

Housing Select Committee			
Title	Emergency services review	Item	3
Contributor	Scrutiny Manager		
Class	Part 1	Date	19 June 2013

1. Purpose of paper

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed that its select committees will carry out a review of emergency services in Lewisham. The Housing Select Committee has been tasked with determining impact of the changes as they relate to the borough's housing.
- 1.2 At its meeting in March, the Committee requested that officers provide further information about how it might approach this task. A scoping report was considered by Members at their meeting on 03 April 2013 and it was agreed that the Committee would receive evidence for the review at its meetings on 16 May and 19 June 2013.
- 1.3 At its meeting on 16 May, the Committee heard from Lewisham Homes and Brockley PFI about their work to ensure fire safety in their housing stock. The Committee requested further information about work being carried out to engage with residents, as well as Lewisham Homes' plans to install sprinklers in the borough's housing stock.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- consider the content of the attached report from Lewisham Homes
- direct questions to officers at the meeting on 19 June
- consider whether recommendations should be made to the overview and scrutiny committee

3. Background

- 3.1 At its meeting on the 11 February 2013 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a scoping report, which set out the terms of reference for a review into emergency services in Lewisham. At the meeting, it was decided that the review would be co-ordinated across all select committees. Members of the O&S Committee considered the proposed terms of reference and they agreed that the review would aim to:
 - clarify the key policy initiatives and financial constraints impacting on emergency services locally
 - identify the local implications for services
 - consider the potential impact of any service changes

- 3.2 As part of the review, the Committee resolved that the Housing Select Committee would:
- identify the related impact on services and performance locally, particularly in relation to tenants and housing providers (Lift call outs, fire safety checking responsibilities etc)
 - consider the potential impact of any service changes specifically in relation to tenants and housing providers
- 3.3 The Housing Select Committee agreed that its contribution to the emergency services review would focus on:
- Prevention, engagement and enforcement
 - Potential future implications of the proposed changes
- 3.4 Proposals in the draft fifth London safety plan include the intention to close New Cross and Downham fire stations and reduce the number of fire fighters in the borough. The Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee heard from the borough fire commander on 8 May 2013 that, if the proposals were agreed, response times in the borough would increase. In order to mitigate the impact of the changes, the fire service intends to intensify its efforts to work with communities and housing providers to prevent fires from starting. Furthermore, it is anticipated that this work will be targeted at those most at risk from fire (demographic information from the draft fifth London safety plan has been included as appendix B).

4. Key lines of enquiry

- 4.1 The terms of reference for the review have been established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee has agreed to address these areas by seeking answers to a set of key questions:

Prevention, engagement and enforcement

- How will the proposed changes impact on work to prevent fires in Lewisham's housing stock?
- How will partners continue to ensure that effective prevention work takes place?
- How much training for housing providers was carried out in previous years- and how much is expected to be carried out following the proposed changes?
- What plans do housing providers have in place to engage with residents on the issue of fire safety?
- How many issues and enforcement notices have been issued by the fire brigade for Lewisham's public housing?
- How will support be maintained for enforcement activity to be carried out?

Future implications

- Do the proposed changes take into account the anticipated growth in Lewisham's population, as well as likely increases in housing density?
- How will the changes to the lifts policy impact on housing providers in the borough?
- Have housing providers assessed the potential impact of the proposals to charge for multiple false alarms and unnecessary lift call outs?

5. Further implications

There are no direct legal, financial, equalities, sustainability or crime and disorder implications arising as a result of the implementation of the recommendations in this report. However, there may be further implications arising as a result of the review. These will need to be considered, as appropriate.

If you have any questions about this report please contact Timothy Andrew (Scrutiny Manager) on 02083147916.