

# Tenants', Leaseholders' and Residents' Consultative Forum

## AGENDA

**DATE:** Thursday 10 May 2012

**TIME:** 7.30 pm

**VENUE:** Committee Rooms 1&2,  
Harrow Civic Centre

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### **MEMBERSHIP** (Quorum 3 Council Members)

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**Chairman:** Councillor Bob Currie

**Councillors:**

Mano Dharmarajah

Mrs Camilla Bath (VC)  
Kam Chana

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### **Representatives of Individual Housing Estate Tenants' and Residents' Associations**

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### **Reserve Members:**

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1. Victoria Silver
2. Ben Wealthy

1. Susan Hall
2. Barry Macleod-Cullinane

**Contact:** Vishal Seegoolam, Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Tel: 020 8424 1883 E-mail: [vishal.seegoolam@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:vishal.seegoolam@harrow.gov.uk)

# **AGENDA - PART I**

## **1. ATTENDANCE BY RESERVE MEMBERS**

To note the attendance at this meeting of any duly appointed Reserve Members.

Reserve Members may attend meetings:-

- (i) to take the place of an ordinary Member for whom they are a reserve;
- (ii) where the ordinary Member will be absent for the whole of the meeting; and
- (iii) the meeting notes at the start of the meeting at the item 'Reserves' that the Reserve Member is or will be attending as a reserve;
- (iv) if a Reserve Member whose intention to attend has been noted arrives after the commencement of the meeting, then that Reserve Member can only act as a Member from the start of the next item of business on the agenda after his/her arrival.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive declarations of personal or prejudicial interests, arising from business to be transacted at this meeting, from:

- (a) all Members of the Forum;
- (b) all other Members present.

## **3. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 8)**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 February 2012 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

## **4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

To receive questions (if any) from local residents or organisations under the provisions of Executive Procedure Rule 51 (Part 4D of the Constitution).

## **5. PETITIONS**

To receive petitions (if any) submitted by members of the public/Councillors under the provisions of Executive Procedure Rule 49 (Part 4D of the Constitution).

## **6. DEPUTATIONS**

To receive deputations (if any) under the provisions of Executive Procedure Rule 50 (Part 4D of the Constitution).

## **7. INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW CONTRACTORS**

Introduction of Linbrook Services Ltd, Slade (London) Ltd and Quality Heating Service Ltd.

## **8. LOCALISATION OF COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION (To Follow)**

Presentation on behalf of the Divisional Director of Housing Services.

**9. INFORMATION REPORT - INTERIM HOUSING FINANCE BUSINESS PARTNER -  
OUTLINE OF ROLE AND DRAFT WORK PLAN 2012-13 (Pages 9 - 14)**

Report of the Divisional Director of Housing Services.

**10. INFORMATION REPORT - RESIDENT SERVICES MANAGER'S REPORT AND  
FEEDBACK FROM OTHER COUNCIL LED RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT  
ACTIVITIES (Pages 15 - 22)**

Report of the Divisional Director of Housing Services.

**11. INFORMATION REPORT - ASSET MANAGEMENT UPDATE (Pages 23 - 40)**

Report of the Divisional Director of Housing Services.

**12. YEAR END POSITION STATEMENT**

Verbal Update of the Divisional Director of Housing Services.

**13. SUGGESTIONS FOR AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

**14. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

Which cannot otherwise be dealt with.

**15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting will be held at 2.00pm on Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

**AGENDA - PART II - NIL**

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# TENANTS', LEASEHOLDERS' AND RESIDENTS' CONSULTATIVE FORUM MINUTES

## 29 FEBRUARY 2012

**Chairman:** \* Councillor Bob Currie

**Councillors:** \* Mrs Camilla Bath \* Ben Wealthy (2)  
Kam Chana

\* Denotes Member present  
(2) Denotes category of Reserve Member

### Minute's Silence

Following sentiments from Officers and TRA Representatives, the Forum observed a minute's silence as a token of respect for Mrs Julie Cook who recently passed away.

### Representatives from the following Associations were in attendance:

Antoneys Close Tenants' and Residents' Association  
Eastcote Lane Tenants' and Residents' Association  
Elmgrove Tenants' and Residents' Association  
Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations  
Harrow Weald Tenants' and Residents' Association  
Kenmore Park Tenants' and Residents' Association  
Leaseholder Support Group  
Weald Village Tenants' and Residents' Association  
Woodlands Community Association

## 97. Attendance by Reserve Members

**RESOLVED:** To note the attendance of the following duly constituted Reserve Members:

Ordinary Member

Reserve Member

Councillor Mano Dharmarajah

Councillor Ben Wealthy

## 98. Declarations of Interest

Agenda Item 7 – INFORMATION REPORT – Resident Services Update and Feedback from Resident Involvement Activities; Agenda Item 8 – INFORMATION REPORT – Asset Management Update; Agenda Item 9 – INFORMATION REPORT – Housing Revenue Account Reform – Update; Agenda Item 10 – INFORMATION REPORT – Housing Changes Update

Councillor Bob Currie declared personal interests on the above items in that he attended monthly meetings of the Eastcote Lane Tenants' and Residents' Associations. He would remain in the room whilst the matters were considered and voted upon.

## 99. Minutes

**RESOLVED:** That

- (1) the minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2012 be taken as read and signed as a correct record;
- (2) the minutes of the special meeting held on 30 January 2012 be taken as read and signed as a correct record subject to the inclusion of:

'The Chair of the Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations thanked the presenting officer for the detailed information shared with the Forum' under Minute 96.

## 100. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

**RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions were put, or petitions or deputations received at this meeting.

## RESOLVED ITEMS

### 101. INFORMATION REPORT - Resident Services Update and Feedback from Resident Involvement Activities

An officer introduced a report which updated the Forum on a wide range of Council led resident involvement activities. The officer advised that:

- service charge arrears continued to reduce. Work was continuing to improve the accuracy of service charging billing;

- Harrow was due to host a meeting with the West London Housing Directors Group on 6 March 2012, to explore opportunities for achieving efficiencies in relation to Leasehold Services and joint working between West London Boroughs. A report would be presented to a future meeting of the Forum if any ideas were taken forward;
- the Council's views had been submitted in response to the Right to Buy consultation. If residents expressed an interest in buying a Council owned property, officers endeavoured to hold meet with interested parties to explain the process;
- there were currently 25 live cases of tenancy fraud being investigated. The rate of tenancy audits was being increased to address the issue;
- the good level of performance in relation to rental income collection has been sustained, with 98.53% of rents being collected against a year end target of 98.50%;
- a Financial Inclusion event was scheduled to take place on 18 April 2012 at Cedars Manor School. Partners including the Citizens Advice Bureau, Money Advice and Credit Union would also be attending to offer tenants advice on finance related matters;
- the controlled parking scheme was nearing completion for the estates which voted in favour. It was anticipated the scheme would come into effect by May 2012;
- communication between Housing and Grounds Maintenance was improving, with officers from the Grounds Maintenance team now attending estate inspections;
- consultation for sheltered housing modernisation closed on 5 March 2012. It was anticipated that the final proposals would be implemented by summer 2012;
- an action plan had been agreed as a result of the review conducted by the Housing Quality Network. The plan included improving involvement opportunities and generating new opportunities for resident involvement;
- further information on the development of Tenant Scrutiny would be circulated to Members, tenants, leaseholders and residents over the forthcoming weeks. The Forum would also receive a report at a future meeting;
- issues raised by the Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations (HFTRA) Scrutiny and Challenge Panel included issuing progress reports on Housing Needs, developing a more robust approach to tackling under-occupation and the development of the

Tenants' Handbook. The Divisional Director of Housing Services assured the Forum that all matters raised would be thoroughly investigated.

In response to questions, officers advised that:

- the Editorial Board would advertise meetings in appropriate venues, excluding estates where requested;
- it was not anticipated that TRA Representatives would be invited to attend the initial meeting with the West London Housing Directors. The Forum would be kept informed of any outcomes of the discussion;
- procedural issues prevented information being communicated between the Public Realm Department and Housing Services in relation to tree pruning. This area was being addressed;
- proposals to convert estate car parks to fee based car parks had not been finalised but only applied to the underground car park at Churchill Place and the car park adjacent to Northolt Road community centre. Adequate car spaces would be available at the Churchill Place Estate once the underground car park at had been opened. It was believed that the relevant Ward Councillors had been informed;
- plans to extend a particular property on Woodlands Close had stalled. Authority to commence work had recently been granted. Work was due to start soon;
- TRA Representatives were encouraged to follow the advice of the police in relation to empty properties;
- the Financial Inclusion event on 18 April 2012 could only be included in the Homing In publication once it had been considered as part of the planning process by the Housing Editorial Board;
- having a good financial history of making payments was taken into account when investigating arrears. Officers endeavoured to meet with individuals prior to instigating any court action. Work was being done to ensure closer working relationships at a corporate level in relation to arrears;
- it was noted that colleagues from Access Harrow had been invited to attend the next HFTRA meeting on 22 March 2012.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.



## 102. INFORMATION REPORT - Asset Management Update

The Forum received a report which updated it on progress made in relation to Asset Management. The officer advised that:

- the appointment of Linbrook Services Ltd and Slade (London) Ltd as contractors for the responsive repairs contract would be subject to the approval of Cabinet in March 2012;
- Human Resources had completed the job evaluations for additional roles within the Asset Management department. It was anticipated that job matching would continue through March with the new roles being established by May 2012;
- a five-year programme for external decorations would be presented to a future meeting of the Forum;
- under guidance issued by the Governments Housing Minister, a tenant cash back scheme should be considered and introduced by 1 April 2012. The report highlighted progress with a range of pilot projects currently being undertaken and a number of obstacles that had been identified. The view of the forum was not supportive of such a scheme being introduced in Harrow. The forum requested to feed back to elected representatives in any consideration of introducing any such scheme, that they would prefer to use resources to work along side the council in delivering a first class repairs service;
- the Council's Harrow House Warmers scheme was going well, with information on the scheme being distributed to the National Health Service and charities. Further information would be shared at a later meeting of the forum. A TRA Representative thanked officers for the recent installation of loft insulation at their property under the Home Warmers initiative.

In response to questions, officers advised that:

- all properties that required external decoration would be included in the five year plan that was being formulated;
- a consultant had been utilised to assess the cost for the works being conducted on the Francis Road Estate. The cost of this had been budgeted for and was not an additional expense;
- the tenant cash back scheme included specific provisions which prohibited tenants undertaking certain maintenance tasks. Further information would be provided at a future meeting of the Forum.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

### **103. INFORMATION REPORT - Housing Revenue Account Reform - Update**

An officer introduced a report which updated the Forum on the progress made in relation to Housing Revenue Account Reform. The officer advised that:

- the settlement figure for Harrow announced by the Government was £88.461 million. The interest rate on this figure would be confirmed following settlement on 28 March 2012;
- HRA Reform would eradicate the need for Harrow to contribute approximately £7 million to Central Government annually. Taking account of the additional borrowing costs of the settlement and maintaining the HRA Capital Programme to existing levels, this would give the Council an additional £2 million per annum.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

### **104. INFORMATION REPORT - Housing Changes Update**

An officer introduced a report which provided an update on the Housing Changes Review, as a requirement of the Localism Act. The officer advised that:

- work around realising policy priorities and considering best practice was continuing;
- once a modelling stage had been completed, a consultation phase would commence, with correspondence being circulated to Members of the Forum, and wider housing groups and individuals;
- the policies within the Harrow Housing Strategy were required to conform with the London Housing Strategy due to be issued by the Mayor of London. Due to the London Mayoral election May 2012, the timescale for the Strategy was yet to be finalised.

In response to a question, the officer advised that there was a possibility the Strategy could change should a new London Mayor be elected in May 2012.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

### **105. INFORMATION REPORT - Quarter 3 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Monitoring Report**

**RESOLVED:** To note that this item was withdrawn from the agenda.

### **106. Any Other Urgent Business**

#### Millman Close – Overhanging Trees

A TRA Representative highlighted the issue of overhanging trees on the Millman Close estate. An officer advised that a site inspection would be

conducted to assess the situation. A response would be provided at a future meeting of the Forum.

Ways of increasing resources for such maintenance were being investigated.

**RESOLVED:** That the item be noted.

**107. Date of Next Meeting**

**RESOLVED:** That the Forum were next due to meet on 10 May 2012.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.31 pm, closed at 9.50 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BOB CURRIE  
Chairman

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**REPORT FOR: TENANTS',  
LEASEHOLDERS' &  
RESIDENTS'  
CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	10 May 2012
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>INFORMATION REPORT –</b> Dave Roberts (interim Housing Finance Business Partner) – outline of role and draft work plan 2012-13
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Lynne Pennington, Divisional Director of Housing Services
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Enclosures:</b>	Appendix 1 – Draft Housing Business Plan outline

## **Section 1 – Summary**

The purpose of this report is to introduce Dave Roberts, who has been appointed as our interim Housing Finance Business Partner for the next year, and to outline his role and draft work plan over the coming year.

**FOR INFORMATION**

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **Introduction**

1. Dave Roberts has recently commenced work as Housing's new interim Housing Finance Business Partner, reporting to the Divisional Director of Housing.
2. For information purposes, Dave has been working as a Local Authority Housing Finance Consultant since 1999, and since that time he has worked for HACAS, HACAS Chapman Hendy, Tribal and most recently Sector. Prior to becoming a consultant, Dave worked in Local Government for 12 years, the last 8 of which included responsibility for Housing Finance.
3. Dave has worked with Harrow Council in previous years, providing consultancy services and advice in respect of housing finance and business planning.

### **4.0 Outline role**

- 4.1. The key aspects of Dave's role have been agreed as set out below, with the over-arching part of his role being to develop a 30-year Business Plan for Housing. This document will define the services that will be delivered to tenants and residents over the coming years, how those services will be delivered, and how they will be financed.
- 4.2. The Housing Business Plan will comprise both Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Housing General Fund (HGF) elements, but for the purposes of financial modelling these will need to be kept separate due to the different funding and regulatory regimes. These separate elements will, however, be brought together to generate the overall Housing Business Plan.
- 4.3. It is expected that Tenants, Leaseholders and other stakeholders will play a key role in the generation of the initial Housing Business Plan, and in its continued monitoring and development over time.
- 4.4. The HRA element of the business plan will be based on the position following the introduction of self financing, and in producing this Dave will necessarily work closely with the Council's Housing Finance team, as well as the Director and the key members of her team.
- 4.5. As the TLRCF will be aware, HRA self financing is expected to deliver significant savings to the HRA over the next 30 years, and part of Dave's work will involve producing models to determine the extent of the savings likely to arise as result of this, and options for how these savings could be applied.
- 4.6. The outcomes of the Housing Changes Review will impact on both the HRA and HGF business plans, in terms of service delivery, relationships

with customers, increased levels of tenant and resident involvement in housing, and homelessness and the supply of affordable housing. Dave will be working with each of the members of the senior team to help quantify the costs of any new initiatives and/or changes to existing delivery mechanisms, to help ensure that services are providing value for money going forward, to maximise income opportunities within the bounds of affordability, and to advise on the financial aspects of the provision of new affordable housing, including mechanisms for possible funding via HRA revenue streams.

## 5.0 Draft Work Plan

5.1. A more detailed work plan, including links to the overall Housing Changes plan and budget timetable is currently in production. Given that Dave did not commence work until 2<sup>nd</sup> April, and has only now met all of the key members of the housing senior team, it has not been possible to complete this in time for this meeting of the TLRCF. Set out below, however, is a brief outline of work intended to be undertaken over the next few months, and which will feed into subsequent meetings of this Forum.

- Draft Rent Strategy – intended for **July** Cabinet – this will highlight some options for rents over the coming years. The intention would be to identify possible ways to maximise rental income whilst still retaining affordability, and would be in respect of both existing properties and any new-build
- Draft Garage and Facility charges report – intended for **July** Cabinet – this would be intended to start this year's debate around appropriate levels of charges for garages and facilities.
- First draft outline business plan - intended for **July** Cabinet – this will comprise the framework for the Business Plan document, with key sections highlighted.
- Further drafts of the business plan will go to subsequent meetings in September and December to ensure that links with the Council's budget-setting timescales are retained.
- To work with the VFM sub-group to determine its future role in the light of Co-Regulation and the increasing role of tenants in scrutinising budgets and the Housing Business Plan.
- To support the Tenants' Scrutiny Panel in respect of financial matters relating to service review, including raising financial awareness where appropriate and providing training in aspects of housing finance.

5.2. This is a condensed version of some the work that will be undertaken over the coming months, and is intended to give you a flavour of the role that Dave has been employed to fulfil and the work that he will be undertaking. A more detailed plan is currently being produced and should be available within the next two weeks, subject to approval.

5.3. Dave is looking forward to working with Tenants, Members, Leaseholders, other residents and the staff of LB Harrow to help develop the Housing Business Plan and to making a contribution towards the Council achieving its Housing Ambitions.

### **Section 3 – Further Information**

6. All relevant information is contained within the report.

### **Section 4 – Financial Implications**

7. Financial matters are integral to the report.

### **Section 5 – Corporate Priorities**

8. The content in this report informs tenants, leaseholders and residents of the role of the new Housing Finance Business Partner and gives a flavour of the type of work he will be engaged in over the next few months and supports the corporate priority of 'united and involved communities' by engaging more effectively with residents.

Name: Roger Hampson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 25/04/12		

### **Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** Dave Roberts, Housing Finance Business Partner  
Direct 0208 420 9678

**Background Papers:**  
None



**London Borough of Harrow  
Housing Business Plan  
2012-2042**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Input required from:</b>
<b>Foreword by ...</b>	
<b>Executive Summary</b>	
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1.1 What is the Business?	
1.2 Why do we need a business plan?	
1.3 How has it been developed?	
<b>Section 2 – Aims and Objectives</b>	<b>Lynne + All</b>
2.1 The Council's vision for the service	
2.2 Key priorities and their link to the business plan	
2.3 Sub-regional housing strategy	
2.4 Continuous improvement	
2.5 Information sources	
<b>Section 3 – The Housing Service</b>	<b>Dave/All</b>
3.1 The Council's role	
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3.3 Services delivered and other key functions	
<b>Section 4 – The Changing Environment</b>	<b>Alison/Jane/Jon</b>
4.1 Internal and external influences	
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4.5 Contribution to corporate objectives	
4.6 Key statistics	
4.7 Supply and demand	
<b>Section 5 –Co regulation and Resident Involvement</b>	<b>Maggie/Toni</b>
5.1 Resident involvement framework	
5.2 Involving stakeholders in priority setting	

- Section 6 –Housing Stock Condition** **Derek**
- 6.1 Future investment need (Stock condition survey and data)
  - 6.2 Improving the housing assets (30 year Housing Asset Management Strategy)
  - 6.3 Repairs and maintenance
  - 6.4 Ensuring Value for Money through procurement
- Section 7 – Performance** **All**
- 7.1 Performance management structure
  - 7.2 Developing people
  - 7.3 Decision making process
- Section 8 – Financial Resources** **Dave, plus housing finance**
- 8.1 The HRA Business Model 2012-42
  - 8.2 The Housing General Fund Business Model 2012-42
- Section 9 – Governance** **All**
- 9.1 Current arrangements
  - 9.2 Key stakeholders
  - 9.2 Available options
- Section 10 – Future Actions** **All, pulled together by Lynne**
- 10.1 Action Plan

**Appendices**

**REPORT FOR: Tenants', Leaseholders' and Residents' Consultative Forum**

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Date of Meeting: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2012

Subject: **INFORMATION REPORT – Resident Services Manager’s Report and feedback from other Council led Resident Involvement Activities**

Responsible Officer: Lynne Pennington  
Divisional Director of Housing Services

Exempt: No

Enclosures: None

### **Section 1 – Summary**

This joint report sets out a range of information items that the Resident Services Manager would like to bring to the attention of the Tenants', Leaseholders' and Residents' Consultative Forum and provides feedback following discussions and questions raised at previous TLRCF meetings. It also provides feedback to TLRCF on a wide range of Council led service specific and service wide resident involvement activities.

**FOR INFORMATION**

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **2.0 Updates from previous discussions and new items for information**

#### **Leasehold Services**

##### **Performance**

**2.1** The Leasehold Team continues to improve performance in the collection of money due. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March service charge arrears are £69,648.40 and £17,467.43 for major works. Performance targets were exceeded by more than £30,000 in 2011/12 where the year end target was to reduce service charge arrears to £100,000.

##### **Information**

**2.2** The West London Housing Directors Group asked Harrow Council to host an initial meeting to explore Leasehold Services: Joint Working between West London Boroughs, with a view to achieving efficiency savings. The meeting took place on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2012. However there is a wide range of different structures and arrangements in place in each of the West London Boroughs to provide services to leaseholders. In addition there is a clear need for local knowledge to be utilised to deal with specific leaseholder queries, and for service charge calculation, billing and collection. The group is therefore recommending to the West London Directors Group that there is no merit in exploring joint working further at this stage.

**2.3** The Leasehold Team issued ground rent notifications this year in advance of the actual demands being issued. A number of complaints were received about this being a waste of money. However it is a legal requirement to send out notification of the ground rent in March. The actual demands will be sent out within the next 30 days.

**2.4** Another legal requirement is for leaseholders to be provided annually with details of the insurance cover provided. To comply with the FSA regulations all leaseholders will receive details of the Council's buildings insurance cover during April.

#### **Tenancy Management**

##### **Anti Social Behaviour Success**

**2.5** TLRCF Members may be interested in a successful outcome to a long running ASB complaint- using a technique called shuttle mediation. Our colleagues in the Corporate Community Safety Team undertook this form of mediation on our behalf on the case which was essentially a situation where two neighbours, one a tenant and one a leaseholder had stopped talking to each other, originally over an issue with a skip. This escalated into a serious neighbour dispute and led to many complaints to housing staff regarding noise and the behaviour of children in both families.

**2.6** Mediation is often used for neighbour disputes where both parties agree to sit down a talk about their complaints together and can be successful. However in this case things had deteriorated so badly the people concerned refused to even meet together. So instead the mediators met with each party separately and listened to all the complaints from both sides. They then proposed a solution, which with some negotiation was acceptable to both sides.

**2.7** A mediation document was then drawn up which both families have agreed to follow, meaning that no further complaints should arise. This is our first success using this type of mediation, and it is time consuming but if the outcome is as we hope to have ended a long running neighbourhood dispute and a great deal of officer time dealing with complaints it will have been worthwhile.

### **Financial Inclusion Awareness Roadshow**

**2.8** On Wednesday 18 April various services and partners joined forces to hold this session for tenants and leaseholders living in the Harrow Weald area.

**2.9** Income Management, Leasehold Services, Resident Involvement, Tenant Resident Association, Housing Benefits, Harrow Insurance Services, Excite, Credit Union, My Harrow Account, Housing Needs (Under Occupation), A2 Dominion & the Citizens Advice Bureau were all present to provide a financial service in line with the governments Financial Inclusion Agenda. From 6.30-8.30 all the services displayed their wares at Cedars School, Harrow Weald. Disappointingly the attendance from Harrow tenants and leaseholders was low but this can be attributed, at least in part to the appalling weather. A2 Dominion had one customer.

**2.10** This session was the first of four road shows Resident Services will lead on for this year. It is hoped that we can ensure an increased turnout to future events and are working with the Federation to make the events more successful.

### **Digital Switch Over**

**2.11** At the time of writing this report we have not received any complaints about the switch over from our tenants or leaseholders. This would indicate that the publicity and guidance from Housing Services has paid dividends.

### **Tenancy Strategy**

**2.12** Every Local Authority has to have an agreed and published Tenancy Strategy by 15 January 2013 under Social Housing Tenure Reform. An officer project team has been set up to draw together Harrow's strategy, taking on board the views of TLRCF members at earlier discussions on the housing changes. Once we have a draft document consultation will take place with all tenants. This will include consultation on whether we should now use Introductory Tenancies, a decision we previously put on hold pending this strategy being developed.

## **Tenancy Fraud**

2.13 Work continues in this area and progress continues to be made. One figure that clearly demonstrates this is that 31.2% of our stock received tenancy audits between April 2011 and March 2012.

2.14 Although the Department for Communities and Local Government is monitoring the performance of Local Authorities in this area, there are concerns nationally that Registered Providers (Housing Associations) are not delivering in the area of social housing fraud in partnership with Local Authorities. Karen Connell, our lead on Tenancy Fraud is re launching the invite to Harrow Registered Providers with the support of the Chartered Institute of Housing. Properties recovered by Local Authorities and Registered Providers can all be offered to homeless families hence the need for partnership working.

## **Estates Services and Sheltered Housing**

### **Sheltered Housing Modernisation**

2.15 Formal consultation with Tenants and staff closed on 5th March 2012. Feedback was largely positive and we received some ideas from both staff and Tenants that could lead to amendments to our original proposal. Unfortunately, we were unable to discuss these ideas with colleagues in the Finance Department until 17th April and this has caused a delay in formulating a final proposal for consideration by the Members Policy Task Group and the Tenant, Leaseholder and Residents Consultative Forum. (If these groups approve the proposals in principle final approval would then need to be given by Cabinet.) We will keep Tenants and staff informed of developments and will present our final proposal to the TLRCF as soon as possible.

## **3. Resident Involvement and Activities**

3.1 A meeting was held on the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup> April 2012 to monitor progress with the Resident Engagement Review action plan and for the group to receive updates. Good progress had been made with the plan with a number of actions being in progress or completed before the target dates. Achievements so far are namely:

- Draft revised constitutions are in place
- A suite of advice and procedure notes are in draft to be approved by the Editorial Board
- Estate representative profile and criteria agreed
- Work has commenced on drafting a Resident Involvement Strategy
- A draft tenant, leaseholder and resident training plan has been developed
- The involvement database has been refreshed and now truly reflects those with an interest in engagement
- Dedicated Resident Involvement section within Homing In

The Resident Involvement Team is continuing to work on a number of

initiatives that arise from the actions within the plan.

**3.2** The Resident Involvement Team hosted a TRA Get Together on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2012. The event was attended by over 30 residents. A young person from the Youth Service acted as Master of Ceremonies and presentations were given by young people residing on our estates about what involvement means for them. The feedback forms have now been analysed and the event highly praised for its diverse and interesting content. A further event is planned for the autumn of this year.

**3.3** The team hope to raise the profile of involvement with young people further and are attending a meeting of the Youth Parliament on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2012 to make a presentation.

### **Estates Services Steering Group (ESSG)**

**3.4** The last ESSG meeting was held on the 1st March 2012 and included discussions on Grounds Maintenance and the proposal to introduce a mix of static & mobile caretakers. Dave Corby from Public Realm attended and a large proportion of the meeting was taken up with grounds maintenance issues.

The next meeting is on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2012 and the agenda will include updates on the above mentioned topics along with recharging for bulk clearance, which we didn't have time to cover at the last meeting.

### **Housing Editorial Board**

**3.5** The Housing Editorial Board has not met since the last TLRCF report.

### **Value for Money Group**

**3.6** The Value for Money sub group met on 24<sup>th</sup> April. Discussions included the ongoing challenge to the level of Support Services Charges made to the Housing Revenue Account and Dave Roberts, our new Finance Business partner explained his initial work programme and how his work would involve the group. A detailed discussion also took place on the future of the group and how it could work in partnership with tenant scrutiny panel once it was established.

### **Developing Tenant Scrutiny**

**3.7** A tenant scrutiny and co-regulation awareness raising session was held on the 13<sup>th</sup> April 2012 and facilitated by Housing Quality Network Ltd (HQN) The event was attended by staff, Members, currently involved residents but also new tenants who had expressed an interest in the scrutiny process. The session was very informative and tenants expressed a desire to be further involved. Resident Services will now be working with Members, Corporate colleagues and residents to develop the next stages.

## **HFTRA Scrutiny and Challenge Panel**

**3.8** The HFTRA Scrutiny and Challenge Panel is due to meet again on 31<sup>st</sup> May. An update from that meeting will be provided to a future TLRCF

## **Section 4 – Further Information**

**4.1** Resident Involvement review and action plan updates will be provided to the next meeting of TLRCF.

**4.2** Progress with Scrutiny and Co-regulation updates will be provided to the next meeting of TLRCF.

**4.3** Progress with Leasehold Services: Joint Working between West London Boroughs will be reported to the next meeting of TLRCF.

## **Section 5 - Financial Implications**

**5.1** Any financial issues are contained within the body of the report and any service improvement issues that arise as a result of residents ideas and suggestions will be considered within the relevant service area budget.

## **Section 6 - Equalities Implications**

**6.1** There are no equalities implications associated with this report  
No Equality Impact Assessments have been carried out.

## **Section 7– Corporate Priorities**

**7.1** All of the above contribute to the corporate priorities, in particular:

- Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe.
- United and involved communities: A Council that listens and leads.
- Supporting and protecting people who are most in need.

Name: Milan Joshi

on behalf of the  
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> April 2012

## **Section 8 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

### **Contact:**

Maggie Challoner  
Resident Services Manager  
Tel: 020 8424 2473



Email: [Maggie.challoner@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:Maggie.challoner@harrow.gov.uk)

**Background Papers:** None

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**REPORT FOR: TENANTS'  
LEASEHOLDERS' and  
RESIDENTS'  
CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

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**Date of Meeting:** 10<sup>th</sup> May 2012

**Subject:** INFORMATION REPORT – Asset Management Update

**Responsible Officer:** Lynne Pennington – Divisional Director of Housing Services

**Exempt:** No

**Enclosures:** Yes

- Draft Fencing Plan
- The Repairs Charter

## **Section 1 – Summary**

This report sets out to update the forum on progress made in the Asset Management Team on the repairs procurement exercise, client side restructure, Milmans Close, the repairs charter, performance and the draft future investment plans.

### **For Information**

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **Procurement update**

#### 2.1

In March 2012 the Cabinet approved the awarding of the response repairs contracts to the following contractors:

- Harrow East – Linbrook Services Limited
- Harrow Central – Slade (London) Limited
- Harrow West – Linbrook Services Limited

In April 2012 the Cabinet awarded the 3 star gas maintenance contracts to the following contractors:

- Harrow Rented Housing – Quality Heating Systems Limited
- Harrow Corporate / Communal / Sheltered – T Brown Group Limited.

Both the new contracts will come in to place from the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012. Detailed mobilisation plans have been put in to place to ensure the effective transfer of the service from the current supplier to the new suppliers, which may allow for the new contractors to start partial service delivery during June.

#### 2.2

A small group of tenants, leaseholders and residents have played a key role in the customer service and service quality aspects of the contractor selection process.

#### 2.3

The procurement of the framework contracts to deliver the planned investment works, such as kitchen and bathroom renewals is underway and it is planned to submit the contract award proposals to the Cabinet in July 2012.

### **Client Side update**

#### 2.4

As previously reported to the TLRCF with the change of contractors the council is required to strengthen the client side so we can carryout a number of functions currently done by Kier Services and to better manage the contracts, which customers have told us is a priority.

#### 2.5

The AMT team is to grow from 27 to 34 roles and the new structure has been agreed and staff consulted. However the process has been delayed as agreement could not be reached with one of the unions over the job evaluation process and the council's change management process requires an appeal session to be organised. This will take place at the end of April and a verbal update on progress will be given at the meeting.

## **Milmans Close**

### 2.6

At the TLRCF meeting in February 2012 a number of issues were raised concerning the above scheme in relation to leaseholder charges and completed works, especially concerning gutter clearance and tree management. It was agreed the Head of Asset Management would investigate the issues, meet residents on site and report back to the May 2012 meeting. The site meeting took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

### 2.7

The issues raised at the site meeting included:

- The trees at the rear are council owned, need pruning and when the leaves block the gutters and downspouts the leaseholders are charged for the cost of removing.
- There a number of loose waste pipes outside number 38
- The rear balconies do not allow access to the gardens
- Residents are concerned at the power usage on the scheme
- Front gardens were never reinstated after path works
- The steps to the front are not safe

### 2.8

In response to this inspection the following has been agreed:

- Resources have been made available to treat / prune the trees, however they are on land managed by the Parks Department and permissions have been sought from them to complete the work.
- An order has been raised to replace and fix the waste pipes
- The rear balconies will be address in the 12/13 capital investment programme
- A review of power usage has been ordered.
- The front garden areas will be tidied and either turf or astro turf laid
- The steps at the front will be reassessed as part of the 12/13 capital works.

A verbal update on progress will be given at the meeting.

## **The Repairs Charter**

### 2.9

The TLRCF have previously been consulted on the proposed Repairs Charter which subject to Cabinet approval on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2012 will be implemented when the new contracts come in to operation on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012.

### 2.10

Following the wide consultation a number of changes have been made to improve the charter and a copy of the final version is attached to this report for information.

## **Performance**

### 2.11

#### Response Repairs

The performance scorecard for Asset Management shows at the end of February 2012 that the overall satisfaction with works carried out in their homes was 89% and above the 88% target.

The number of repairs complete on the first visit was 80.03% against a target of 82% and the number of job recalls had reduced from 15.45% to 10.63%, but still above the target of 5%

### 2.12

#### Gas Safety

Health and Safety of the council's tenants is a top priority and gas safety is a key element of this obligation. The council has a target of 100% of all properties with a gas supply to have a current gas safe certificate (CP 12). At the end of March 2012 99.42% had the required certificate. 23 properties have not had a certificate for longer than a month and were actively being pursued via the no access policy.

## **Future Investment Plans**

### 2.13

#### Fencing

Enclosed with the report is a draft fencing renewal plan for 12/13. This is a new programme and £100,000 has been set aside for the works. The data held on fencing condition is lacking in some aspects and therefore the programme has been built up based on previous surveys and feedback from Housing Officers and Inspectors. The programme is split in to two phases with Phase 1 being the main priority for the year. Phase 2 is a back up list which might be completed if the budget allows or any Phase 1 scheme does not go ahead following validations / consultation.

### 2.14

#### Capital Investment Plans 12/13

It was hoped to bring the draft 12/13 Capital Investments plan to the TLRCF in this report. However this has not proved possible due to the accounting changes to the Housing Revenue Account. In previous years any under spend would be carried forward in to the following year, however the borrowing limit has prevented this from happening and until the exact year end position is clarified and the budget availability agreed the programme cannot be formulated.

A verbal update will be given at the meeting.

## **Financial Implications**

### **3.1**

The report has highlighted the following financial implications:

- The procurement of the new repairs and gas contracts and the AMT restructure, which have cabinet and project board approval
- The repairs charter will mean greater investment in the council's stock which will be funded via reduced costs of the new contracts and extra resources made available following HRA reform
- 12/13 investment plans have been produced within the guidelines given for the annual budget

## **Equalities implications**

### **4.1**

Equality Impact Assessments have been carried out for the repairs procurement and the Asset Management Team restructure.

## **Corporate Priorities**

### **5.1**

Please identify which corporate priority the report incorporates and how:

- Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe: The repairs charter and the new repairs contracts
- United and involved communities: A council that listens and leads: Tenants, Leaseholders and Residents being part of the new contractor selection. Response to the issues at Milmans Close
- Supporting and protecting people who are most in need: The repairs charter
- Supporting our town centre, our local shopping centres and businesses: Appointment of local contractors and use of local suppliers for parts.

### **Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance**

Name: Roger Hampson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 25 April 2012		

### **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact: Derek Stewart – Head of Asset Management  
0208 424 1075 or 07919 697637**

**Background Papers: none**



**fencing**  
 Filter used: Property Type Like %Block% AND Property Type <=> Gar Block  
 Results for 392 properties listed

Block/House name	Street 1	Postcode	UPRN	Fences MATERIAL	Fences MATERIAL Install Date	Fences MATERIAL Remaining Life	Secondary Fencing MATERIAL	Secondary Fencing MATERIAL Install Date	Secondary Fencing MATERIAL Remaining Life	Phase
302-316 (evens)	Alexandra Avenue	HA2 9DA	212079		/ /		POST AND WIRE	01/01/89	2	1
1-8 Naresby Fold	Bernays Close	HA7 4AZ	205416		/ /		Close Boarded	01/01/98	-3	1
47-57a (odds)	Binyon Crescent	HA7 3NE	211219		/ /		Close Boarded	01/01/90	2	1
31-41a (odds)	Binyon Crescent	HA7 3ND	211207		/ /		Close Boarded	01/01/90	2	1
Belmont Lodge	Blackwell Close	HA3 6JX	207933		/ /		POST AND WIRE	01/01/79	2	1
357-367	Burnt Oak Broadway	HA8 5AW	206587		/ /		POST AND WIRE	01/01/88	2	1
297-303	Christchurch Avenue	HA3 5BB	206331		/ /		POST AND WIRE	01/01/88	2	1
305-311	Christchurch Avenue	HA3 5BB	206343		/ /		CHAIN LINK	01/01/88	2	1
74-80	Clifton Road	HA3 9NS	209151		/ /		Close Boarded	01/01/80	-3	1
66-72	Clifton Road	HA3 9NS	209149		/ /		Close Boarded	01/01/80	-3	1
82-88	Clifton Road	HA3 9NS	209163		/ /		Close Boarded	01/01/80	-3	1
58-64	Clifton Road	HA3 9NS	209137		/ /		Close Boarded	01/01/80	-3	1
15-28	Cowen Avenue	HA2 0LU	210667		/ /		CHAIN LINK	01/01/78	-3	1
41-47	Ellement Close	HA5 1EP	206408		/ /		CHAIN LINK	01/01/58	2	1
65-71	Ellement Close	HA5 1EP	206422		/ /		CHAIN LINK	01/01/58	2	1
49-63	Ellement Close	HA5 1EP	206410		/ /		CHAIN LINK	01/01/78	7	1
97-175	Hazeldene Drive	HA5 3NR	212328		/ /		Close Boarded	01/01/75	2	1
Durrant Court	High Road	HA3 5EE	208066		/ /		Close Boarded	01/01/83	-2	1
29-33	Hornbuckle Close	HA2 0YA	210710		/ /		Close Boarded	01/01/80	1	1
19-26	Howards Close	HA5 3UQ	213073		/ /		Other	01/01/68	-3	1
43-48	Howards Close	HA5 3UQ	213097		/ /		Other	01/01/68	-3	1
27-42	Howards Close	HA5 3UQ	213085		/ /		Other	01/01/68	-3	1
1-23	Juxon Close	HA3 5NN	212938		/ /		Other	01/01/80	2	1
687-687A	Kenton Lane	HA3 6AS	211647		/ /		Other	01/01/95	2	1
34-45	Stonegrove Gardens	HA8 7TD	212213		/ /		CHAIN LINK	01/01/78	-2	1
18-33	Stonegrove Gardens	HA8 7TD	212201		/ /		POST AND WIRE	01/01/88	2	1
Grahame White House	Warneford Road	HA3 9JH	210411		/ /		CHAIN LINK	01/01/90	-4	1
21-27	Whittington Way	HA5 5JS	205466		/ /		CHAIN LINK	01/01/80	-4	1
11-19	Whittington Way	HA5 5JS	205454		/ /		CHAIN LINK	01/01/90	-1	1
3-9	Whittington Way	HA5 5JS	205442		/ /		CHAIN LINK	01/01/90	-1	1
29-35	Whittington Way	HA5 5JS	205478		/ /		CHAIN LINK	01/01/90	-1	1
37-43	Whittington Way	HA5 5JS	205480		/ /		CHAIN LINK	01/01/90	-3	1
45-51	Whittington Way	HA5 5JS	205492		/ /		CHAIN LINK	01/01/90	-2	1
71-77	Whittington Way	HA5 5JU	205519		/ /		CHAIN LINK	01/01/90	-1	1
9-20	Wood Close	HA1 4AS	210265		/ /		Other	01/01/78	-3	1
18-32	Augustine Road	HA3 5NP	212873		/ /		Other	01/01/80	7	2

34-48	Augustine Road	HA3 5NP	212885	//		CHESTNUT PALLING	01/01/96	5	2
2-16	Augustine Road	HA3 5NW	212861	//		CHESTNUT PALLING	01/01/96	5	2
166-166A	Camrose Avenue	HA8 6BX	211453	//		POST AND WIRE	01/01/98	7	2
43-43A	Dudley Gardens	HA2 0DQ	211518	//		Other	01/01/97	7	2
45-67	Elmgrove Crescent	HA1 2QT	212691	//		Close Boarded	01/01/96	2	2
9-9A	Gloucester Road	HA1 4PP	211556	//		Close Boarded	01/01/99	-4	2
Thomas Hewlett House	Hartington Close	HA1 3RJ	207983	//		Other	01/01/96	7	2
1-30	Honeypot Close	NW9 9RA	212108	//		TIMBER PANEL	01/01/89	7	2
14-25	Kipling Place	HA7 3NG	211295	//		Close Boarded	01/01/90	2	2
72-94	Lower Road	HA2 0DH	212275	//		CHAIN LINK	01/01/91	1	2
38-53	Milman Close	HA5 3LF	212457	//		Close Boarded	01/01/78	2	2
1-12	Milman Close	HA5 3LF	212421	//		CHAIN LINK	01/01/80	7	2
26-37	Milman Close	HA5 3LF	212445	//		CHAIN LINK	01/01/80	7	2
14-25	Milman Close	HA5 3LF	212433	//		CHAIN LINK	01/01/80	7	2
123-131A	Northolt Road	HA2 0LX	210825	//		Close Boarded	01/01/97	7	2
133-151	Northolt Road	HA2 0LX	210837	//		Close Boarded	01/01/97	7	2
115-121A	Northolt Road	HA2 0LX	210813	//		Close Boarded	01/01/97	7	2
153-171	Northolt Road	HA2 0LX	210849	//		Close Boarded	01/01/97	7	2
137-137A	Park Lane	HA2 8NN	211685	//		POST AND WIRE	01/01/79	2	2
1-9	Rickmansworth Road	HA5 3TG	207373	//		Other	01/01/78	2	2
1-12	Stuart Avenue	HA2 9BB	209187	//		CHESTNUT PALLING	01/01/98	7	2
1-12	Stuart Avenue	HA2 9BB	209199	//		Close Boarded	01/01/98	7	2
1-12	Stuart Avenue	HA2 9BB	209204	//		CHESTNUT PALLING	01/01/98	7	2
2A-2H	Theobald Crescent	HA3 5NB	212964	//		Other	01/01/80	7	2
76-76A	Warham Road	HA3 7HZ	211776	//		Close Boarded	01/01/98	2	2
1-8 Kenilworth House	Wolverton Road	HA7 2SS	204723	//		TIMBER PANEL	01/01/97	2	2

# London Borough of Harrow

## The Repairs Charter

### What is a repairs charter?

It is the guide to repairs, service and standards for tenants of Harrow Council.

We aim to provide a repairs service that:

- Meets the high standards you expect
- Is cost effective and within budget
- Safeguards the future of your home
- Protects the environment
- Meets our statutory and contractual repairing obligations

To meet these aims we will:

- Consult with tenants about our service
- Carry out repairs quickly and in one visit whenever possible
- Arrange appointments to carry out the work at a time that suits you
- Set a high standard of quality of work
- Listen to any problems about repairs and try to put them right
- Keep our spending within agreed budgets
- Consider the environmental impact of products we use
- At all times put the health and safety of our tenants first
- Publish information on how we are performing

### How will the repair people behave in my home?

We understand the importance of respecting your home and belongings and we have adopted the following code of practice:

The person inspecting or carrying out repairs will:

- Treat you and your home with respect and be polite and courteous to you at all times
- Visit your home and carry out any work at a time that suits you and by prior arrangement
- Introduce themselves and provide identification, before entering your home
- Check for any special arrangements e.g. children, pets etc
- Explain the nature of the work to be carried out and any safety issues involved
- Not enter your home if it appears that there are unsupervised children at home under the age of 18
- Keep your home safe in so far as it is reasonably practicable to do so by the person inspecting or carrying out repairs to your home
- Work tidily and clear away all unused materials at the end of each working day
- Only use your electricity, gas, telephone or water if you have given them permission
- Use clean dust sheets on all occasions and clean away all rubbish

- Not smoke in your home, use radio equipment or leave tools and equipment where they are a hazard
- Respect your privacy and confidential information
- Respond to special requests e.g. if English is not your first language or you have a disability / vulnerability.

### How do I report a repair?

You can report a repair or make enquires by:

- Calling Access Harrow on 0208 901 2630 [9am – 5 pm Monday to Friday]
- Emailing us at [housing@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:housing@harrow.gov.uk)
- Going to our website at [www.harrow.gov.uk](http://www.harrow.gov.uk)
- Requesting a repair in writing or visit our offices
- Telling any member of our housing staff
- Calling our out of hours emergency repairs on 0800 614 456

Which ever method you use to report a repair our staff will need to know as much detail as possible, so we can provide a quick solution for you. Within 3 hours of you reporting the repair our contractors will call you to make an appointment that is convenient to you, this will be 30 minutes for emergency repairs. Please ensure you tell them about any special arrangements to gain access to your home. We will also give you a unique reference number for all reported repairs

### What if I have special needs?

If you have special needs or are a vulnerable tenant, we may schedule the repairs faster than normal. We encourage you to tell us about any special circumstances when you report a fault so that we can prioritise it correctly.

You should ensure that you tell our staff about any disability, such as hearing or mobility restrictions, so that they can make special arrangements [e.g. knock louder or allow longer for the door to be opened] and we will record this information for all future repairs.

### Repair Priorities

Your repairs will be carried out within the following timescales or an appointment time which is more convenient to you:

- **Emergency repairs** - **Priority 1** within 4 hours
- **Urgent repairs** - **Priority 2** within 1-5 working days
- **Non – urgent repairs** - **Priority 3** within 1-20 working days
- **Batch repairs** - **Priority 4** within 90 days we will review/complete subject to funding.

### **What are emergency repairs?**

An emergency repair is any defect that is either an immediate danger to your safety, security or health or something that may lead to serious damage to the property. This could include the following:

- Gas leak
- Loss of water
- Burst pipe / flooding
- Loss of power
- Unsafe electrics
- Unusable toilet if only one in the home
- Unsecured ground floor window or door
- Offensive or racist graffiti
- Dangerous glazing in doors and windows

### **What are urgent repairs?**

These are defects that may cause discomfort, inconvenience or nuisance to you or a third party, but are not a risk to you or the property. This could include the following:

- Blocked drains, sinks, baths or toilets [where there is a second toilet]
- Heating faults
- Minor electrical faults
- Roof leaks
- Entry phone failure
- Defective cistern / overflow
- Faulty communal TV aerial

### **What are Non – urgent repairs?**

These are defects that are not likely to cause serious discomfort, inconvenience or nuisance to you or a third party. This could include the following;

- Repairs to doors, windows and floors
- Repairs to external walls and paths
- Clearing down pipes and gutters
- Repairs to plasterwork
- Repairs to kitchen fittings
- Minor plumbing faults

### **What are batch repairs?**

These are repairs that the council would like to complete but are low priority when there is competing demands from Priority 1, Priority 2 and Priority 3 and a limited budget. Each quarter the council will review the demand and subject to funds being available will batch the work in to one package and engage the contractor to complete. This could include:

- Fence repair / replacement
- Gate repair / replacement
- Tree pruning

## **Inspections**

In order to ensure we complete as many repairs as possible on the first attempt we may need to carry out an inspection to determine what level of work is required. Also to ensure the quality of the work we will inspect a number of completed repairs. In both instances we will require access to your home at a mutually convenient time.

We will also operate a telephone satisfaction survey for 20% of completed repairs as soon as possible after completion.

## **Do I have a “Right to Repair”?**

The “Right to Repair” scheme (as laid out in the Right to Repair Regulations 1994) gives you the right to have certain emergency or urgent repairs done quickly and to be paid compensation if we fail to do it within a reasonable timeframe.

To be eligible for this, a repair must be what is known as a qualifying repair. This means:

- It is classed as an emergency or urgent repair
- It has an estimated value of less than £250
- We have failed to complete the repair within the set timescales
- You have provided reasonable access arrangements

Further details on this scheme are available on the Governments website [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

## **Can I improve my home?**

You have the right to carry out your own improvements such as installing extra heating or a shower. However you must ask Harrow Council and get written agreement before you start the work for any improvement that could affect the structure / services of the building. We may apply some reasonable conditions when giving permission, but we will not refuse permission without good reason.

## **Will you charge me for any repairs?**

If you, your family or friends have caused damage to your property and this was not the result of normal wear and tear, you must repair the damage or we will charge you for doing the repair. If you are unable to pay the full amount, arrangements can be made for you to pay by instalments.

If you have been the victim of criminal damage, we will pay for the damage to be repaired, as long as you have a valid crime reference number from the police.

We do not repair or replace your personal or household goods and we would strongly recommend that you take out insurance to cover such failures. The council has negotiated an

insurance scheme for tenants, which can be paid weekly. Details are available on the council's website [www.harrow.gov.uk](http://www.harrow.gov.uk) - The recharge costs will include:

- A call out fee
- Cost of the works in full including VAT
- An admin fee of 10%

### **What if I lose my house keys?**

To avoid problems arising from loss of keys we strongly recommend that you leave a spare set of keys with family, friends or neighbours.

If you lose your keys, or get locked out you will be charged for any costs associated with gaining access to your home. This may include:

- A call out fee
- Cost of replacing all locks including VAT
- Cost of repairing any associated damage to the door / frame including VAT
- An admin fee of 10%

If you do call us to attend a lock out we will attend ASAP, however you may have to wait for this service as any other emergency repairs will be dealt with before dealing with lock outs.

### **Are there any restrictions on the repair service?**

We expect all tenants who rent a property from the council to take responsibility to ensure they, or their visitors do not cause any damage or misuse the property and when they give up the tenancy, the property is returned in a good clean condition with no rubbish.

There are a small number of circumstances where the repairs service may be limited to emergencies and "Right to Repair", they include:

- You have missed 3 consecutive appointments for repairs when you have agreed the appointment time
- The repair is due to be completed as part of a planned investment programme
- You have a proven history of violent or abusive behaviour towards staff, our contractors, or other residents.
- You have started the right to buy process
- An abandonment notice has been issued
- You are refusing to give access for the annual gas service
- You have seriously neglected to look after the property either internally, externally or both

You have the right to appeal against any decision to limit the service through our complaints / compliments process.

## Mutual Exchanges

In the event of you agreeing a mutual exchange an inspection will be completed prior to approval to ensure the property is in an acceptable condition. You will need to put right any damage or unauthorised work before you can exchange.

## What is planned investment and how will this affect repairs?

If your home is due to have planned investment work done in the near future [such as a new kitchen or bathroom], we will only carry out repairs if the fault:

- Is an emergency
- Poses a health and safety risk to you or visitors
- Is covered by the “right to repair”
- Is unrelated to the planned works
- Is causing serious inconvenience to you or visitors
- Is likely to cause further damage to the property

## What are the arrangements for servicing heating systems?

Each year we will need to carry out servicing works on all gas and some electric appliances. At the time they are required we will contact you to arrange an appointment that is convenient to you. Under current law we have a duty to inspect and ensure all gas appliances within your home are safe to use on an annual basis.

**You must allow us reasonable access to your home to carry out this safety check. Failure to respond to two appointment notices will result in the council taking legal action to force entry and you could be liable to pay the council’s costs of obtaining entry to your home.**

## What service standards can I expect?

We are committed to improving the customer experience in the delivery of the repairs service. It is important to us that you are fully satisfied with the service. You can expect the following:

- When calling Access Harrow we aim to answer 90% of calls within 30 seconds
- The contractor will make an appointment with you within 3 hours of your call, this will be fast tracked for emergency repairs to 30 minutes
- We keep 90% of appointments made
- At least 95% of tenants are satisfied with the service
- We will inspect at least 10% of works after completion.
- Tenant and Leaseholder representatives will be involved in ongoing contractor appraisals
- We will give the utmost importance to any issue that affects the tenants health and safety
- We will take all complaints and service failure seriously and fully investigate them to put them right and learn from them to improve the service
- On average we will let all empty homes within 21 days



- At least 95% satisfaction with any improvement / planned work carried out in your home
- We will provide a range of appointments for a Saturday morning and some evenings for minor repairs
- We will service gas appliances every 12 months
- We will give you a reference number when you report a repair so you can track it's progress
- We will respond to all stage 1 complaints in 10 working days
- We will attempt to complete telephone satisfaction surveys for at least 20% of all repairs

## **Leaseholders**

Each lease can have different obligations and therefore any leaseholder should consult the actual lease agreement for their home, to see who is responsible for which repairs. Leases for the same scheme / block may be different. Generally regarding flats, the council will organise repairs and improvements to the structure of the building and the common parts. For any work costing more than £250 for each individual leaseholder, then Section 20 consultation will be undertaken. The leaseholder will be responsible for the internal repairs and decorations.

In cases of emergency communal repairs such as water / sewage leakage then the council will respond in line with the Priority 1 status and agree the repair liability at a later stage. Again the Health and Safety of the leaseholder is paramount.

A system will be in operation that will allow all leaseholders to view communal repairs for their block / scheme for the previous month, via the council's website [www.harrow.gov.uk](http://www.harrow.gov.uk)

## **Complaints / Compliments**

Anyone who wishes to make a complaint or compliment may do so either:

- In person
- By telephone (0208 901 2630)
- In writing ( by letter, fax, email, using the councils complaint form which is also available online)

Any member of staff will be able to accept a complaint or compliment.

The council operates a 3 stage complaints process. If you are still not happy with how we propose to resolve your complaint after stage 3, you can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman service. Contact details for the Ombudsman are available on their website [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)

## **Who is responsible for which repairs?**

We are not able to list all repairs but the following table is designed to give some guidance on who is responsible for what repairs. This is only intended as general guidance as for instance some items listed under internal repairs will be the responsibility of the leaseholder as opposed to the council.

TYPE OF REPAIR	YOU	HARROW	PRIORITY
<b>Bathroom / Kitchen / Plumbing</b>			
Burst pipes / water escapes		•	P1
Bath panels		•	P3
Bath repairs [wear and tear]		•	P3
Blocked bath / sink / basin		•	P2
Blocked toilet [if only one]		•	P1
Broken toilet seat	•		
Cistern / handles [if only one]		•	P1
Cooker	•		
Cooker socket		•	P2
Kitchen units repair		•	P3
Leaking pipe		•	P1
Loss of water		•	P1
No hot water		•	P2
No water		•	P1
Plugs and chains	•		
Refix loose basin / WC		•	P3
Replace sealant to edge of fittings	•		
Replace tap		•	P2
Shower rail and curtain	•		
Shower repairs [if fitted by Harrow Council]		•	P3
Stopcock repairs		•	P3
Tiled splash back		•	P3
<b>Electrical</b>			
No power		• [Or supplier]	P1
No lights		•	P2
Florescent tubes and starters		•	P2
Light bulbs	•		
Reset tips / fuses	•		
Check electrics after water penetration		•	P1
Repair extractor fan		•	P3
Repair to white goods	•		
Mains powered smoke alarms		•	P2
Part loss of power		•	P2
Sockets cracked or loose		•	P2
Electrical storage heaters [if only heating]		•	P2
Communal lighting		•	P2
<b>General Internal Repairs</b>			
Door bell	•		
Broken handles and latches	•		

Door repairs – wear and tear		•	P3
Locks and keys	•		
Door replacement		•	P3
Internal decorations	•		
Air locks to radiators		•	P3
Unsafe timber, flooring or stair treads		•	P2
Ease windows		•	P3
Internal plaster work		•	P3
Hairline plaster cracks	•		
Hard wired smoke alarms		•	P2
Curtain rails	•		
Carpet / laminated floors	•		
<b>External repairs</b>			
Green houses	•		
CCTV		•	P2
Blocked or leaking drains / sewage		•	P2
Cloth lines or rotary dryers	•		
Strom damage		•	P2
Water penetration		•	P2
Repairs to roofs / gutters/ rain pipes		•	P3
Blocked flue		•	P2
Fences and gates		•	P3
Insecure windows		•	P1
Gardens	•		
Porch / canopy repairs		•	P3
Glazing [if crime number supplied]		•	P2
Walls and masonry repairs		•	P3
Meter doors		•	P3
Failed double glazing seals		•	P3
Manhole cover		• Or provider	P3
Unsafe access paths		•	P2
<b>Gas and Heating</b>			
Total heating failure		•	P2
Part heating failure		•	P3
Gas servicing		•	Annual programme
Make safe		•	P1
Boilers		•	P1/2
<b>General</b>			
Lifts		•	P2
Door entry		•	P2
Fire alarms / emergency lighting		•	P2
Laundry in schemes		•	P3
Tenant improvements	•		


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