



Housing Management and Almshouses Sub (Community and Children's Services) Committee

Date: THURSDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2013
Time: 1.45pm
Venue: COMMITTEE ROOMS, WEST WING, GUILDHALL

Members: Deputy Billy Dove (Chairman)
Virginia Rounding (Deputy Chairman)
Alderman David Graves
Deputy the Revd Stephen Haines
Deputy Henry Jones
Gareth Moore
Adam Richardson
Elizabeth Rogula
Revd Dr Martin Dudley (Ex-Officio Member)
Angela Starling (Ex-Officio Member)

Enquiries: Philippa Sewell
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Philippa.sewell@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Lunch will be served in the Guildhall Club at 1pm

**John Barradell
Town Clerk and Chief Executive**

AGENDA

Part 1 - Public Reports

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**
3. **MINUTES**
To approve the public minutes and summary of the meeting on 11 July 2013 (copy attached).

For Decision
(Pages 1 - 4)
4. **ASSAULTS ON STAFF UPDATE AND LONE WORKING POLICY**
Report of the Director of Community & Children's Services (copy attached).

For Information
(Pages 5 - 28)
5. **GAS SAFETY REGULATIONS - LANDLORDS RESPONSIBILITIES**
Report of the Director of Community & Children's Services (copy attached).

For Information
(Pages 29 - 32)
6. **HOUSING ESTATES - ALLOCATED MEMBERS' REPORT**
Report of the Director of Community & Children's Services (copy attached).

For Information
(Pages 33 - 42)
7. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**
8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**
9. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**
MOTION - That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Part 2 - Non-Public Reports

10. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**
To approve the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2013 (copy attached).

For Decision
(Pages 43 - 44)
11. **COMPREHENSIVE LIFT MAINTENANCE CONTRACT**
Report of the Director of Community & Children's Services (copy attached).

For Decision
(Pages 45 - 50)
12. **CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES - APPLICATIONS TO WAITING LIST**

For Decision
(Pages 51 - 54)
13. **FORMER TENANT ARREARS WRITE-OFF**
Report of the Director of Community & Children's Services (copy attached).

For Decision
(Pages 55 - 60)
14. **HOUSING PROJECTS PORTFOLIO UPDATE**
Report of the Director of Community & Children's Services (copy attached).

For Information
(Pages 61 - 80)
15. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

For Decision
16. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

For Decision

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Agenda Item 3

HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB (COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE Thursday, 11 July 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub (Community and Children's Services) Committee held at Committee Rooms, West Wing, Guildhall on Thursday, 11 July 2013 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Deputy Billy Dove
Deputy the Revd Stephen Haines
Gareth Moore
Adam Richardson
Virginia Rounding
Revd Dr Martin Dudley (Ex-Officio Member) (In the Chair)
Angela Starling (Ex-Officio Member)

Officers:

Jacky Compton	- Committee & Member Services Officer
Ade Adetosoye	- Director of Community & Children's Services
David Bacon	- Chamberlain's Department
Jacquie Campbell	- Community & Children's Services Dept
Sandra Brown	- Community & Children's Services Dept
Elizabeth Donnelly	- Community & Children's Services Dept
Mike Kettle	- Community & Children's Services Dept
Eddie Stevens	- Community & Children's Services Dept

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Alderman David Graves and Deputy Henry Jones.

2. MEMBERS DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Members proceeded to elect a Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No. 29. A list of Members eligible to serve was read by the Town Clerk and one Member, Deputy Billy Dove, expressed his willingness to serve.

RESOLVED – That Deputy Billy Dove be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

Whereupon, Deputy Billy Dove took the Chair.

The Chairman welcome Adam Richardson to his first meeting of the Sub Committee.

4. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Deputy Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No. 30. A list of Members eligible to serve was read by the Town Clerk and reported that one Member, Virginia Rounding, had expressed her willingness to serve.

RESOLVED – That Virginia Rounding be elected Deputy Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

5. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Sub Committee received the Terms of Reference, as agreed at the May 2013 meeting of the Community & Children's Services Committee.

RECEIVED.

6. **MINUTES**

The public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 31 January 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

Assaults on Housing Officers (page 6) – In answer to question, the Head of Housing Management advised that a lot of work had been carried out on the number of assaults on Housing Officers, and stated that although there had been no further assaults, there had been a couple of near misses. She advised that an update report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

Golden Lane Estate Curtain Walling (page 4) – the Housing Services Director advised that an update report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

7. **ALLOCATED MEMBERS SCHEME**

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services relating to an update on the Allocated Members Scheme, which was introduced in 2000 to encourage Members to take an active interest in the management of the City's 11 social housing estates.

The Chairman of the City Bridge Trust Committee advised that City Bridge Trust officers share the schedule of visits to various places with Members of the Committee. The Chairman stated that perhaps a similar thing could take place with the City's various Housing Estates and Members of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That Members –

- Note the guidelines attached at Appendix 1 to the report; and
- Agree the preferred option for the number of Allocated Member posts, as set out in 3.2 (b) of the report.

8. **ANNUAL REPORT FOR TENANTS 2013**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services relating to the Annual Report for Tenants.

The Housing Services Director stated that a report on Gas Servicing would be submitted to the next meeting of the Sub Committee.

The Head of Housing Management informed Members that she had spoken with Tenants about the format of the Annual Report and she was advised by Tenants that in future they would only like to see a summary of the Annual Report rather than a full glossary of the report.

RECEIVED.

9. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There were no urgent items.

11. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED:- That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act as follows:-

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Exempt Paragraphs</u>
12-17	3

12. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

13. **CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES UPDATE**

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services relating to an update on the City of London Almshouses.

14. **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services relating to Affordable Housing Development.

15. **PROJECT PROPOSAL - ISLINGTON ART FACTORY**

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services relating to a project proposal for the Islington Arts Factory.

16. **PROJECT PROPOSAL - RICHARD CLOUDESLEY SCHOOLS**

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services relating to a project proposal for Richard Cloudesley Schools.

17. **PROJECT PROPOSAL - SUMNER BUILDINGS**

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services relating to a project proposal for Sumner Buildings.

18. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

19. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There were no urgent items.

The meeting ended at 2.55 pm

Chairman

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Agenda Item 4

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee	26 September 2013	4
Subject: Assaults on Housing Officers & Lone Working Policy	Public	
Report of: Director of Community & Children's Services	For Information	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Summary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In January 2013, the Housing Management Sub-Committee received a report on the rise in incidents of aggressive behaviour towards housing staff. During 2012, there were 12 incidents, compared to only one in 2011 and 2010. The report outlined measures which were being taken and Members asked to be kept informed of the situation. • In 2013 to date there have been only three incidents, one of physical assault and two of verbal assault. However, nationally there is concern at the increasing number of assaults on front-line housing staff, particularly following an incident in Brixton in July 2013. • A further set of measures have been implemented to build on previous actions. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased use of Skyguard personal security devices; ○ Security measures at estate offices; ○ Strengthened operation management on estates and an increase in staff working on rent arrears and with vulnerable people; • A draft Lone Working Policy for the Community & Children's Services Department has been developed to complement the corporate policy by adding specific detail. 		

Main Report

1. Background

1.1 In January 2013 the Housing Management Sub-Committee received a report outlining the rise in verbal and physical assaults on the City's Housing staff during 2012 and setting out measures being taken to support and protect staff.

1.2 These measures, planned and implemented by a special staff working group, included:

- A review of risk assessments and local working procedures
- The introduction of security devices for high risk staff;
- New training for lone workers in office situations;
- A publicity campaign to encourage better behaviour;
- Swift and decisive action being taken against perpetrators.

1.3 Since then, the vulnerability of housing staff nationally has gained a higher profile. In June 2013, 'Inside Housing' published the results of a 12 months survey which showed a growing trend of hostility towards front-line staff working in housing. Figures for the first quarter of 2013 indicated an increase in verbal and physical assaults compared to the previous year.

1.4 In July 2013, a housing officer from Metropolitan Housing Partnership and a bailiff from Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service were injured when a man opened fire on them as they attended a property in Brixton to carry out a court-ordered eviction due to rent arrears. The injuries were not life-threatening and police arrested the perpetrator swiftly, but the incident has increased fears that front-line housing staff are particularly vulnerable to threats and physical violence.

2 Current position

2.1 To date, in 2013, there have been only three reported incidents of assaults. One was a physical assault on a Barbican car park attendant, involving a non-resident. The others were verbal assaults – one, on Avondale Square Estate, to a contractor and the other by telephone to an apprentice working in the Benefits Team.

2.2 We are pleased and relieved that such incidents have reduced compared to 2012 and hope that this position will continue. Nevertheless, with the incident in Brixton and the national picture in mind, we have taken additional steps to improve the security of staff where possible.

- 2.3 Many of our staff now carry a hand-held Skyguard security device and there is one available in each estate office to be taken out by staff on home visits. The device, which can be discreetly carried and activated, links directly to a monitoring service. If the alarm button is pressed, the monitoring staff listen to what is occurring and summon appropriate assistance, be it police or medical staff in the event of an accident. Calls are treated as a priority by the police and the devices include a Global Positioning System (GPS) which pinpoints the location and allows assistance to be on site anywhere in London within 6 minutes. Calls are recorded, as well as monitored, so can be used as evidence if legal action needs to be taken.
- 2.4 Estate offices are being remodelled where necessary to provide better personal space and escape routes for staff in an emergency. We have installed CCTV in one estate office, where there was a particularly high number of unpleasant incidents.
- 2.5 We have strengthened the operational management of our estates, putting more resources at a local level and increasing the team responsible for the collection of rent arrears. We are also increasing the team which works with our most vulnerable tenants.
- 2.6 A new corporate system for reporting incidents and ‘near-misses’ has been introduced. This has been widely publicised to housing staff and we are using it to make it as easy as possible for them to report anything of concern.

3 Lone Working Policy

- 3.1 Risk assessments and reviews have taken place to minimise the requirement for staff to work alone. However, it is not possible or practical to eliminate lone working in the Housing Service. Officers on our smaller estates and our Sheltered Scheme Managers are frequently working alone as there is not the work to justify increasing staffing – especially as the cost of front-line staffing is charged to tenants and homeowners through service charges. Staff carry out home visits and are out and about on our estates constantly, and it would be unreasonable to change this.
- 3.2 We have minimised risks and provided support as far as is possible by means of the measures outlined in the January report and above. We wish now to introduce a Lone Working Policy which will be specific to the Community & Children’s Services Dept. This complements the existing corporate policy, but adds specific details pertinent to housing and other staff.
- 3.3 The proposed policy, which is attached at Appendix 1, sets out the position of the department with regard to Lone Working. It outlines the

responsibilities not just of managers, but of individual members of staff, who have a duty to take precautions and make use of the processes and equipment provided to protect them. The policy outlines measures taken to support staff and includes procedures, advice and guidance for them to follow.

3.4 It is proposed that the draft policy will be presented to the next meeting of the Community & Children's Services Committee for approval.

4. Financial and Risk Implications

4.1 All measures requiring financial input are being funded through local budgets – in particular the Housing Health & Safety budget. No extra funding is required at this time.

4.2 The issue has been identified as a priority on the Departmental Risk Register. As violence is an accepted workplace hazard it is regulated for under the provisions of the Health & Safety at Work Act.

5. HR Implications

5.1 If we do not manage the increase in these incidents, then we will be at risk of increased stress and sickness for staff. Staff exposed to violence could also potentially take a claim against the CoL as an employer for an injury at work. The mechanisms outlined above are key in being able to defend any such claims.

5.2 We will continue to monitor the position and to liaise with colleagues in HR to get necessary advice and assistance.

Consultees

The Town Clerk, Chamberlain and Comptroller & City Solicitor have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Contact:

Jacquie Campbell, Head of Barbican & Estates
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**Department of Community and
Children's Services**

**Policy and Guidance on
Lone Working**

Issue Number	001
Date	12/12/12
Review Date	12/12/13
Author	June Bridge

Version: - 1
Date: - 12/12/12
H/Shared/Health and Safety/ Procedures and Guidance

Document Control Sheet

Revisions

Version	Page/Paragraph Number	Description of Change	Date Approved

Departmental Statement of Intent

Colleagues

The Departmental Leadership Team (DLT) is aware that lone working forms a core part of the business of the Community and Children's Services Department and acknowledges the risks to staff that working alone may present.

The DLT recognises that there may be an increase in potential risks associated with lone working and that assistance may not be readily available in the event of an incident. In order to minimise the risk to staff Risk Assessments and sensible controls should be in place prior to work commencing.

The City values the health and safety of its employees and seeks to help ensure that they are not put at risk unnecessarily whilst working alone.

I expect all of you to play your respective roles in minimising the risks associated with lone working order to ensure this department remains a positive, healthy and environment for staff.

Ade Adetosoye

Community and Children's Services Director

Introduction

Managers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of their staff and the health and safety of those affected by their work. This includes the organisation and control of lone workers.

Staff also have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work and to co-operate with Managers in order to meet Health and Safety obligations.

The aim of this policy is to provide background information on working alone including information on who is affected, why people work alone and the hazards of working alone, and to suggest practical solutions and strategies for staff to enable them to work in safety.

This policy applies to all staff who may be working alone at any time during the course of their work. It does not replace The City's overarching Health and Safety policies, but seeks to compliment and reinforce them, and should be read in conjunction with the corporate policies.

Corporate policies are placed on [The City's H&S pages](#).

Version: - 1

Date: - 12/12/12

H/Shared/Health and Safety/ Procedures and Guidance

What the Law says

The City of London is aware of its legal responsibilities under the law in respect of employees and visitors (including contractors) who work alone on its premises, and/or on City of London (CoL) business.

There are two main pieces of legislation that apply:

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974: Section 2 sets out a duty of care on employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees whilst they are at work.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999: Regulation 3 states that every employer shall make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of his employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work.

Under Health and Safety legislation there are no absolute restrictions on working alone, it will depend on the findings of a risk assessment.

Definition of Lone Work

A person is alone at work when they are on their own – when they cannot
Within this document, ‘lone working’ refers to situations where staff in the course of their duties work alone in the community, in the homes of individuals or in their own home, or may be the only staff member present in an office or other establishment maintained by the City of London or by one of its partner agencies. They will be physically isolated from colleagues, and without access to immediate assistance. This last situation may also arise where there are other staff in the building but the nature of the building itself may essentially create isolated areas.

A person is alone at work when they are on their own, when they cannot be seen or heard by another person and when they cannot expect a visit from another worker or member of the public for some time.

Lone Workers are at risk from a number of threats, including:

- Physical or verbal assault
- Injury as a result of an accident
- Abduction
- Robbery

- Harassment
- A feeling of being isolated

Responsibilities

Managers

1. Ensure that all legal requirements relating to lone working issues are identified and minimised
2. Identify those lone working situations where the law specifies safe systems of work to be followed and to implement these systems accordingly
3. Ensure that all workers are provided with a copy of The City of London's lone working policy and procedures.
4. Provide all necessary equipment, instruction, information, training and supervision, in order to meet the legal and other requirements relating to lone working.
5. Ensure that job descriptions and safe systems of work clearly state what is required in the course of the employee carrying out their duties.
6. Carry out risk assessments (see the third Edition Code of Practice for General Risk Assessment — available from the Corporate Health and Safety Section) and establish suitable systems to monitor the conditions of solitary workers to ensure that the risks are eliminated or controlled.

Employees

It is the responsibility of employees to:

1. Ensure that the lone working and other departmental procedures are followed and adhered to.
2. Report any personal medical conditions which may make need to be taken into consideration working alone
3. Co-operate with their employers in the discharge of their legal obligations
4. Ensure that they are aware of risks associated with the task and take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work
5. Attend training as required
6. Be aware of developing situations and avoid risk where possible
7. Report incidents and near misses using the incident reporting procedure

8. Alert colleagues to any residents/situations that could cause potential problems to a lone worker.

Further Information:

Health & Safety Executive leaflet 'Working Alone in Safety, Controlling the risks of solitary work': www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf

Procedures

Introduction

Working alone work carried out by staff working in Community and Children's Services Department and involves working with residents, service users and members of the public whose behaviour can be unpredictable, especially if the outcome of enquiries or conversations with staff is not the message that they wish to hear. For this reason it is essential that all staff who work alone, be aware of and adhere to the lone working procedures to ensure their safety.

Working alone is an acceptable option providing that the recommended measures, and any controls deemed necessary following risk assessments, are in place and followed.

Apart from staff being confident that they are capable of doing the job on their own the three most important things to be sure of are that:-

- The lone worker has full knowledge of the hazards and risks to which they are being exposed and has the authority to suspend work where necessary.
- The lone worker knows what to do if something goes wrong.
- Someone else knows the whereabouts of a lone worker and that there is a protocol for regular communication.

How should Managers keep their staff safe?

In addition to and expanding upon the requirements set out in the lone working policy, Managers should undertake the following steps to ensure staff and resident safety:

1. Identify and meet training needs in relation to lone working at induction.
2. Ensure that if solitary workers have made them aware of medical conditions which could increase their vulnerability when working alone, that risk assessments are done with the workers condition in mind, and appropriate measures are put in place where necessary.

3. Ensure that solitary workers have access to adequate first aid facilities and that mobile workers carry a first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries.
4. As far as reasonably practicable ensure that staff are not put at risk.
5. Establish clear guidelines to set the limits to what can and cannot be done while working alone, specifying how to behave in circumstances which are new, unusual or beyond the scope of training.
6. Put practical procedures in place to remove or minimise risk taking account of foreseeable emergency situations in addition to normal working conditions.
7. Establish emergency procedures in respect of lone working and ensure that solitary employees and contract workers are trained how to implement them.
8. Fully investigate incidents and near misses, and ensure that these are reported to the Incident Line (0207 332 1920) in accordance with [APPROPRIATE POLICY](#).
9. Identify methods available to raise an alarm or obtain assistance, and where it is deemed necessary provide a mobile phone or other security device.
10. Ensure that any equipment provided is properly maintained.
11. Regularly review and update procedures and risk assessments relating to Lone Workers as necessary.

What is a High Risk Activity?

- Visiting service users for the first time that have been referred to the department as needing assistance that may have problems such as drug or alcohol abuse, mental health problems, be in debt, etc.
- Visiting people to discuss financial matters, arrears of payment etc.
- Working out of hours to effect repairs to property.

- In the estate offices the Customer services Assistants often have to deal with residents who may be unhappy with some of the aspects of service received, situations can become heated.

Assessment of risk

The purpose of the risk assessment is to establish two main facts whether the work can be done safely by an unaccompanied person, and what arrangements are in place to ensure that staff who work alone are not put at greater risk than staff who work together.

1. In formulating an assessment of risk the following issues should be considered, as appropriate to the circumstances:
 - the environment – location, security, access
 - the context – nature of the task, any special circumstances/high risk factors
 - the individuals concerned – indicators of potential or actual risk
 - history – any previous incidents in similar situations
 - any other special circumstances
2. All available information should be taken into account and checked or updated as necessary
3. Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to complete the task.
4. While resource implications cannot be ignored, safety must be the prime concern

Planning

1. Staff should be fully briefed in relation to risk as well as the task itself.
2. Plans for responding to individual service users who present a known risk should be regularly reviewed and discussed with the staff team. (See Safer Working Practice)
3. Communication, checking-in and fall-back arrangements must be in place.

4. The team manager is responsible for agreeing and facilitating these arrangements, which should be tailored to the operating conditions affecting the team.

Working at Night

Estate Officers and Scheme Managers should record any emergencies dealt with at night in the office diary, and a note should be made in Orchard. In the case of floating support their line manager should be notified at the first available opportunity and a record of the incident made in Orchard. An incident form (IR1) should be completed and sent to their line manager. Please see the Incident Reporting Policy for further information and guidance.

Violent and Aggressive Behaviour

The City of London has a zero tolerance approach to violent or aggressive behaviour towards its staff from residents, visitors or colleagues. Housing staff are not expected to confront any potentially violent or volatile trespassers. All such incidents should be immediately reported to the police and the staff members line manager.

Issuing lone worker equipment

The City of London will ensure that any employee undertaking lone working activities will have access to a lone worker safety pack. The pack contains information on personal alarms and instructions on how to use them, practical advice on personal safety and what to do when working in other people's homes, a mobile telephone that should be working and charged fully at all times when on City of London business and a first aid pack which must always be available.

Lone workers should read the HSE leaflet '[Working Alone](#)'. It is also suggested that lone workers read and refer back to the leaflet from the Suzie Lamplugh Trust 'Handy Home Visits Guide (G35)'. A copy of this will be provided on request.

Security of buildings

1. Estate Officers and Scheme Managers are responsible for ensuring that all appropriate steps are taken to control access to the building, and that emergency exits are accessible.
2. Alarm systems must be tested regularly.
3. Key codes for access should be changed from time to time, and as a matter of course if a breach of security is suspected.
4. Staff working alone must ensure they are familiar with the building they are visiting and with the exits and alternative exits.
5. If there is any indication that a building has been broken into, a staff member must not enter alone, but must wait for back-up.
6. In buildings where staff may be working with people in relative isolation, there should be an agreed system in place to alert colleagues in an emergency.

Personal safety (department specific)

1. Before working alone, a dynamic assessment of the risks involved should be carried out in conjunction with one or more relevant staff members as necessary. Visits should be arranged during the course of the normal working day where possible.
2. If it is thought that a threat could present itself the service user should attend the office for interviews or, if this is not possible, joint visits should be undertaken.
3. Staff must inform their line manager or other identified person when they will be working alone, giving accurate details of their location and following an agreed plan to inform that person when the task is completed. This includes occasions when a staff member expects to go home following a visit rather than returning to their base.
4. Staff are required to use their outlook calendars to record where they are visiting and how long they anticipate being away from base.

5. staff such as floating support workers, who work to a pre-planned programme of visits, should inform their line manager or other suitable colleague if they deviate from the programme.
6. Staff should undertake all steps to ensure their safety and should never put themselves at risk. If there is any prior doubt over a workers safety they should consider alternative options to lone working (Assessment of risk point 3).
7. Staff working in the community should be issued with a mobile phone or other security device; they are responsible for checking that it is charged and in working order. Personal alarms may also be provided.
8. At all times whilst working alone staff should listen to their instincts and remove themselves or avoid a situation/potential situation at the first opportunity. Staff should always use their personal security devices if they feel threatened or worried, and should not be concerned about raising a 'false alarm'.
9. Staff must not assume that having a mobile phone and a back-up plan is a sufficient safeguard in itself. The first priority is to plan for a reduction of risk.
10. Staff are required to check in with the office if they are going home after their last visit of the day.
11. If a member of staff does not report in as expected, an agreed plan should be put into operation, initially to check on the situation and then to respond as appropriate.
12. Arrangements for contacts and response should be tailored to the needs and nature of the team. Issues to take into account include:
 - staffing levels and availability – developing links with a residential establishment may be the best out of hours solution
 - the identified risks
 - measures in place to reduce those risks
13. Where staff work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, managers must make provision for regular contact, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of working in isolation.

Personal Safety (general)

It is not wise to rely on alarm systems or breakaway techniques to get you out of trouble – there are a number of things you can do to avoid trouble in the first place, like recognising potential dangers, and taking positive steps to reduce risk, for yourself and for service users in your care.

Be aware of the environment

- Know what measures are in place where you work: check out alarm systems and procedures, exits and entrances, and the location of the first aid supplies.
- Make sure that your car (if you use one) and mobile phone are in good working order, and that electrical and other mechanical equipment is safe to use. Check the instructions for use, and ensure that faults are reported/dealt with.
- If your work takes you into areas which are isolated, poorly lit at night or known for high crime rates, arrange to check in when the visit is over, or work with a partner.
- If a potentially violent situation occurs, be aware of what might be used as a weapon against you, and of possible escape routes.
- Try to maintain a comfortable level of heating and lighting in buildings you control.

Be aware of yourself

- Think about your body language. What messages are you giving?
- Think about your tone of voice and choice of words. Avoid anything which could be seen as sarcastic, inflammatory or patronising.
- Think about what you are wearing. Is it suitable for the task? Does it hamper your movement? What signals does it send out? In a potentially risky situation, does a scarf or tie offer an opportunity to an assailant?
- Be aware of your own triggers – the things that make you angry or upset.

Be aware of other people

- Take note of their non-verbal signals.
- Be aware of potential triggers.
- Don't crowd people – allow them space

- Don't make promises
- Be aware of the context of your meeting – are they already angry or upset before you meet, and for what reason?
- Listen to them, and show them you are listening.

Practical guidance for scheme staff undertaking home visits or carrying out daily rounds

Each individual should gain as much information about the patch as possible to alert themselves and others of areas of concern. This information should be verbally communicated to all relevant staff and documented. Each individual should share concerns about an area, family or individual with colleagues. If in doubt of whether resident information can be shared with a contractor, staff should refer their concerns to the appropriate line manager.

Staff conducting home visits should:

- Not be alone if a problem has been identified with the family or resident.

If this is the case: -

- An up to date risk assessment must be available and a decision made by the Sheltered Housing or Estate Manager about whether visits should be made.

During the visit staff should

- Make sure that their mobile phones/safety devices are switched on
- Carry a personal alarm (where provided)
- Use stairs rather than lifts unless the situation dictates otherwise
- Always be vigilant
- Wait to be invited in or ask if they can enter the property if the staff member considers it safe to do so
- Watch for changes in mood, movements or expressions
- Avoid confrontation. If a potentially hazardous situation looks likely, or staff feel uncomfortable with a situation – leave if possible, or use your personal safety device.
- Ensure you are always closest to the exit

- Check as they go in how the front door locks
- Avoid panicking in unusual situations
- Have an understanding of how to deal with aggressive behaviour

Out-of-hours working

Out of hours work should only be undertaken in exceptional circumstances and/or as agreed with a manager unless unforeseen circumstances dictate otherwise. Any staff member working out-of-hours (late nights/bank holidays/weekends) should check in with the service provider providing emergency cover for the area in which they are working.

In the case of general needs properties this will be **CONTACT AND NUMBER**

In the case of Sheltered Housing properties this will be:

- City of London Almshouses **CONTACT AND NUMBER**
- Harman Close **CONTACT AND NUMBER**
- Isleden House **CONTACT AND NUMBER**
- Mais house **CONTACT AND NUMBER**

Any staff member providing cover on the out-of-hours rota should check in with ????????

Example Visit and Check in Procedure

When travelling away from the office, staff on visits should inform their manager or nominated member of staff of the following:

- Destination
- Estimated time of arrival
- Return time
- Mode of travel
- Alternative plans if necessary

An example of a check in procedure is:

- Use Outlook to record where you are going
- Identify one main person to be the nominated point of contact
- Agree how frequently the lone worker will check in
- Notify nominated point of contact of changes to plans (delays with transport, cancelled meeting etc.)

Version: - 1

Date: - 12/12/12

H/Shared/Health and Safety/ Procedures and Guidance

- Ensure phones/personal safety devices/other equipment is taken and in good order.

It should be emphasised that staff must check in and check out with the office if they are not returning after/between visits. It is also vital to have hand over procedures should shift/duty workers change.

Whilst lone working devices may be used it is important to realise that normal check in/checkout procedures must still be in place and used.

Monitoring Calls - Alerting a colleague to danger

During the course of a monitoring call whilst you are on a visit, if you feel like you are in danger (or are in danger) you will need to alert your colleague without inflaming the situation. To do this, you will need to use a pre-agreed sentence or sentences. When you are asked ‘are you OK/is everything OK?’ if the situation is such that you require intervention you should respond with one of the following answers:

If you need the police (there is a situation but you are unhurt) – ‘I’m OK but I may be running a bit late, please let Mr Peel know, I was due to be with him next.’

If you need the police and an ambulance (there is a situation and you are hurt) – ‘I don’t feel great and I won’t be able to make it to my next appointment, please let Mr Peel know, I was due to be with him next.’

Which sentence you use will determine the emergency services response.

Mr Robert Peel was the founder of the Metropolitan Police.

Emergencies – General

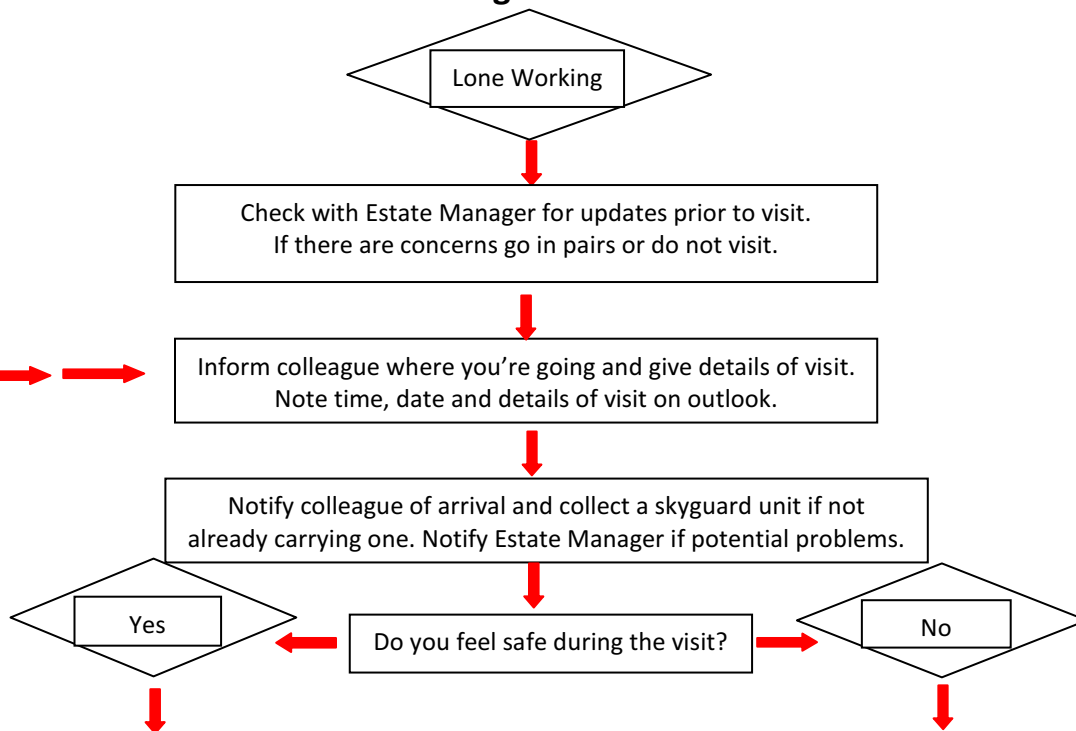
In the event of a major emergency contact the appropriate emergency services, the duty Resident Estate Officer or the Guildhall switchboard on 020 7606 3030.

If an employee has any concerns about their welfare and security this should be raised with the Supported Housing Manager as soon as possible. If they feel they are in immediate danger they should call 999 or 112.

Reporting

1. Should an incident occur, the reporting and de-briefing should follow the guidance in the Serious Incident Reporting Policy.
2. The staff member's line manager should be informed of the incident as soon as practicable, and take over the monitoring process.
3. [Post incident response reporting guidance](#)

Lone working visit - flowchart



- Body language
- Mastering difficult conversations
- Anti-social behaviour
- Breakaway and disengagement skills
- Challenging behaviour – older people and learning disabilities
- Difficult, disturbing and dangerous behaviour
- Lone working and risk assessment
- Managing challenging behaviour
- Breakaway and self-defence

Further Information

For further advice or information please contact the departmental Health and Safety manager June Bridge on 020 7332 1327, email june.bridge@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Agenda Item 5

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee	26 Sept 2013
Subject: Gas Safety regulations – Landlords Responsibilities	Public
Report of: Director of Community & Children’s Services	For Information

Summary

The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 deal with landlords’ duties to make sure gas appliances, fittings and flues provided for tenants are safe. (These duties do not extend to leasehold properties.)

As landlord we are responsible for the maintenance and repair of flues, appliances and pipework, which we own and have provided for our tenants use, by a Gas Safe registered engineer. Although there is no prescribed timeframe for these duties, good practice would be the demonstration of regular, annual maintenance checks and subsequent repairs.

We are also responsible for ensuring an annual gas safety check is carried out within 12 months of the installation of a new appliance or flue, which we own / provide and annually thereafter by a Gas Safe Registered engineer. We are required to keep a record of the safety check for 2 years and issue a copy to each existing tenant within 28 days of the check being completed and issue a copy to any new tenants before they move in.

This report will update committee on the current process for carrying out the gas safe checks, current performance and actions being taken to improve performance.

1. Background

The Housing service currently contracts all gas servicing and safety checks, on eligible properties i.e. those having a gas supply meter, gas central heating or other gas appliance provided by the City of London housing service, to Carillion PLC. Annual gas safety checks should be carried out on all properties that meet these criteria. Therefore the performance target, for compliance with the Gas Safety Regulations 1998, to carry out annual gas safety checks is 100%.

2. The process to complete the gas safety inspection

At 10 weeks prior to the expiration date of the current gas safe certificate a letter is sent by Carillion PLC, on behalf of the City of London, to the tenant advising that the annual gas safety check is due and an appointment is offered for a gas safe registered engineer from Carillion to attend.

If the tenant does not keep the appointment (or fails to make an alternative appointment) then a further letter is sent (approx. 8 weeks before expiration) with a revised appointment or request that the tenant contacts Carillion.

If access to carry out the inspection is still not gained following this 2nd letter, then a final letter is sent by registered post (approx. 6 weeks before expiration) requesting access and advising that the matter is being referred to the City of London's housing service. A copy of the letter is provided to City of London for audit purposes.

3. Successful Gas safety inspection

On completion of the appointment and a successful gas safety check a gas safe certificate is issued (one copy for the tenant and another for CoL). If the check is not successful and repairs are required, these will be either be carried out at the time or follow up arrangements for additional works will made and the situation will be "made safe". This may in extreme cases include the "condemning of an appliance for no further use".

4. No access gained

Upon notification from Carillion that they have completed the process of attempting to gain access (letters 1, 2 and 3 above), but without success, the City of London's Housing Service will hand deliver a further letter and make all reasonable attempts to contact the tenant to arrange access in order to carry out the gas safe checks.

5. Ultimate sanctions

Withholding access to the property for the purpose of carrying out urgent or emergency repairs is a potential breach of the tenancy agreement and where this occurs following all of the above attempts to engage with the tenant for the purpose of arranging the gas safety checks, the matter is referred to the Comptrollers department to commence legal action to obtain an injunction to gain access or to issue a notice of seeking possession.

Refusal of access for the purpose of gas safety checks puts both the tenant and neighbours at risk.

4. Service Improvements & Current Performance

A recent change in the process includes making evening telephone calls to the tenant where the gas safe certificate has expired and in some circumstances, we have offered evening or weekend appointments to accommodate tenant's availability. This has achieved limited success to date – for example, in one such evening 17 appointments were made. This is currently being repeated on a weekly basis and outcomes are being closely monitored.

Reporting processes and record management has also been improved to ensure a full audit trail of activities taken to gain access is recorded

As the gas safety checks are due on the anniversary of the previous gas safety check there is an on going process of completion i.e. a rolling 12 month programme. Performance is monitored weekly by the City of London's property service team. Due to the on-going nature of this service and given the requirement for 100% compliance, performance is reported on the basis of being "an accurate position at that given time".

The current number of properties (as at 9th Sept 2013) without a valid gas safe certificate is 39.

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Agenda Item 6

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee	26 September 2013	6
Subject: Housing Estates - Allocated Members' Report	Public	
Report of: Director of Community & Children's Services	For Information	
<u>Summary</u>		
<p>This report, which is for information, provides an update for the Committee on events and activities on the City of London Corporation's social housing estates.</p> <p>The report is compiled in collaboration with Allocated Members, whose role is to take an active interest in their estate, to champion residents and local staff and to engage with housing issues in order to play an informed part in housing-related debates within the Committee.</p>		

Main Report

Background

- The Allocated Members Scheme was introduced in 2000, when Members of the Community & Children's Services Committee were allocated to different City of London Corporation housing estates. The purpose of the scheme was:
 - To give residents and staff a named Member to 'champion' their estate
 - To allow Members to take an interest in the estate, its residents and staff
 - To develop a group of members with housing knowledge & experience to contribute to the CC&S Committee.
- This report is presented to the Housing Management Sub-Committee twice a year.

General Estate Matters

- We have completed our restructure of estate management, and all posts are now filled. Estates are now divided into two areas, rather than three.

The City & Fringes Area Manager is Bob Jacks. Bob is responsible for Golden Lane, Middlesex Street and the three small estates on the edge of the City, Dron House, Isleden House and Windsor House.

The Out-of-City Area Manager is Elizabeth Donnelly. Elizabeth is responsible for Avondale Square, Holloway, South Bank, Sydenham Hill and York Way estates.

- We have also appointed a new Sheltered Housing Manager, Jacqueline Whitmore. Jacqueline, who was previously the Scheme Manager at Isleden House, reports to Elizabeth Donnelly and manages Mais House, Harman Close and the City of London and Gresham Almshouses.
- Our apprentices have been extremely successful in moving into employment. Of the 15 apprentices appointed in the last 2 years, 6 have now left the organisation – one to be a barrister's clerk, one a youth worker, one a recruitment consultant, one to work for a national newspaper and one to do National Service in Israel. Only one left us because he was unsuited to the role.

Of the remaining apprentices, four so far have successfully applied for permanent jobs in the Housing Service. Three are applying for jobs with our support, and the remaining three are still apprentices, but in a more advanced position with increased responsibility.

We are now appointing five new apprentices, who will be with us for two years. We are very proud of our apprentices and the programme of support and opportunities we are able to give them.

- We carried out our annual estates satisfaction survey in January and the results were excellent. This year, we measured dissatisfaction, rather than satisfaction, on the grounds that people were more likely to respond to tell us if they were not satisfied. Dissatisfaction turned out to be extremely low – only 1.1% of residents expressed dissatisfaction with the overall service provided. Next year, we will conduct the survey electronically.
- We are in the process of putting final touches to the Residents' Celebration Day, to be held in the Guildhall on 5 October. This is the

third year of the event, which has proved to be very popular. All Allocated Members and Members of the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee are very welcome to join us on the day, and should contact Jean Evans at jean.evans@cityoflondon.gov.uk if they wish to attend.

Avondale Square Estate - Allocated Member, Virginia Rounding

Having enjoyed been the Allocated Member for Windsor House, I am delighted to have come to Avondale Square at what is an extremely exciting time.

In June, Wendy Giaccaglia started as the new Estate Manager. Previously the City's Resident Involvement Manager, Wendy is well known to many of the residents, and I joined her and a group of residents on a very informative and useful Estate Walkabout in July.

Planning permission has been gained to demolish the old Community Centre and to build a new community facility, an estate office and 17 new flats. The estate office has been relocated into a former shop for the duration of the works. Residents have been heavily involved in drawing up plans for the development and it is clear that the new facilities and flats will be of a high standard.

Structural engineers have been appointed to work on another exciting project, which proposes the building of new homes on top of two existing blocks, Eric Wilkins House and George Elliston House. If approved, the project will also involve carrying out roof works and replacing windows throughout the blocks. Residents have been kept informed of progress through newsletters.

The 'Our Place' project, run in partnership with Waste Watch, ended at the beginning of June. The project was designed to bring people together and to encourage a sense of community and ownership of the estate. Achievements included the setting up of weekly bingo sessions, the development of a community garden and the production of a CD of resident voices saying what they love about Avondale Square as a community.

Golden Lane – Allocated Members, Gareth Moore, Angela Starling

Firstly, we would like to welcome the new Estate Manager, Laurence Jones. Laurence was previously the Estate Manager at Avondale Square and is already having an impact in his new role.

We are pleased to advise the Committee that the planned five year review of the Listed Buildings Management Guidelines has been carried out. The Planning and Transportation Committee approved the draft Golden Lane Estate Listed Building Management Guidelines and agreed to a formal public consultation

exercise being carried out in July 2013, prior to its adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Since January the design team working on the re-cladding of Great Arthur House have met some key milestones. The Detailed Design Report has been given approval ensuring the project proceeds to the next stage. Planning and listed building consent applications have both been made. We are now in the procurement phase of the project and we look forward to informing Members in due course that a contractor has been appointed and that the long-awaited work can commence.

A proposed redevelopment of the children's sunken play area has progressed significantly over the last 6 months. Draft plans to redesign the area to make the play pit a safer and more attractive environment for the under-fives to enjoy have been agreed. It is hoped that the scheme will be funded from monies received from developments in the area.

Following on from the success of the "Our Place" project at Middlesex Street Estate, we are looking to implement a Good Neighbour Scheme at Golden Lane. This is where someone living on the estate volunteers to spend at least one hour each week supporting a neighbour in a various ways, from befriending to running errands. The scheme has been very successful at Middlesex Street, and Golden Lane residents are enthusiastic and keen to run it for themselves.

Holloway & York Way Estates – Allocated Member, Deputy Catherine McGuinness

As part of the estate management restructure, there has been a change of management at Holloway & York Way Estates. A new Estate Manager, Michelle Warman, started in post on 15 July. Michelle comes to us from Thurrock Council and brings a wealth of housing experience. We also had one of our former apprentices, Sarah Parker, start a permanent post with us as Customer Services Officer. I would like to welcome both Michelle and Sarah to York Way and look forward to working with them.

Holloway was one of the pilots for the Estate Plans. After a successful first year, staff worked with the residents' Focus Group on ideas for the second year's Plan. A survey of all residents was conducted to obtain a wide viewpoint, and the points raised were added to ideas from the Focus Group. Our new Plan makes it clear for everyone exactly what is going to happen on the estate this year, and I am pleased to inform you that the estate continues to provide an excellent service.

The Estate Plan for York Way has also been received very well by residents. One small, yet very effective, improvement resulting from the plan was the introduction of a weekly Estate Update. This has proved very successful and has reduced the number of residents calling to the estate office considerably. Due to its success, the idea is now being introduced on all of the estates.

Officers are exploring the possibility of building new properties on a site very close to Holloway Estate. The new properties would be managed from Holloway, and the estate staff have met with colleagues from the City Surveyor's department to discuss various options. I shall update Members as these plans develop.

The condition of the windows at both Holloway and York way estates is of growing concern of residents. As on other estates, officers are looking at options to accelerate the window replacement programme, thus improving the appearance and energy efficiency of the homes and making residents more comfortable as well as reducing their heating bills.

Middlesex Street Estate – Allocated Member, Deputy Henry Jones

The Good Neighbour Scheme launched at Middlesex Street Estate in January has proved a great success and is going from strength to strength. An offshoot of this scheme has been the formation of the Petticoat Square Gardeners. A number of volunteers along with the assistance of the COL's Open Spaces now maintain the estate's soft landscaping. The estate staff are working with the club to increase participation and to make sure that the residents know that they are welcome to be included and to emphasise the benefits this brings to the estate.

The current building works on the estate are almost at an end. Phase Two was completed in July 2013 when the 10 studios, built in the converted former Community Centre, were handed to the Housing Service. This has been a difficult time for residents, who have coped with noisy and dusty works over a considerable length of time. However, the outcome is that new socially rented homes have been built within the City for the first time in many years, and the new residents are delighted.

It is anticipated that options for Phase Three of the building programme will be presented to our residents in 2014 and an effective consultation and information programme will be created to ensure that all residents are fully informed of the options and progress.

I am delighted to welcome Paul Richardson, the new Estate Manager, to Middlesex Street Estate. Paul was previously the Estate Manager at York Way and Holloway Estates. Paul is keen to introduce new ways of communicating with residents on the estate, and plans to launch a Facebook page for Middlesex Street shortly.

Small Estates – Allocated Member, Elizabeth Rogula

Having been the Allocated member for Isleden House, I am pleased to have extended my role to encompass Dron House and Windsor House. Angela Smith, the Estate Manager for these three Small Estates, has moved from her previous role at Golden Lane and Southwark, and is helping me to get to know my new estates. Angela will be spending one day a week at each estate to support the Estate Officer and to meet with residents.

At Dron House, a draft design has been agreed to convert the existing community hall and estate office into a one three bedroom flat and a multi-functional estate office/community room. Discussions are now taking place with Tower Hamlets on planning issues and I look forward to updating Members in due course. The Estate Officer post has been filled on a secondment basis for over a year now, but we are now able to appoint Matthew Ring to the post permanently. Matt has worked extremely hard for the estate during his secondment, and residents are delighted with his appointment.

At Isleden House, we are looking again at converting some little used space into 5 one bed flats. Planning permission for a smaller scheme on the site was refused previously because it removed a communal workshop facility. The new scheme is more ambitious and also provides a small workshop facility, so we are optimistic that it will be more successful this time. Consultation with residents is taking place before pre-planning advice is sought from the London Borough of Islington.

Windsor House continues to progress well. The possibility of updating the children's play area and the redevelopment of the community hall continues to be investigated and funds identified. Although still at an early stage, officers are working with colleagues in other departments and external agencies to explore this and I look forward to updating Members in due course.

Members will recall from the last report that the biggest concern for residents at Windsor House is the condition of windows on the estate. Officers are developing a plan that will accelerate the window replacement programme and provide residents with more energy efficient homes as soon as possible.

South Bank Estates – Allocated Member, Adam Richardson

I am delighted to be taking up the role of Allocated Member at the South Bank Estates and am looking forward to getting to know the different blocks, the staff and some of the residents in the coming months.

Officers advise me that, despite their best efforts, the much-anticipated door entry system replacement project at Sumner Buildings, Pakeman House and Stopher House has suffered further planning delays. However, whilst these issues were being addressed the contract was advertised and tenders have now been received.

Since the last report, residents of Sumner Buildings have experienced some anti-social behaviour from late night revellers frequenting a restaurant/club in the building adjacent to the estate. However, I am very pleased to report that the estate staff have been working very hard and closely with local Planning officers and locally elected councillors to rectify the problem. There has been no recurrence of trouble recently and residents are appreciating this.

Work is taking place to explore the possibility of building some additional new homes at Sumner Buildings, on the site of an old bunker. At Pakeman House, it is likely that funding from an adjacent development will allow us to build more new homes, an estate office and a community facility, which is lacking at present. This is an exciting time and I look forward to telling Members more about these projects as they unfold.

Sydenham Hill Estate – Allocated Member role vacant

The former Allocated Member, Deputy William Fraser, has now stepped down from the role after some years. He has been a committed and engaged Allocated Member during that time, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his efforts on behalf of the estate and its residents.

It has been disappointing that despite strenuous efforts to fill the vacant Estate Officer's post, this proved impossible. The residential nature of the position proved to be a major stumbling block and, as a result, the staffing structure on the estate has been changed. Residents were kept fully informed of the problems in recruiting and during this time the Avondale Square Estate Office continued to give support to residents and staff.

However, the situation is now resolved. Residents have been pleased to welcome their new Estate Manager, Sonia Marquis, who previously managed Golden Lane and Southwark Estates. To ensure the estate is well-run and to fulfil the wish of residents to have a greater staff presence on site, Sonia is spending two days every week working at the estate. Sonia is currently looking

at options to improve the estate office and provide a small meeting facility for residents.

The current gardener has been promoted to a new role of Estate Supervisor. This role maintains some of the gardening and cleaning functions but will also assist the Estate Manager and give greater support to the residents. This arrangement is being trialled and will be reviewed after an initial period.

The Lammas Day celebrations were revived this year by a group of residents who came forward to organise it. The celebrations were a great success and we hope that the residents may arrange some more social events in the future.

Sheltered Housing – Allocated Member, Billy Dove

Our sheltered housing residents enjoyed a number of trips and treats during the summer. These included an excursion to the gardens at Sissinghurst, a visit to the Historic Dockyard at Portsmouth and a trip up the Shard. The trips were very popular and successful, with everyone who attended having a thoroughly good time.

Residents at different schemes have been coming together to have bingo and quiz afternoons at Harman Close. Parties from both Isleden House and Mais House have visited, and this encourages new friendships, as well as being fun.

I am pleased to say that work is starting to renew the call alarm systems at our sheltered schemes. It is vital that our residents feel that help is at hand in an emergency, and efficient, modern alarm systems will help to ensure that they are supported at all times.

There are a number of exciting projects starting at the City of London & Gresham Almshouses. The gardens are being landscaped and a former staff flat, now unused, is being turned into an office and community meeting place for the residents. Residents are delighted, and are taking time to contribute to the planning of both projects so that they get exactly what they want. Work has also started to address a serious damp problem in one block, and staff are working closely with residents to minimise disruption for them.

Consultees

This report was compiled in consultation with the Allocated Members, managers and staff of the CoLC's housing estates. The Town Clerk, Chamberlain and Comptroller & City Solicitor have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

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Agenda Item 10

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