

Cabinet

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Report Title: Improving Housing Management Services and Wider Integration

Wards: All

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Report summary

The reintegration of Lambeth Living provides an opportunity to transform and improve housing management services and provide a direction of travel for wider service integration. This paper:

- provides an update on the short term plan to improve services following reintegration; and,
- looks to the next 3-5 years and the ambition to develop an integrated model of service delivery which focuses on better and cheaper outcomes for residents, particularly those who are vulnerable, and delivers services which improve wellbeing.

Finance summary

None arising from this report.

Recommendations

- (1) To note the successful transfer of housing management services from the Arms Length Management Organisation back to the Council and the subsequent service improvement programme.
- (2) To note the development of a task force to develop a common understanding of vulnerability and wellbeing across the council and with partners.
- (3) To agree that the Cabinet Member for Housing oversees the improvement action plans.
- (4) To agree the proposals for consultation to change the engagement governance structure for housing management tenants and leaseholders.

1. Context

- 1.1 Housing Management provides services to 24,000 tenants and 9,000 leaseholders. It is responsible for collecting rents, providing estate services such as cleaning, repairs and maintenance. Many of the actual services are provided under contracts with external companies. We are midway through the largest ever improvement programme as part of the Lambeth Housing Standard.
- 1.2 Cabinet agreed in April 2015, that reintegrating housing management services into the Council would allow a more 'joined-up' approach to services, based on the recognised link between housing, health and life chances. This decision also provided:
- an opportunity for tenants and residents to influence the shape of a new housing service;
 - better alignment of housing management with other council services;
 - better value for money for residents;
 - savings to reinvest in services; and,
 - better support to housing management services to improve performance.
- 1.3 Over a short time scale a project plan to ensure the smooth transfer was implemented, a new Director of Housing Management appointed and services successfully returned to the Council on 26 June 2015. This is in itself a remarkable achievement and was organised and implemented across delivery, commissioning and enabling teams as well as involving residents and other stakeholders including Lambeth Living staff and the Lambeth Living Board.

2. Proposals and reasons

Improving housing management services

- 2.1 With housing management back in house there are significant opportunities to improve and develop joint and integrated services. The first integration step has been to bring Housing Delivery services under the line management of the Director of Housing Management. There will also be an early realignment of the senior management team within housing and a redesign of services to meet service priorities. It is however important to manage expectations and understand that not everything will change immediately. It is also important to recognise and celebrate some of the existing work, often beyond basic bricks and mortar maintenance.
- 2.2 This report sets out the priorities for the development of the service within the context of an uncertain future for the Council's housing provision. The recent Government announcements since the general election and in the budget in particular will have a severe detrimental financial impact on the provision of housing services across the sector. These include:
- the change in rent policy from CPI+1% increases to an impending 1% rent reduction for four years from April 2016 will result in an HRA loss of between £2.5bn and £3.9bn nationally and around £28.5m from Lambeth's HRA business plan against planned income;

- the policy for the forced sales of high value stock could mean the loss of an additional 100-120 units a year, on top of the increased reduction in stock through increased right to buy discounts;
- the continuous impact of welfare reform particularly the reduction in the benefit cap and the introduction of Universal Credit is likely to affect rent collection;
- the access to lettings from Registered Providers (nearly half of new lets) will be hit by the extension of the right to buy to registered provider (housing association) tenants and so put additional pressure on our own stock; and,
- there are also likely to be additional requirements placed on the service through the Government's "pay to stay" policy, requiring the Council to collect – but not retain - substantially higher rents from tenants earning more than £40k.

The Council is both actively involved in working with other local authorities and stakeholders on policies to mitigate some of the worst impacts of these changes and working to assess possible implications. It is anticipated that the Government will publish a Housing Bill in October with more details.

2.3 We will also need to consider other changes such as the impact of the estate regeneration programme, in terms of the housing management service's key role in assisting with the programme, and the longer term planning for managing a more diverse stock.

2.4 Meanwhile Housing Management services have continued to be provided during the transition process and improvements in performance have been sustained. Work has also started in the last three months to develop a new programme for improvement to reflect the issues and concerns raised by residents and other stakeholders during the consultation and transfer process. Housing Management has developed four key priorities based on resident feedback as areas for improvement or change:

- improving repairs and capital works services;
- better services for leaseholders;
- supporting vulnerable residents; and,
- improving engagement and involvement.

Priority 1: repairs and capital works

2.5 The majority of complaints, about 70%, are related to repairs or capital works. They are generally about the responsiveness of service, quality of work or poor communication. There has been evidence of appointments not being kept or mis-recorded, delays in getting works done and a large number of outstanding jobs. The capital works team which is responsible for delivering the Lambeth Housing and Decent Homes standards, and investing almost half a billion pounds over five years, has been criticised in particular for poor communication with residents and members.

2.6 The good news is that services are improving:

- we have delivered more responsive repairs to date than last year, and driven better value for money has allowed additional resources to be put into a planned preventative maintenance programme;

- 1000 follow up enquiries per month following a repair booking rates the service at 95% satisfaction;
- we have had zero overdue home repairs since July 2015;
- complaints have fallen year on year from 2100 in the year 2013-14 to 530 in the year 2014-15;
- reduced the number of disrepair claim cases to 82; and,
- Short Cycle void turnaround time is an average of only 9 days.

2.7 In order to drive further improvements a number of workshops have been organised attended by contractors and a cross section of council staff. These have established a set of common principles and is driving innovation and service delivery. These meetings will drive the improvement plan, which includes;

- improved communications to residents and members. All 2015/16 capital works are now available on the website and a commitment that 2016/17 and 2017/18 capital works will be added by March 2016;
- personal newsletters sent to all residents whose homes are in the capital programme in 2015/16;
- development of a mobile application (App) to manage repairs and raise jobs keeping residents more informed;
- providing 2 hour appointments;
- providing open data for residents who will have an easy access route to see the performance of the council and contractors on an estate by estate basis so they can have confidence in the performance of the service;
- introducing a handy persons service;
- an enhanced repairs service where residents can pay for jobs which are not our responsibility;
- providing i-pads to estate officers to manage work in the field;
- introducing Wednesday Walkabouts (see 6.6); and,
- mapping data to better understand our repairs and maintenance needs. This will inform the development of a planned works programme.

2.8 In addition a repairs task force has also been set up with officers and residents which will monitor improvements and produce an action plan ahead of the procurement of repairs contracts from 2016 onwards so that our contractor can see what we want to achieve and what needs changing. The task force will also look at longer term issues responding to what our residents want as service users.

Priority 2: leasehold services

2.9 Leaseholders represent nearly a third of our residents and this will grow each year. They have told us through the STAR survey and in workshops that they are dissatisfied with the service. Satisfaction is at an all time low:

- 19% were satisfied that we listen to and act on their views;
- 26% are satisfied that they have opportunities to participate in decision-making;
- 20% satisfied with the ease of contacting the right person; and,
- overall only 32% satisfied with services.

2.10 In response a new leaseholder task and finish group has been set up to focus on delivering the Leasehold Action Plan (Major Capital Works Plan), driving leaseholder satisfaction and improving the home ownership services. Improvements include:

- Martin Arnold Limited has been appointed as the Independent Expert;
- a Major Works committee has been created with clear terms of reference and will meet 6 weekly to review work carried out by Independent Expert; and,
- the areas the Independent Expert will consider are:
 - the appointment and performance of consultants and contractors
 - design, specification and necessity of works
 - how were the works procured, was the work tendered and did the procurement process offer value for money?
 - were the works priced accurately and reasonable?
 - has the work been carried out to industry standards?
 - are residents satisfied with the service?

2.11 There needs to be a greater recognition of the increasing numbers of leaseholders the opportunities to develop services and relationships further. There is an added layer of complexity where a significant number of leaseholders are non resident and rent to the private rented sector.

Priority 3: supporting vulnerable residents and wellbeing

2.12 Residents told us that they want better joined up services protecting vulnerable households. In the short term we are working with partners and colleagues to develop new ways of working. This will build on existing initiatives to support strategies like financial resilience and the health and wellbeing strategy. We will also seek to support residents by working across services and focusing on services which support residents with mental health problems.

2.13 Some of the joint work includes:

- a Service Plus pilot proactively supporting older people (over 75 year olds) working with Age UK and Ace of Clubs;
- a LEAP project is being scoped with Housing Management, Housing Options and other partners to tackle and alleviate the pressures for families and children living in overcrowded conditions;
- joint work with housing services and social care to manage families and vulnerable adults with no recourse to public funds; and,
- we are developing a new housing management service for sheltered housing including a tailored tenant offer for sheltered residents.

2.14 There has been a progressive rise in interest in outcomes which look to measure individual and social wellbeing and whether increased wellbeing and happiness of citizens can be demonstrated through better integrated service models. As part of the housing management transformation and integration it is intended to develop an approach to wellbeing which is

being led by a project manager. He has begun to scope the issues and current practice with the aim to develop a service offer based on wellbeing.

- 2.15 A report, which is currently being prepared, will provide more detail of all of this and will additionally provide a comprehensive update of what we know about existing relevant projects. It will contain proposals for how we progressively move from the present situation where there are a great many initiatives underway both large and small (mainly small) to a situation where we have streamlined our offer and take advantage of economies of scale offered by larger projects. This is likely to involve rolling up some smaller projects and consolidate work in bigger better integrated projects.
- 2.16 We need to think about supporting a range of vulnerable residents and the ambition is to offer a minimum universal service offer and a further more holistic offer made available by assertive outreach to those whose wellbeing we can most increase. However at the moment definitions of vulnerable groups tend to be too wide (for example all the elderly) or ill-defined (e.g. 'young people who are vulnerable'). Further vulnerability policies are not informed by an understanding of what might be achieved by each additional unit (measured in £s) of increased support we might offer. Therefore we need to develop a model which can achieve the biggest increases in wellbeing from each pound spent. But there is a great deal of uncertainty which derives from a lack of understanding of what works and also from not knowing what kinds of inputs/enhancements particular clusters of residents might most value.
- 2.17 We therefore plan to convene a new task force with the active support of our public health department to look at what we know about (1) vulnerable groups likely to be living on our estates (2) what we know about what we might be able to do to maximise wellbeing gain from limited resources and (3) to consider how we might get our residents to input into both the range and design of interventions we might want to offer as a result.
- 2.18 The early piece of work for the task force will be to help us arrive at an initial practical definition of vulnerable resident groups we wish to support in our initial work which have a positive impact. We will invite all interested stakeholders to make a case with supporting data for those residents they would see as prime targets of our work. The task force will collate all this information and offer a paper in response summarising all this data and offering our own perspectives (informed by national data/evidence of what works) and would then convene a 'big tent' event early next year to discuss findings and to agree a way forward. This event would involve the Lambeth 500 (see engagement section).
- 2.19 This would give us both a definition of who we wish to target (based on evidence of need) and something close to a specification of the offers available to these groups. We could then trial an initial intervention either/or by geographical area or by vulnerable group and collect pre data re wellbeing.
- 2.20 The range of interventions likely to be on offer will include but not be limited to the kinds of interventions that concern the housing-related structural determinants of health, and that we will be looking to offer a service that goes beyond public health interventions that relate to housing. An example being developed between housing and the LEAP project is where

interventions in the home to alleviate overcrowding and support families in their accommodation.

- 2.21 Clearly we need to make sure we are tackling the most basic problems that have direct health impacts including for instance damp homes, thermal inefficiency and overcrowding, but ultimately we need to develop those interventions that increase the wellbeing of residents more broadly that go beyond these basics to include integrated offers from health/social services/third sector and other stakeholders.

Priority 4: engagement and involvement

- 2.22 The basis for the Council's engagement with those who rent our properties is driven by the Tenants' Compact which aligns a Government requirement introduced in 2000 to give guidelines to Local Authorities for involving residents. Councils are to:

- actively promote and develop new approaches for tenant participation;
- make tenants aware of opportunities to get involved;
- provide training; and,
- provide financial support and facilities.

- 2.23 The Council's wider formal engagement structure with residents is Neighbourhood Forums. Some are drafting local plans as required under the Localism Act but these will be superseded by Co-operative Local Investment Plans (CLIPS) of which there are 7 – Waterloo, North Lambeth, Stockwell, Clapham, Brixton, Norwood and Streatham. Other forums which our residents in particular are involved with include the Safer Neighbourhood Panels which are co-ordinated by the Police but have no budget.

- 2.24 It was clear from pre reintegration consultation and from the STAR survey that our current engagement offer is not reaching out. By far the majority of tenants and leaseholders are not involved and 70% have not heard of the Area Forums or the Tenant or Leaseholder Councils. Under 10% had attended such meetings with the main reason given for not attending being the resident not being aware of the (34%) and time of meetings/other commitments (32%). Of those who had attended meetings, 26% did not feel there was anything good about them and the main area for improvement stated by nearly 50% was around governance and providing residents with feedback.

- 2.25 The Council recently looked at resident engagement more widely which highlighted that there is:

- lack of coordination across the Council towards engagement;
- limited insight into residents' needs and interests generally;
- limited range of engagement methods, traditionally relying on meetings and workshops; and,
- concentration on project specific engagement rather than a more general approach across a range of issues that are important to residents

- 2.26 Lambeth housing management has a very traditional and formal engagement model focused on numerous levels of meetings with both tenants and leaseholders. The process can be adversarial, engages with a very small number of residents and tends to be drawn

into localised issues. It does not reflect the changing nature and different types of occupiers in our stock which comprises council tenants, leaseholders, tenants of leaseholders (private tenants), shared ownership and freeholders.

2.27 The current model comprises:

- **tenants and residents associations** which are the backbone of engagement. We currently have 90 TRAs of which 23 are either out of registration or active but not interested in registering. But only 58% of our 102 estates (>50 units) have a TRA;
- the structure of **area forums** (six in total) has been in place for over 30 years and attendance is declining, and it's not uncommon for officers to outnumber residents. Last year the terms of reference were reviewed by the Residents' Steering Group and the Area Housing Managers to strengthen the scrutiny function. Training was also organised for Area Forum officers but has been poorly taken up with less than 30% attendance. Despite these changes there continues to be limited appeal particularly for new TRA reps;
- **contractor forums** were set up to discuss repairs issues and meet monthly in the north and quarterly in the south, but not in the central area;
- **Tenants' Council** has existed more or less unchanged for nearly 20 years and is the strategic body for residents. It has 5 or 6 reps from each AHF as well as representation from TMOs. However, attendance is consistent from only 15 TRAs over the past 12 months and opportunities for real strategic discussion is limited;
- **Area Leasehold Forums** (ALF) were set up in the early 2000's following complaints from leaseholders that existing forums did not deal with their issues. The 6 ALFs differ from Area Forums in that they are made up of interested leaseholders living in the area and not elected TRA reps. Attendance was problematic until Lambeth Housing Standard started when attendance increased significantly largely around concerns regarding LHS;
- each ALF elects 4 representatives to **Leasehold Council**;
- both area forums and Tenants' and Leaseholders' Council have **executive meetings** for chairs/vice chairs to work with officers to decide forum agendas. These meet in between forums;
- the **sheltered housing forum** was re-established last year having been moribund for a number of years. It meets quarterly and has good attendance from the majority of sheltered schemes; and,
- the annual **residents' conference** has been used to co-produce policy although not every year. Average attendance about 100 of both tenants and leaseholder TRA reps primarily.

2.28 Operationally and locally there are some excellent innovative examples to increase engagement and participation, including:

- the **Lambeth 500**, launched at the Country Show in July 2015, aims to recruit five hundred residents who want to actively engage and be involved with housing services. The Lambeth 500 will interact in a number of ways such as responding to surveys but also by joining communities of interest to review services. This bespoke way of communicating will pay closer attention to residents' needs and concerns and be more responsive and reactive in the type of service we offer;

- we organised a **residents engagement workshop** on Saturday 11th July where both tenants and leaseholders discussed with staff and the Cabinet Member for Housing what's wrong with current engagement and how we make it better. We discussed:
 - how do we and should we talk to residents;
 - how we communicate and what they would like;
 - how should we help to build community involvement;
 - how would they like to influence housing service;
- increasing estate walkabouts and launching the **Wednesday Walkabouts** where Lambeth staff, partners and contractors visit an estate, engage residents, coordinate clear ups and resolve issues. We have started to record all actions from walkabouts so that TRAs and residents can hold the council to account for issues that have been raised – we will turn these into **estate action plans** and respond to all issues, even if we cannot resolve them, so residents know they've been considered and it's available to scrutiny;
- the **Getting Involved** grants programme enables resident groups to organise or commission activities. These have included summer youth programmes, fun days, social events, sewing classes, lunch clubs and sports activities;
- the **Edible Living** food growing programme has 18 estates actively involved with growing interest from others. This programme has been shortlisted for the 24Housing Green Initiative awards;
- **learning works** is an educational and training programme aimed at developing community leaders and aiding employment opportunities. This has developed with the Get, Set, Go project where welfare affected residents volunteer on community projects in return for credits on their rent accounts equivalent to the lost benefit; and,
- establishing virtual leasehold panels to review our communications to make them more user friendly.

2.29 It is clear, however, that our formal approach to engagement and involvement needs to change. There is an appetite to re-vamp resident engagement to address some of the issues in the structure as well as develop new ways of working already started. Residents have told us they want a change. Throughout the pre- and post- reintegration consultation with tenants and leaseholders there has been a consistent message that residents are not properly communicated with and the engagement that is on offer does not reflect what people want. Participants at the engagement workshop in July with the Cabinet Member for Housing found the structure of layers of meeting both confusing and at unhelpful.

2.30 A move away from this traditional approach would embrace the recommendations of the Council's review, particularly the need to work collaboratively and innovatively with the Third sector in order to be inclusive with residents. It might also offer an opportunity to deliver savings. A recent AmicusHorizon report, 'Success, satisfaction and scrutiny', calculated the savings generated by involving residents as £2.763m per year for the 28,000 homes administered by this housing association. Fundamental to achieving this was a change of culture to a one team culture which all levels of the organisation adopted. Other Registered Providers have queried the value of traditional engagement (eg. Family Mosaic's report 'Changing Places') concluding that engagement needs to be more relevant to residents.

2.31 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has recently completed a commission on resident involvement and a summary of their findings is attached in the appendix to this report. The terms of reference was to focus on improving housing related services to residents through the development of resident involvement strategies. A number of key recommendations resonate with this report in particular:

- to embed resident involvement in Lambeth housing services, including the scrutiny of performance;
- placing residents at the heart of the service;
- using data and business intelligence to improve services;
- creating structures around three levels of involvement;
- Level 1: involvement at a local level eg in a TRA;
- Level 2: involvement in a task and finish group looking at a specific issue (eg selection of contractors, complaints, procurement strategy); and,
- Level 3: involvement in scrutiny and performance management.

Proposed new governance arrangements

2.32 In response to the clear messages that residents have sent the Council, we are proposing a clean break with the way this has worked in the past and a fresh opportunity for the new housing service to improve on the engagement offer. It's important that at all levels of engagement we work closely with both residents and ward councillors.

2.33 Locally we will:

- make our engagement individual by keeping residents informed (50% of residents just want to know, not to be involved). This will be addressed through better communications within existing budgets;
- listen and ask. The launch of the Lambeth 500 is an ambition to make engagement and involvement much bigger and enable us not just to ask people borough-wide what they think of us and want from housing management services, but to be able to start to ask people on an estate by estate basis about decisions on their estate. This will not be done through meetings but via email, text, phone, post so we can involve as many people as possible and to provide a forum for direct feedback from what they tell us;
- drawing from the Lambeth 500 we will recruit and train people to sit on resident panels. The first panels will be on:
 - Contract procurement;
 - Grant awards, taking over the role of the residents' steering group;
 - Complaints adopting a recognised good practice to oversee the final review stage;
- work with all estates, or clusters of estates, using formal TRAs, organised open meetings, walkabouts or evening forums. These will be regular and planned to ensure we talk about plans for their estate, address issues that have been raised and to talk about other opportunities such as estate pride, food growing etc. Resources will be diverted from area forums to support more work with estates and we will invest in

technology to enable housing officers to access the necessary information at meetings to respond to questions rather than having to ‘take it away’; and,

- focus on local environmental issues which are a priority for residents on estates. We want to encourage more involvement in the look of our local estates and hold the area offices to account on what goes on in the estates, particularly around waste management and maintenance.

2.34 On an area basis we propose:

- to change Area Forums. Consultation tells us that most people do not know about them, and those that do often do not go. Those that do go do not think they achieve anything (the most reported section in the consultation that was good about area forums was “nothing”). It is therefore proposed that area forums will be replaced. In their place the existing contractors meetings will be turned into 3 Area Boards, to be made up of representatives from local TRAs They will not be forums to discuss casework but will interrogate Key Performance indicators and will be responsible for holding both contractors and the Area Offices to account; and,
- the casework function of the area forums will be addressed by reviewing the opening hours on a weekly basis of area offices and call centre. We will hold a surgery at different regular locations in the evenings to allow people to come and speak face to face with someone who can help them. We will investigate occasional Saturday opening of the front desks in the area offices and better interactive communications such as web chat.

2.35 Borough wide we propose to:

- recognise the complex nature of tenure on our estates and move towards a collective view of residents rather than just by tenure. This should allow a more citizen focus on engagement and move closer to achieving more resilient neighbourhoods where residents work together to tell us what they want. Working in a more joined up way and understanding our stock profile better may provide additional benefits such as fraud detection;
- replace Tenants Council and Leaseholder Council. We recognise there is still a need to address strategic, borough-wide issues therefore at the Tenants’ Conference in October and the Leaseholders’ Conference in November we will discuss this proposal and possible mechanisms to elect a Tenants’ Executive and a Leaseholders’ Executive with representatives from the north, south and central areas;
- the timetable for the proposed changes will be:
 - prepare a report and presentation on the mechanism and terms of reference for the new proposals; and initiate consultation at tenants conference (October 2015) and leaseholders conference (November 2015);
 - send the proposals to all residents by January 2016; and,
 - put into place the new formal structure from April 2016.

The longer term vision to integrate services

2.36 The development of a new integrated operating model will help to meet manifesto commitments, narrowing inequalities and shape a broader set of outcomes around the

person and place. This will improve health, community safety, improve environmental sustainability, build stronger communities and create jobs; and will also improve our capacity to jointly commission across outcomes and revenue streams delivering efficiency savings and achieving more from the money we collectively spend.

- 2.37 Work with children's and adult's social care colleagues is underway to develop a joint understanding of wellbeing. In the longer term commissioning plans will be clear about how services will be developed to provide holistic and integrated services. This will achieve better coordinated services and drive down spending by avoiding duplication, targeting services and adopting an early intervention and prevention approach. The result should be an improvement in resident wellbeing. Early thinking about wellbeing in a Lambeth housing context is taking place and a separate scoping report is being drafted. A small delivery / commissioning and health project team has been established to take this forward.
- 2.38 The big question is how do we get there? There have been repeated attempts with limited success to encourage greater collaboration between public bodies. The challenge to work in an integrated way within a local authority is multiplied when dealing with health or third sector services. There are numerous barriers such as letting go or working to different or ill defined outcomes. Research undertaken after attempts to integrate describes the need to have critical success factors, including strong governance and management control. There are other dependencies too such as cultural and behavioural change, strategic and political direction and an agreed operations model for delivering customer services.
- 2.39 Integration with public services and third sector providers is a longer term ambition and will require an integrated commissioning strategy. Using the experience of Commissioning we will be bold in identifying where there is overlap in service delivery and create commissioning plans to recommission single coordinated services for residents wherever possible. An integrated commissioning approach allows us to review access routes to and provision of, housing for all vulnerable households and ensure that bricks and mortar provision is properly linked into other support services. The Council's commissioning focus on outcomes for residents, rather than individual service activity, will help us and there are several examples of where such an approach is having an impact including our multi-agency approach to the Troubled Families programme, our NRPF improvement project and our work to integrate older peoples' housing services.
- 2.40 A key element of any integration will be our approach to customer services and the development of a customer-focussed model for the design of services. This needs to include:
- improved access to services and information;
 - earliest possible resolution of customer enquiries and requests;
 - shifting work forward in the organisation towards customer facing staff;
 - streamlined, modern and efficient approach;
 - measuring performance to drive improvements; and,
 - ensuring a sustainable level and quality of services that we can provide.

Using integrated technology and a more flexible culture should improve the customer journey. For customers this will deliver a range of benefits such as a single point of contact,

a case management approach, fewer handoffs and delays, skilled staff empowered to act on customers' behalf, and greater automation for, and communication with, customers. This model reflects the concerns of housing management service users and was discussed with the Reintegration Board that oversaw the housing management transition back to the council. The board endorsed this approach and moves towards wider integration needs to ensure that this customer-centric ethos is developed.

- 2.41 It is increasingly understood that housing is central to the success of achieving better outcomes for citizens. The development and transformation of housing services can be seen as key in the process to create a wider integrated service model. The commissioning expertise Lambeth which has developed over the last few years will greatly assist the development of linked housing and social care services to work towards a combined service delivery model.

3. Finance

- 3.1 The recommendations of this report should deliver efficiencies in operations both within the Housing Revenue Account and other interlinked services. In light of the announcements in the summer budgets, there will be pressure on the HRA budgets and the efficiencies will contribute to ensuring that the HRA is able to mitigate some of these pressures.

4. Legal and Democracy

- 4.1 Section 21 of the Housing Act 1985 vests in the Council the general management, regulation and control of its housing stock.
- 4.2 Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 requires Council to maintain such arrangements as it considers appropriate to enable those of its secure tenants who are likely to be substantially affected by a matter of housing management:
- (a) to be informed of the Council's proposals in respect of the matter; and,
 - (b) to make their views known to the council within a specified period and the Council is required, before making any decision on the matter, to consider any representations made to it in accordance with those arrangements.
- 4.3 A matter of 'Housing management' relates to the management, maintenance, improvement or demolition of dwelling-houses let by the authority under secure tenancies, or the provision of services or amenities in connection with such dwelling-houses.
- 4.4 This requirement relates to matters of Housing Management that constitute a new programme of maintenance, improvement or demolition, or a change in the practice or policy of the authority, that are likely substantially to affect either its secure tenants as a whole or a group of them who form a distinct social group or occupy dwelling-houses which constitute a distinct class (whether by reference to the kind of dwelling-house, or the housing estate or other larger area in which they are situated). As such, changing the consultation requirements may apply to any new policy or practice in respect of consulting with secure tenants.

- 4.5 The Council is further required to publish those arrangements which must be available for inspection at the Council's main place of business and available on request.
- 4.6 In *Moseley v LB Haringey*, the Supreme Court held that procedural fairness sometimes requires the public authority to explain why alternative proposals have been rejected when consulting residents. The Supreme Court held that the purpose of consultation is to:
- (a) lead to better decisions informed by relevant information and properly tested;
 - (b) avoid a sense of injustice; and,
 - (c) reflect the democratic principle at the heart of our society.
- 4.7 Further, the Supreme Court endorsed the principles for fair consultation expoused in *R v Brent London Borough Council ex p. Gunning* that the basic requirements that are essential if the consultation process is to have a sensible content are that:
- a. consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage;
 - b. the proposer must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit of intelligent consideration and response;
 - c. adequate time must be given for consideration and response; and,
 - d. the product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising any statutory proposals.
- 4.9. Article 1 of The First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998 provides that every person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of their possessions and that no one shall be deprived of their possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law. These provisions do not impair the rights of the state to enforce such laws as it deems necessary to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest or to secure the payment of taxes or other contributions or penalties.
- 4.10 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council in the exercise of its functions to have due regard to the need to:
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other form of conduct prohibited under the act; and,
 - (b) to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation) and persons who do not share it.
- 4.11 Having regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

Article 1 of The First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998 provides that every person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of their possessions and that no one shall be deprived of their possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law. These provisions do not impair the

rights of the state to enforce such laws as it deems necessary to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest or to secure the payment of taxes or other contributions or penalties.

4.12 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council in the exercise of its functions to have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other form of conduct prohibited under the act; and,
- (b) to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation) and persons who do not share it.

4.13 Having regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- (b) take steps to meet the needs of the persons who share that characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; and,
- (c) encourage persons of the relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

4.14 This proposed key decision was entered in the Forward Plan on 11 August 2015 and the necessary 28 clear days notice has been given. In addition, the Council's Constitution requires the report to be published on the website for five clear days before the proposed decision is approved by Cabinet. A further period of five clear days – the call-in period – must then elapse before the decision is enacted. If the decision is called-in during this period, it cannot be enacted until the call-in has been considered and resolved.

5. Consultation and co-production

5.1 There has been extensive consultation with residents prior to the reintegration of housing management services. It is through this consultation that the four priorities emerged and the recommendations to update the structure and governance for engaging and involving residents. Further consultation will be undertaken on the proposed changes to engagement as set out in paragraph 2.34 above.

6. Risk management

6.1 Risks and appropriate mitigations associated with any actions arising from the four priority work streams outlined above will be considered as programmes of service improvements are developed.

7 Equalities impact assessment

- 7.1 There are likely to be equality implications associated with the outcomes of the four priority workstreams identified above, for example in making sure the engagement and communication strands are accessible and in considering how services for vulnerable resident groups can be improved. The background and context for considering these areas to be priorities will be considered as part of the EIA process by the corporate EIA panel in October/yNovember, to ensure that the workstreams fully address any gaps in service and that the development of service improvement adequately seek to address these gaps.
- 7.2 The key equalities issues associated with the changes to housing management have been highlighted through this report:
- 7.2.1 Priority 3: **supporting vulnerable residents and wellbeing**: we must target our resources and support on those who need it most based on a robust assessment of need.
- 7.2.2 Priority 4: **engagement and involvement**: we must better engage with all tenants and leaseholders by ensuring we use methods that are accessible based on meaningful ongoing conversations.
- 7.3 A detailed challenge session is scheduled with the Corporate EIA Panel on 5November 2015 to help develop these two priority areas of work to ensure they best meet the needs of residents with particular protected characteristics (as described by the Equality Act (2010) as well as our own local equality characteristics (socio-economic, health and English as a second language).

8 Community safety

- 8.1 Any community safety implications associated with the priority workstreams will be considered as part of the improvement programme.

9 Organisational implications

- 9.1 Organisational implications arising from the priority workstreams will be considered as the improvement programme is developed.

10 Timetable for implementation

- 10.1 Timetables are contained in the body of the report.

Audit trail				
Consultation				
Name/Position	Lambeth cluster/division or partner	Date Sent	Date Received	Comments in para:
Councillor Matthew Bennett	Cabinet Member:	22/8/15	2/9/15	
Sue Foster	Strategic Director	27/8/15	1/9/15	
Helen Charlesworth-May	Strategic Director	27/8/15	1/9/15	
Hamant Bharadia Finance	Business Partnering	2/9/15	2/9/15	
Greg Carson Legal Services	Corporate Resources: Integrated Support	2/9/15	9/9/15	
Democratic Services	Corporate Resources: Corporate Affairs	8/9/15	9/9/15	
Cllr Jackie Meldrum	Councillor	23/9/15	23/9/15	

Report history	
Original discussion with Cabinet Member	01/07/15
Report deadline	30/09/15
Date final report sent	28/09/15
Report no.	15-16/82
Part II Exempt from Disclosure/confidential accompanying report?	No
Key decision report	Yes
Date first appeared on forward plan	11 August 2015
Key decision reasons	Community Impact
Background information	DCLG Tenant Compact
Appendices	Overview and Scrutiny summary