

Mayor Jason Perry
Croydon Council
Town Hall
Katharine St
Croydon CR0 1NX

December 2022

Dear Jason

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT HOUSING IMPROVEMENT BOARD

I enclose the second report of the housing improvement board, which we are providing to inform the Cabinet discussion on the paper *Update on the Housing Transformation Programme* on 7 December.

In summary, we **support** both recommendations in the paper.

As you know, at our September meeting, we were very concerned that nearly 18 months had passed since the appalling conditions of some properties in Regina Road, and wider problems with the housing service, had become apparent, yet almost nothing tangible had happened to address its obvious massive shortcomings. We are, however, very encouraged that, since then, there has, at long last, been real and tangible progress on a number of fronts. The Transformation Programme is also a massive step forward from the previous improvement plan in its focus on tenants and residents, and the thoroughness of its analysis.

The task ahead, in our view, is now:

- To continue to strengthen the programme. The most important ways this needs to happen are to develop metrics, targets and interim milestones to incentivise and track progress; and to ensure that the revised housing revenue account business plan which is being prepared for your approval next year and the transformation programme are consistent with each other.
- To put the change set out in the programme into practice. Promising starts have been made on some aspects, but getting to a housing service performing in line with sector norms, let alone the higher standard we would all like to see, will take several years of focus and hard work.

It is vitally important that housing improvement is managed as one of the council's highest corporate priorities, not pigeonholed as a housing service issue alone. The experience of tenants and residents on estates is shaped not just by the performance of the housing service, but by environmental services and other parts of the council. Systems and cultural issues in the housing service, including the treatment of tenants and residents, poor financial management, lack of good performance data and poor contract management, mirror wider weaknesses in the council as a whole. The service's historic and current poor performance has an enormous impact on tenants and residents, and on the council's corporate reputation.

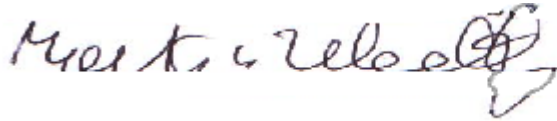
I would like to thank my fellow board members for their insight and hard work; all councillors, tenants and other members of the public who have shared their views with us; and council officers, especially Susmita

Housing Improvement Board

Sen, Lara Ashley, Velvet Dibley, and the tenant involvement team, for their assistance in our work. My fellow board members and I are also very grateful for the personal interest and engagement you and Lynne Hale have shown since you took office earlier this year.

This letter and the accompanying paper will be placed on the board's web page, and I am copying it to all members of the Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet, and to Tony McCardle (Improvement and Assurance Panel).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martin Wheatley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

Martin Wheatley
Chair, Independent Housing Improvement Board