

## SCRUTINY CALL-IN

**Names of Members:  
(minimum of 2)**

(indicate Lead Member)

Phil Waker (Lead)  
Lee Waker  
Bill Dale

**Date of Executive:**

Tuesday 12 October 2004

**Item for Call-in:**

Selection of Barking & Dagenham's Panel of  
Registered Social Landlords

**Decision of Executive:**

**Agreed**, in order to strengthen the Council's ability to deliver high quality new affordable homes and bring about community regeneration programmes, to:

1. Include the Southern Housing Group on the Council's panel of preferred RSL partners; and
2. Request the Southern Housing Group to invite a Ward Councillor from each of the Abbey, Gascoigne and Thames Wards to sit on the Board of the housing development management company for projects in this Borough.

**Reasons for Call-in:**

As Attached

## REASONS FOR CALL-IN

1. Southern Housing has a number of properties in Village Ward. Approximately 160 are on the Rookery Farm Estate (which includes the area often referred to as the Leys Estate).
2. In recent weeks we have spoken to a number of tenants of Southern Housing on the Rookery Farm Estate who have long been very unhappy with Southern Housing. This includes tenants who were involved in the Tenants Association until they wound the Association up in despair because of the performance of Southern Housing and the feeling that they were getting nowhere with the problems.
3. There is still a great deal of dissatisfaction regarding a £3.75 million refurbishment that took place some time ago. The tenants do not believe the agreement was adhered to by Southern Housing regarding the use of that money and a fund that was due to be set aside for other use when some tenants did not want particular aspects of the refurbishment. Southern Housing was supposed to supply a breakdown of costs, but failed to do so despite many requests for the information.
4. Tenants state that Southern Housing cut the number of surgeries and often cancel them without notice.
5. Tenants complain they have trouble contacting people who understand their issues.
6. Tenants state that while the repair company now used by Southern Housing is a great deal better than the previous one, the information the Association passes to the company is often incorrect.
7. Tenants also believe that Southern did not supply the children's play area they were due to under the refurbishment agreement.
8. The above problems are far from all the issues. We are informed there are many more. We are grateful for the Officers arranging a site meeting with Southern Housing in November, but we do not believe Southern Housing should be placed on the Council's Registered Social Landlord preferred partner panel until we can be assured that the issues we have with this Association are either addressed or we are confident are being addressed.
9. Should we be satisfied that Southern Housing will address the outstanding problems, many of them *long* outstanding, we would want the ongoing involvement with Southern Housing that has been proposed for Abbey, Gascoigne and Thames Wards.