Residents' Housing Scrutiny Group

Agenda

Date                Wednesday 13th March 2013
Time                7.00 p.m.
Venue               East Ham Town Hall, Committee Room 2

Sir Robin Wales
Mayor of Newham

Chief Executive

For further information contact:
Overview and Scrutiny Unit
Residents' Housing Scrutiny Group - Wednesday 13th March 2013

MEMBERSHIP

Claudia Rabess
Kathy Dryden
Sean Moseley
Mary Klu
Dawn Harris
John Kemp
Stella Damm
Ernest Wilkinson
Councillor Ellie Robinson (Chair)
Councillor John Gray

OFFICERS

RESOURCES:

Luke Byron-Davies, Scrutiny Manager
Members Attendance at Meetings - Statutory Requirements

Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that a Member (councillor) of an authority must attend a meeting of the authority as a whole (i.e. Full Council) at least once every six months. Attendance at a meeting of a committee or sub-committee of Council (Standards Advisory Committee, Local or Strategic Development Committee, Licensing, Overview and Scrutiny, Investment and Accounts and Chief Officers Appointment Committees) would count in lieu of a meeting of the Full Council. Members of the Executive (the Mayor and Cabinet Members) also need to attend a meeting of the Executive i.e. Cabinet at least once every six months.

Attendance at a meeting of an outside body to which a Member has been formally nominated as the Council Representative would also count in lieu of a meeting of the council or one of its committees or sub-committees but not in lieu of attendance at a meeting required by the Executive and Mayor (i.e. Cabinet). The list of outside bodies is appended to the Council’s constitution. As there is no guidance we take the view that these bodies would count, as would attendance at a LEA governor at a school governing body meeting. However Members are strongly advised to seek advice if they intend to rely on attendance at one of these meetings rather than a meeting of the Council.

If you have any queries with regard to this guidance you should contact:

Helen Sidwell (Monitoring Officer) – 020 3373 9231
(E-mail: helen.sidwell@newham.gov.uk)
AGENDA

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Pages 1 - 6)
   This is the time for Members to declare any interest they may have in any matter being considered at this meeting. Advice is attached.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
   Cllr Ellie Robinson (Chair) will lead the welcome and introductions.

3. MINUTES (Pages 7 - 18)

4. UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS (Pages 19 - 20)
   Luke Byron-Davies, Scrutiny Manager will update on past actions.

5. THE FOCUS OF THE MEETING IS CUSTOMER ACCESS (Pages 21 - 26)
   Susan Folwell, Interim Head of Customer Services and John East, Director, Community Infrastructure will present and answer the Group’s questions on Customer Access.

6. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING
   The next meeting will be held on Monday 24 June at 7-9pm. The venue is to be confirmed.
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Members' Declarations of Interest

Matters for Consideration
Revised Guidance – October 2012

The following is offered as a guide to Members. Further details are set out in the Members' Code of Conduct, attached as Part 5.1 of the Council’s Constitution.

1. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) are covered in detail in the Localism Act 2011. Breaches of the law relating to these may be a criminal offence.

1.1 If you have a DPI in any matter on the agenda you must not participate in any discussion or vote on that matter. If you do so without a prior Dispensation (see below) you may be committing a criminal offence, as well as a Breach of the Code of Conduct. The Council’s Constitution requires any Member declaring a DPI to leave the meeting (including any public seating area) during consideration of the matter.

1.2 Members will be asked at the start of the meeting if they have any declarations of interest. The Council’s Code of Conduct requires you to make a verbal declaration of the fact and nature of any DPI. You are also required to declare any DPIs before the consideration of the matter, or as soon as the interest becomes apparent, if you were not aware of it at the start of the meeting.

2. Non-Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Non-Pecuniary Interest

2.1 The Council’s Code of Conduct requires you to make a verbal declaration of the existence and nature of any "Non-Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Non-Pecuniary Interest". Any Member who does not declare these interests in any matter when they apply may be in breach of the Code of Conduct.

2.2 You may have a "Non-Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Non-Pecuniary Interest" in an item of business where:

2.2.1 A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well-being or financial standing, or a member of your family, or a person with whom you have a close association with to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the Council taxpayers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the authority’s administrative area, or

2.2.2 It relates to interests which would be a DPI, but in relation to a member of your family or a person with whom you have a close association and that interest is not a DPI. If the matter concerns your spouse, your civil partner or someone you live with in a similar capacity, it is covered by the provisions relating to DPIs.

2.2.3 It could also cover membership of organisations which you have listed on your Register of Interests (including appointments to outside bodies), where there is no well-being or financial benefit accruing to you but where your membership might be said to be relevant to your view of the public interest.

2.3 A person with whom you have a close association is someone who is more than an acquaintance, and is someone you are in contact with over a period of time, whether regularly or not. It is someone that a reasonable member of the public might think you would be prepared to favour or disadvantage when discussing a matter which affects them and so covers friends, colleagues, business associates, or someone you know through social contact.
2.4 Family should be given a wide meaning. In relation to the family of both you and your partner, it would include the parents, parents-in-law, children and step children, brothers and sisters, grandparents, grandchildren, uncles and aunts, nephews or nieces, together with the partners of any of these persons.

2.5 You should make a verbal declaration of any such interest in a matter to be considered at the meeting at the start of the meeting, or before the consideration of the item of business, or as soon as the interest becomes apparent if you are not aware at the start of the meeting of the interest.

3. **Register of Members interests**

Members are required to complete the Register of Interests and to keep this register up to date by informing the Monitoring Officer in writing within 28 days of becoming aware of any change in respect of their DPIs.

4. **Dispensations**

In certain circumstances the Monitoring Officer is able to grant a dispensation to you which will enable you either to participate in the discussion on a matter, to vote on the matter, or both. Dispensations can only be granted in limited circumstances. If you believe that you are able to claim a dispensation you must seek advice as soon as possible from the Monitoring Officer, who will consider your request. In some circumstances they may grant this request themselves, in other circumstances they may need to refer your request to the Council's Standards Advisory Committee.

The Monitoring Officer has delegated authority to grant dispensations under Section 33 of the Act. The Monitoring Officer has granted the following general dispensations to all Members until the end of the current administration in May/June 2014 on the grounds that the dispensation is in the interests of the inhabitants of Newham and/or it is appropriate to grant the dispensation to maintain a similar position as applied under the previous code of conduct. This means Members do not need to leave the meeting if their Disclosable Pecuniary Interest arises and is:

- An interest common to the majority of inhabitants in their ward.
- An interest so remote that it is not likely to prejudice their judgement of the public interest.
- Council housing unless related to their own particular tenancy.
- School meals and/or transport unless relating to their own child’s school.
- Statutory sick pay for members.
- Members allowances.
- Setting Council Tax or precept.
- Agreeing any Local Council Tax Benefit Scheme.
- Interests arising from membership of an outside body to which the authority has appointed or proposes to appoint them.
- The Local Government Pension Scheme unless relating specifically to their own circumstances.

5. **Bias and Predetermination**

If in relation to any decision, your outside connections may make it appear to a reasonable person that there is a real danger of bias, or predetermination you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate for you to participate in any discussion about the matter and in the decision, regardless of whether or not you consider that you should declare an interest as defined above.
For further advice about these matters please contact the Monitoring Officer, Helen Sidwell on 020 3373 9231.
Appendix to Interests

Definitions of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

The duties to register, disclose and not to participate in respect of any matter in which a member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest are set out in Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests are defined in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest</th>
<th>Prescribed description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation</td>
<td>Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorship</td>
<td>Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by M in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of M. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Contracts                                          | Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority:  
  a. under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and  
  b. which has not been fully discharged. |
| Land                                               | Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.    |
| Licences                                           | Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer. |
| Corporate tenancies                                | Any tenancy where (to M’s knowledge):  
  a. the landlord is the relevant authority; and  
  b. the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest. |
| Securities                                         | Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:  
  a. that body (to M’s knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and  
  b. either:  
    (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or  
    (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class. |
For this purpose:

“the Act” means the Localism Act 2011;

“body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest” means a firm in which the relevant person is a partner or a body corporate of which the relevant person is a director, or in the securities of which the relevant person has a beneficial interest;

“director” includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society;

“land” excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for the relevant person (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income;

“M” means a member of a relevant authority;

“member” includes a co-opted member;

“relevant authority” means the authority of which M is a member;

“relevant period” means the period of 12 months ending with the day on which M gives a notification for the purposes of section 30(1) or 31(7), as the case may be, of the Act;

“relevant person” means M or any other person referred to in section 30(3)(b) of the Act;

“securities” means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.
RESIDENTS' HOUSING SCRUTINY GROUP

Meeting held on 12th December 2012
at Hathaway Community Centre, E12 6LR

Present: Cllr Ellie Robinson (Chair) and Cllr John Gray
Sean Moseley, Dawn Harris

Also Present: Councillors Andrew Baikie, Anthony McAlmont and Terry Paul
Julie Beveridge, Head of Housing Compliance, John Smith,
Head of Housing Management, Nigel Mould, Neighbourhood Manager (East), Russell Thornton, Head of Rent Service and
Luke Byron-Davies, Scrutiny Manager

Apologies: Councillor Patricia Holland
Mary Klu, John Kemp and Stella Damm

The meeting commenced at 7.00 p.m. and closed at 9.00 p.m.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Cllr Ellie Robinson welcomed all in attendance to the meeting.

2. Minutes

The minutes from the meeting that took place on 16 October were agreed as a correct record.

3. Update on Actions

Luke Byron-Davies (LBD), Scrutiny Manager, explained that all actions emanating from previous meetings had been completed.

4. Forward Work Programme

Luke Byron-Davies (LBD), Scrutiny Manager, asked members to note the forward work programme and asked that any additional items are submitted for future meetings.

5. The focus of the Group's Meeting is Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Cllr Ellie Robinson explained that the agenda item would be split into three sections that were:

- Housing Compliance
- Enforcement and Safety
- LBN’s Garages

**Housing Compliance**

Julie Beveridge, Head of Housing Compliance, and John Smith, Head of Housing Management, presented the Housing Compliance section by explaining that the focus of the work was making sure that tenants complied with their tenancy agreements. The policy of the team is to aim to visit each council tenant once a year. Often issues found are in regards to waste and clutter outside, damage inside the property and illegal sub-letting. In performing this function, it was explained that the team works closely with colleagues in enforcement and information and data is shared between teams.

In addition to the regular day-to-day running of the team’s duties, one-off operations are undertaken that involve two day joint working with the Police, Customs and Excise and other council teams. These intensive projects have been successful in identifying a range of compliance and criminal issues.

**Enforcement and Safety**

Nigel Mould, Neighbourhood Manager (East), presented the Enforcement and Safety section by stating that not many councils have access to the resources that Newham has in terms of the quadrant system and the volume of officers. However, due to the issues in the borough each neighbourhood manager faces challenges over how best to deploy resources.

A variety of interventions were explained to the Group and these were working in partnership with the Police to collaborate on projects, using the CCTV vehicle to pinpoint certain areas with reported ASB and longer term projects to design out crime. An example of designing out crime was the work that was undertaken in Warrior Square to make the area safer by improving the outdoor spaces.

**Questions**

The Group pointed out that in 2011, photographs of suspected people involved in the riots were featured in the Newham Mag and asked if this could be done again to target suspects of other crimes. In response it was explained that this was an option but this approach did not always have a great amount of success.

In response to a question in regards to the usage of tracing agencies, in the view of officers this was not the most appropriate course of action. Officers added that there were a number of internal methods including access to investigators.

The Group explained to officers that problems with sub-let properties such as leaks were causing issues for other tenants. Officers agreed that there could be issues in some cases and explained that they took seriously compliance for landlords.
The Group discussed the issue of regulating the landlords through the method of licensing and it was explained that the cost for landlords of registering with the Council would be relatively small and that action needed to be taken. It was explained that problem landlords are also in the private sector and work is going on with a variety of agencies including housing associations to reduce problem landlords.

The Group asked if the council website was up to date on information for tenants. Officers confirmed that there was a programme for updating the web pages and tenants were being involved in these changes.

A question was asked in regards to Right to Buy leases and whether for anti-social behaviour or other appropriate reasons the leaseholder had lost their lease. Officers confirmed that to their knowledge no leases had been lost due to anti-social behaviour.

**Garages**

Russell Thornton (RT), Head of Rent Service presented a report on the council’s approach to its rental garage stock. It was explained that the policy was to wherever possible publicise vacant garages and to rent them to people that needed them for their cars. It is planned that rental income will be wherever possible reinvested into improving the stock of disused garages.

Most tenants pay in advance and the system for payment is made as simple as possible. The tenant needs to show that they are not in arrears and that they do need the garage. When garages are either in the wrong area where there is no demand or they are in a very poor condition the garages will where appropriate be removed.

**Questions**

The Group asked what the waiting time for a garage normally is. RT responded that it depends which area the garage is being sought, but the process has been sped up over the last few months. A member of the group explained that it took his friend two years to receive a garage, and in response RT stated that it would normally be quicker that that.

In response to asking if multiple garages were permitted, RT explained that multiple garages were only permissible if the tenant had one car per garage and could prove the use was to house a car.

The Group asked if garages could be used for other uses such as storage. RT stated that this was not planned because garages were not completely secure methods of storage. RT added that the aim was to have the right stock in the areas of the borough that most needed them. Cllr Baikie added that if garages were outsourced then rents would be higher and instead local councillors and community hubs can have a greater input into making sure that the correct garage policy is in place. The pressures on finances, Cllr Baikie explained means that the resources being diverted to garages...
are limited.

The Group asked whether the garages were actually making a profit when the overheads for the team were removed and if profit was being made whether it could be ring-fenced for further investment. RT agreed to provide information on the garage rental budget to the Group (009).

The Group asked if people would be able to repair garages themselves and in return receive a discounted lease. RT responded that many garages have hazardous materials including asbestos but some garages could be suitable for this purpose.

**Action**

009

Information on the budget of the renting of garages to be circulated to the Group.

6. **AOB**

There was no further business.

7. **Date of the next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Group will be at 7-9pm, Wednesday 13 March 2013 at East Ham Town Hall.
London Borough of Newham
Residents' Housing Scrutiny Group
12th December 2012

Housing Garages

Russell Thornton – Head of Rents
John Smith – Head of Housing Management
This presentation -

- Basic facts
- Future challenges
- Any questions?
Background – Garages the facts

• LBN have 2,497 Garages
• 849 Let (end of 2011-12)
• 960 Let (as at 04.11.12)
• 1,537 currently void / vacant
• 809 demolished to date
• 255 Applicants on waiting lists
• Garage rental per week £11.58 (£13.87 with vat)
• Garage income: 2011-12 - £549,679
  2012-13 £690,400 (projected) an increase of 25%
• Garage Arrears: £7,843 credit at 31.03.12 Currently £16,395.36 credit at 04.11.12
• How to apply for a garage – go to: www.newham.gov.uk or phone 020 3373 8922
Refurbished Garages
Examples of Garage sites (good and bad) -
Site disposals and development

- Abbotsbury Close E15
- Janson Close E15
- Mortham Street E5
- Tunmarsh Lane/Humberstone Road E13
- Maiden Road E15
- St Winifreds Ave/Rectory Road E12
- Butchers Road E16
- Dormer Close E15
- Pitchford St E15
- Meredith St E13
Garages – Future challenges

- Finance
- Pressure on repairs budgets
- Land management
- Disposals
- Anti-social behaviour
Any questions?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>009</td>
<td>To provide the Group with information on the budgeting arrangements of the Garages Rental Service</td>
<td>Russell Thornton</td>
<td>31/01/13</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Background

Newham’s Corporate Contact Centre provides a comprehensive telephone service for our residents, where generically trained agents deal with a wide range of enquiries, with the aim of first point of contact resolution.

The Corporate Contact Centre has faced significant challenges over the last few years, particularly capacity issues, as the trend shows that customer demand for the telephone service is actually increasing, with high volumes of calls, approximately 73,000 to 76,000 being offered to agents each month which is converse to the expectation in line with the aim of the Customer Access Strategy, to shift customers from expensive face to face contact to ‘self service ‘via the Website.

This has been further compounded by the subsequent closure of several Local Service Centres in the borough, together with the increase in E-Enquiries through MyNewham and Love Newham portals and the ‘Contact Us’ emails, also handled by the Contact Centre. These average 4,500 per month and as the current level of resources within the Corporate Contact Centre are inadequate to meet demand during peak periods, this results in inconsistent performance and high levels of abandoned calls, much above the industry standard of 5%.

With the planned closures of more Local Service Centres this year, further reducing the F2F facility, call volumes are likely to increase. Recent data shows that 70% of all Newham residents for one reason or another have a need to contact the Council, with 81% of contact via the Corporate Contact Centre.

Although performance does at times show signs of stability, recent policy and process changes within the Council, such as the Housing Allocations Policy and Landlord Licensing have highlighted just how fragile a position the Corporate Contact Centre is placed, when with little or no warning, bulk postings, changes in the way a service is delivered or fails to be delivered result in sudden increases in phone calls, with no time to plan, coupled with an out of date resource management tool, means no additional resources can be quickly diverted, which results in periods of underperformance and customer dissatisfaction.

The Corporate Contact Centre has also seen increased customer contact from the introduction of new online applications as part of the ‘channel shift’ agenda. As customers tend to struggle initially in using new technology and navigating the Website/MyNewham and revert to the phone to speak to an agent for guidance in completing online forms, as well as requests for technical assistance when registering on MyNewham.

Although ‘digital by default’ is the way forward as part of the ‘Resilience Agenda’ it must be recognised that transactions need to be simple, quick and easy to use with step by step guidelines where appropriate as well as acknowledging that in the initial launch of online applications, customers will require support.
2. Performance

The current PMI of achieving 90% of calls answered in 15 seconds or less remains in the Corporate Contact Centre. However with the current resources available this is not achievable. The focus is foremost on reducing the abandonment rate, followed by quality outcomes for customers, thus reducing failure demand which results in repeat calls. Something we are unable to measure at present.

Since April 2012 the Contact Centre performance has varied as demonstrated in the Table below, with the average YTD wait being 00:38 seconds, although in January 2013 it increased to 01:19 seconds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Calls Offered</th>
<th>Calls Answered 15s</th>
<th>Calls Abandoned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr-12</td>
<td>58246</td>
<td>71.40%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May-12</td>
<td>63137</td>
<td>82.50%</td>
<td>2.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun-12</td>
<td>60557</td>
<td>57.30%</td>
<td>7.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul-12</td>
<td>75737</td>
<td>40.80%</td>
<td>13.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug-12</td>
<td>68997</td>
<td>82.50%</td>
<td>6.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep-12</td>
<td>74246</td>
<td>69.30%</td>
<td>8.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct-12</td>
<td>76683</td>
<td>68.20%</td>
<td>8.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov-12</td>
<td>72709</td>
<td>53.70%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec-12</td>
<td>49072</td>
<td>72.50%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan-13</td>
<td>78869</td>
<td>29.50%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Improvement since April 2012 had been realised due to additional agency workers brought in to support the service, however they were reduced after the Olympics and released completely in December 2012.
This can be further broken down across services relating to Housing as shown in the Table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Months</th>
<th>All Payments</th>
<th>Lettings</th>
<th>Housing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Calls Offered</td>
<td>Overall %</td>
<td>Calls Offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr-12</td>
<td>7362</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>4525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May-12</td>
<td>7145</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>4533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun-12</td>
<td>6198</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
<td>3549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul-12</td>
<td>6250</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>4023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug-12</td>
<td>5961</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>3814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep-12</td>
<td>5508</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>3657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct-12</td>
<td>5659</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>4016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov-12</td>
<td>5367</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>4239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec-12</td>
<td>3696</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>2485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan-13</td>
<td>5793</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>5799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb-13</td>
<td>4184</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>5581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YTD</td>
<td>63123</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>46221</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Corporate Contact Centre provides the frontline service on behalf of Housing to our residents for the following areas:

- Homelessness Advice
- Rent Arrears Advice
- Choice Based Lettings Advice
- Rent Balance Enquiries

The top 5 of all enquiries via telephone are:

- Letting Enquiries
- Payments
- Housing Enquiries
- Environmental Services
- Parking
As part of the Contact Centre Improvement Plan a number of Projects have been identified to address the current underperformance and realise opportunities that will underpin a sustainable future for the telephony channel, they can be split between Technology, Processes and People:

**Investment in Technology – fit for purpose systems**

**Telephony:**
- An automated switchboard for improved routing of calls - Voice recognition
- Upgrade of the current telephone infrastructure to enable further integration & automate reporting
- Enhanced call recording solution to improve quality in call handling
- Work Force Management Tool integrated with the Telephone system to improve scheduling of resources to more accurately meet customer demand
- Review/replacement of Inform which provides ‘self service’ over the phone to realise further improvement through the automated channel.
- Implementation of Webchat – Contact Centre agents to support customer in completion of online forms

**Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) Development:**
- Development of an Email Management System to improve distribution and performance monitoring of emails
- Introduction of ‘Right First Time’ measures to reduce failure demand – measurement via CRM
- Improved functionality of the Website/MyNewham to enable customers to ‘self service’ quickly and easily

**Processes – right first time**
- review and streamline processes to improve efficiency, working with the service area to improve the customer experience
- a joined up approach to implementing changes to processes
- Promotion of ‘self service’ via the Website for simple transactions, service information rather than publicising the 2000 Telephone number

**People**
- Introduction of Performance Management Framework and Staff Competency Framework
- Development of a Training Programme - Customer Care, Systems usage and Service Knowledge
- Proposed reduction in the operating hours of the Contact Centre to enable resources to focus on providing an improved level of service during core hours
4. Summary

The planned timescale to implement the changes and realise the benefits will be from now until September 2013. However in the meantime in order to stabilise the Corporate Contact Centre, improve call handling and see a reduction in failure demand, a further short – medium term investment in resources has been secured.

The proposed actions will be short to longer term solutions to improve the overall performance of the Corporate Contact Centre as well as supporting channel shift to less expensive automated or online self service.

The imminent transfer of the Customer Service Division to the Operations Directorate will facilitate the much need joined up approach to service delivery with the aim of achieving a significant decrease in customer feedback with regard to issues in contacting the council via the telephone, where the emphasis will be on ‘first time right’, ensuring that technology enables service delivery, processes are simplified and focus on the customer and staff are equipped with the relevant skills and knowledge to provide customers with a high quality service.