

## HOUSING REPRESENTATIVES FORUM

### END OF YEAR REPORT 2018

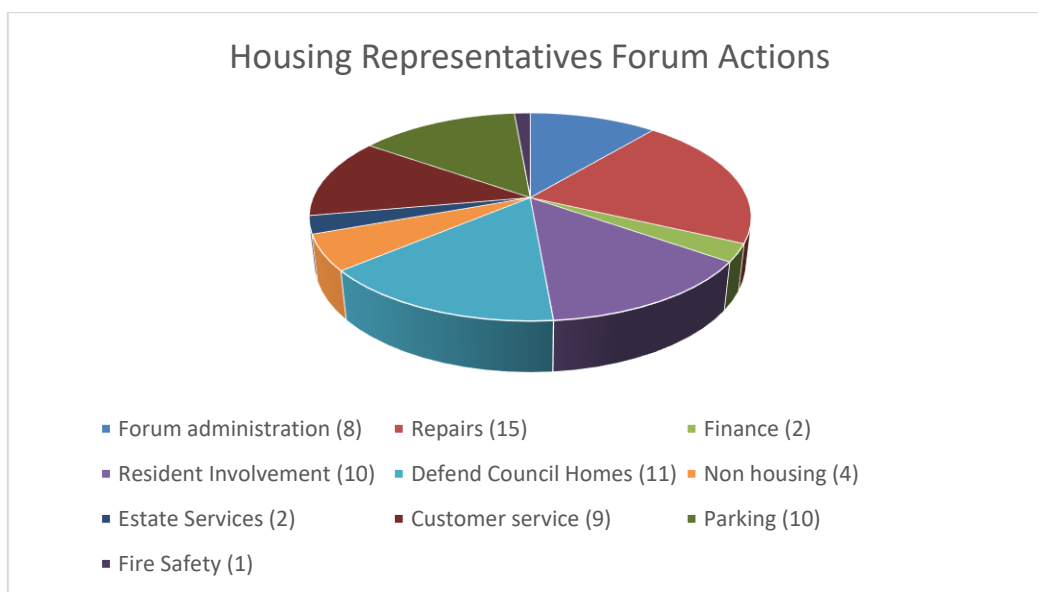
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#### PRESENTED AT THE HOUSING REPRESENTATIVES FORUM ON 11 DECEMBER 2018

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2018 has been another busy and constructive year for the resident-led Housing Representatives Forum. A special thanks to Marilyn Mackie, the Chair of the Forum, and Tom Flynn, the Vice Chair, for their commitment and hard work. Seven meetings have taken place and a very wide range of areas have been discussed.

72 actions have been generated from the discussions that have taken place. This is down from 96 in 2017. A breakdown of the general discussion areas is shown below.



- Forum administration includes corrections to minutes and agenda items for future meetings.
- Resident involvement includes all groups and activities in the resident involvement structure.
- Non-housing covers areas such as the One Place and ultrafast broadband updates
- Customer service includes areas such as the customer contact improvement projects

## **Representation**

There has been an average of 12 resident representatives per forum meeting. This has reduced from an average of 15 resident representatives in 2017. There has been representation from 16 out of 36 TRAs at forum meetings across the year, although some TRAs have only attended once or twice in 2018. This is down from 18 TRAs in 2017.

The estates that have been represented are:

- Ashcroft Square
- Aspen Gardens
- Browning Court
- Charecroft
- Flora Gardens
- Jepson House
- Kelmscott Gardens
- Lancaster Court
- Linacre Court
- Maystar
- Queen Caroline
- Pellant Road
- Springvale
- White City
- William Church
- Yeldham House

There has also been representation from 3 gaps sites, 4 sheltered housing schemes and 4 service improvement groups. This all represents a small increase on 2017.

The Sheltered Housing Schemes that have been represented are:

- Meadowbank Close
- Rowberry
- Cheesemans Terrace
- Vereker Road

The gap sites that have been represented are:

- Ash Lodge
- Milshott Close
- Da Palma Court

**Thank you to all representatives who have attended and worked with us to improve our services.**

## **1. Changes to the repairs service**

### ***What did the forum ask for?***

In October 2018, the forum was updated on the decision to end the Mitie repairs service in April 2019. This is following frequent discussions with forum members that repairs standards and customer services are not where they should be.

### ***What impact has it made?***

Forum members will continue to play a key role in 2019 to shape and develop the new repairs service run by the council under a Direct Labour Organisation.

## **2. Defend Council Housing Unit**

### ***What did the forum ask for?***

The forum wanted to be kept regularly updated on the proposal to safeguard council housing stock and have worked with the DCHU to discuss the outline details of a policy with built in legal mechanisms to do this. The Forum has also been considering the best ways to consult on the draft DCHU policy and will continue this work in 2019.

### ***What impact has it made?***

The regular updates at Forum have enabled representatives to reassure the residents they represent about what is happening and how they can be involved with future decision making.

## **3. Residents Voice**

### ***What did the forum ask for?***

Forum members told us that they found the Borough Forum too formal and not very welcoming for newly involved residents. They also said that a lot of the items being discussed were the same as at other resident meetings.

### ***What impact has it made?***

The first Residents' Voice on 9 October 2018 was attended by over 40 residents and was really well received. Residents worked with officers around the theme of the neighbourhood, with service experts from housing management, estate services, CCTV, and waste and recycling on hand to answer questions and hear from residents about what is working well and what can be improved.

Residents told us they found the session interesting, informal, and engaging. Voting pads also captured feedback on resident priority areas. There are no minutes from the forum – instead an action plan list and a set of visual minutes that was literally

being drawn while the discussions were taking place. These documents can be found [here](#).

The format worked so well, that we will be working with residents to deliver the next forum on 26 March 2019 on the Defend Council Homes Policy and this time we'll be getting residents to help us come up with the voting pad questions.

#### **4. Resident Involvement Governance Project**

##### ***What did the forum ask for?***

The forum asked for a task and finish Governance Project group to be set up to look at all areas of involvement, from how we work with our service improvement groups to how we support the TRAs we work with. Thanks to Dawn, Sue, Kim, Chris, Adriaan, Tony, and Maxine for their help on the group.

##### ***What impact has it made?***

A series of revised and new documents were developed by the Governance Project including a revised constitution template for TRAs, a process for dealing with breaches of the code of conduct, and recommendations for service improvement group and forum membership. It is a credit to the group that when these documents were presented for discussion and agreement at the February and March 2018 HRF meetings that they were all agreed with very few revisions.

#### **5. Resident Involvement Strategy Review**

##### ***What did the forum ask for?***

The forum has worked with us to review the effectiveness of the Resident Involvement Strategy and been involved in monitoring the delivery plan.

##### ***What impact has it made?***

The forum has been instrumental in telling us what has worked well and what could be developed further in terms of involvement. We'll be working closely with forum members to develop a new Resident Involvement Strategy for 2019-2022 from early next year.

#### **6. Parking**

##### ***What did the forum ask for?***

The forum wanted to know how the project to consult on, and then if there was residents support to implement, controlled parking zones across estates and small blocks was progressing. They also wanted to ask questions about parking for carers and smart visitor passes.

##### ***What impact has it made?***

The forum has received regular updates from the Parking Team and been involved in making the RingGo process more straightforward for visitors. The delivery of the

controlled parking programme is in great part due to the work of representatives at the forum telling officers about the issues they were previously encountering.

## **7. Support Surgeries**

### ***What did the forum ask for?***

The forum asked for support surgeries to continue to be held 30 minutes before the forum start time. This is for personal issues to be raised and to help to promote networking between representatives

### ***What impact has it made?***

There has continued to be a decrease in the number of actions which relate to personal matters during forum meetings. Stronger relationships have been built between representatives, council officers, and contractors.

## **8. CCTV**

### ***What did the forum ask for?***

The forum asked us to develop a consultation process when CCTV systems are being proposed for an estate, sheltered housing scheme, or block.

### ***What impact has it made?***

A consultation format was agreed by forum members which has now been sent to over 2000 properties across 6 estates. The consultation responses have helped to show that there is broad support for CCTV installation in a particular area. They are also a chance to capture interest from residents to get involved in their TRA, a service improvement group, or join our mailing list. Consultation reports are uploaded to our recently created [web page](#) to make sure we are being open and transparent about decision making. We've now also worked with the CCTV team to make sure an installation letter is sent out after the consultation stage to let people know before CCTV is installed.

## **9. Ultrafast Broadband Programme**

### ***What did the forum ask for?***

The forum were updated on a programme to install ultrafast broadband to council housing estates and blocks by two companies called Hyperoptic and Community Fibre. Forum members asked for clear and timely communications with residents in areas where surveys and works are due to take place. They also asked the companies to work closely with TRAs to make sure their feedback is taken on board.

### ***What impact has it made?***

Where ultrafast broadband is being installed both Hyperoptic and Community Fibre have pledged to install and supply free broadband to community halls and rooms on an ongoing basis. We will be developing a digital strategy to take into account this project and other digital inclusion initiatives that are happening across the borough.

## **10. Customer Contact Improvement Project**

### ***What did the forum ask for?***

The forum asked for an update on the customer contact improvement project, which is looking at making it easier for residents to get in touch with the right person, team, or the information they need to deal with their service request/enquiry

### ***What impact has it made?***

Forum members heard more about the golden number and asked for a project update to follow on later in the year.

## **11. Fire Safety**

### ***What did the forum ask for?***

A new resident-led Fire Safety Plus Residents Advisory Group (FRAG) was formed soon after the Grenfell Tower fire to work with us on all aspects of fire safety in housing. It has been meeting fortnightly ever since.

### ***What impact has it made?***

Forum members have been updated by FRAG that they have looked at the policy or communal repairs, fire risk assessments, fire safety checks, communications around the stay put policy, the type of housing stock that the council manage and the differing fire safety measures that are needed, fire doors and the Safety-First partnership with the London Fire Brigade.

## **12. Welfare Reform**

### ***What did the forum ask for?***

The forum received an update from the Income Team on welfare reform, including the introduction of universal credit in the borough.

### ***What impact has it made?***

Forum members have a clearer understanding of the support and signposting that we carry out as part of our work with tenants to help them pay their rent and manage their finances.

## **13. Complaints & Members Enquiries**

### ***What did the forum ask for?***

The forum asked for an update on complaints and members' enquiry performance, including a breakdown of enquiry areas and the escalation rate between stage 1 and stage 2 complaints.

### ***What impact has it made?***

Forum members are aware of the areas that the majority of complaints and members enquiries are generated in and want to see a more proactive complaints services that learns from mistakes and takes on board feedback to improve services.

## **14. Growth & Place Update**

### ***What did the forum ask for?***

The forum was informed about the change of department name to Growth & Place to reflect the borough's aspirations to be a great place to live and where economic and community growth go hand in hand.

### ***What impact has it made?***

We'll continue to work with forum members to put this vision into practice across all our areas of work.

## **15. One Place Update**

### ***What did the forum ask for?***

The forum was briefed on the work of One Place to support residents with information and practical guidance to help with budgeting and money matters, including benefits checks.

### ***What impact has it made?***

One Place is keen to do community outreach work with TRAs and made several links at the meeting which may hopefully result in monthly sessions in TRA halls and rooms to support residents.

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