

<b>Item No.</b> 8.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 14 July 2020	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Cabinet
<b>Report title:</b>		The Council's Relationship with Housing Associations – Recommendations of the Housing Scrutiny Commission	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Housing Scrutiny Commission	

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That cabinet note the following recommendations from the housing scrutiny commission arising from the consideration of an item in respect of the council's relationship with housing associations:
  - i. That cabinet is requested to develop clear policy / review existing policy on prioritising issues such as fire safety compliance, residents' satisfaction and other key performance indicators at the point of initiating partnership working with housing associations with a view to possibly developing a service level agreement.
  - ii. That cabinet is requested to investigate the possibility of creating an arbitration panel to deal with serious complaints of service failure within housing associations.
  - iii. That the above recommendations be considered in consultation with the Housing Regulator.
2. That the cabinet request that the relevant cabinet member reports back to cabinet on the recommendations within eight weeks.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The housing scrutiny commission considered an item on the council's relationship with housing associations (attached as Appendix 1). The Commission heard from residents of Clarson House and a local ward councilor for Newington Ward, Councillor Eleanor Kerlake. The residents and the local ward Councillor highlighted concerns around problems with repairs, poor service, poor communication and fire safety issues.
4. It was noted that even with the intervention of MPs and local ward councillors that it had not made a difference to the performance of this particular Housing Association landlord. It was also noted that the failures being reported were not unique to this particular housing association.
5. As part of the ward member's presentation, Councillor Kerlake called upon the commission to consider:
  - How the council could be more muscular in how it was dealing with housing associations and how it was demanding standards for them that

the council would expect for its own council tenants and that the council would expect from private renters as well.

- What the council was demanding at the planning permission stage with housing associations when they are acting as developers and;
  - Whether the council should be supporting residents in putting 'class action' complaints to the Housing Ombudsman.
6. The commission also heard from representatives of Wandle Housing in respect of the issues raised by the residents and local ward councillor. The Commission also heard from council officers, Paul Langford, Director of Resident Services and Perry Singh, Strategy and Business Support Manager in respect of the general issue of the council's relationship with housing associations (see Appendix 1 for further information).
7. In addition to the recommendations to the Cabinet, the commission requested that Wandle Housing attend the next scrutiny commission to provide an update on progress in respect of the issues raised at the meeting.

#### KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

8. It is for the cabinet to decide whether or not to accept the scrutiny commission's recommendations.
9. Overview and scrutiny procedure rule 15.3 requires the cabinet to consider and provide a written response to the report within two months.

#### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Housing Scrutiny Commission agenda and minutes – 9 March 2020	Southwark Council Website	Everton Roberts 020 7525 7221
<b>Link:</b> <a href="http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=56507">http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=56507</a>		

#### APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Report to Housing Scrutiny Commission – The council's relationship with housing associations

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Member</b>	Councillor Gavin Edwards, Chair, Housing Scrutiny Commission		
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Doreen Forrester-Brown, Director of Law and Democracy		
<b>Report Author</b>	Everton Roberts, Head of Overview and Scrutiny (Acting)		
<b>Version</b>	Final		
<b>Dated</b>	2 July 2020		
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No		
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>			
	<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments Included</b>
	Director of Law and Democracy	No	No
	Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
	<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
	<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>		2 July 2020