



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

Date: WEDNESDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 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)

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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 26 September 2013
For Decision
(Pages 1 - 4)
4. **HOUSING UPDATE**
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services
For Information
(Pages 5 - 8)
5. **WELFARE BENEFITS UPDATE**
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services
For Information
(Pages 9 - 14)
6. **CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES UPDATE**
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services
For Information
(Pages 15 - 18)
7. **COMMUNITY PROJECTS ON ESTATES**
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services
For Information
(Pages 19 - 54)
8. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2014/15**
Report of the Chamberlain and the Director of Community & Children's Services
For Decision
(Pages 55 - 66)
9. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB COMMITTEE**
10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**
11. **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 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act as follows:-

Part 2 - Non-Public Reports

12. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**
To approve the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2013
For Decision
(Pages 67 - 68)
13. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB COMMITTEE**
14. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE SUB COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

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Agenda Item 3

HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB (COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE Thursday, 26 September 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, 26 September 2013 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Deputy Billy Dove
Deputy the Revd Stephen Haines
Deputy Henry Jones
Gareth Moore
Adam Richardson

Officers:

Philippa Sewell	- Town Clerk's Department
Natasha Dogra	- Town Clerk's Department
James Goodsell	- Town Clerk's Department
Ade Adetosoye	- Community & Children's Services
Eddie Stevens	- Community & Children's Services
Jacqui Campbell	- Community & Children's Services
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's Department
Karen Tarbox	- Community & Children's Services
Inez Cornwell	- Community & Children's Services
Anne Mason	- Community & Children's Services

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Deputy Chairman Virginia Rounding, Revd Dr Martin Dudley, Alderman David Graves, Elizabeth Rogula and Angela Starling.

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

Mr Gareth Moore declared an interest in housing matters, as a tenant of Golden Lane Estate, and Deputy Henry Jones declared an interest in matters relating to the Middlesex Street Estate as he was a residential and business lease holder.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 11 July 2013 be approved as a correct record.

4. ASSAULTS ON STAFF UPDATE AND LONE WORKING POLICY

The Sub Committee received a report from the Director of Community and Children's Services. Officers advised that despite a negligible number of assaults in the past, a significant rise last year led to measures being taken to ensure staff safety and subsequently incident levels for 2013 had dropped.

Members noted that a Lone Working Policy had also been drafted to improve safety for housing officers and social workers.

In response to Members' questions it was established that no common cause had been identified regarding the assaults, though there was an anecdotal increase in people with mental health issues and financial pressures could heighten agitation.

5. GAS SAFETY REGULATIONS - LANDLORDS RESPONSIBILITIES

The Sub Committee received a report from the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding Landlords' responsibilities for gas safety, as requested at the previous meeting by the Deputy Chairman. With regard to flats not managed by the Corporation, Members discussed the potential for accident as leaseholders had no obligation to ensure gas safety regulations were observed. Officers advised that negotiated boiler servicing rate was offered to leaseholders on a regular basis and, though take up was positive, it was thought that numbers totalled less than 50%.

6. HOUSING ESTATES - ALLOCATED MEMBERS' REPORT

The Sub Committee received a report from the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding the housing estate updates from Allocated Members. The Chairman praised the report and undertook to visit Lammas Green in addition to Mais House. Members discussed the issues of Japanese knotweed and damp at the almshouses, and it was noted that some of the properties affected housed particularly vulnerable people and significant work would be needed to support them and fix the problems.

Members discussed the success of the apprenticeship scheme, and the Chairman requested that a report summarising apprenticeships schemes throughout the Corporation be brought to Establishment Committee for their information. In response to a Member's question, officers advised that Spitalfields Market was not suitable for social housing and units were sold whenever they became available. It was agreed that an update on numbers would be reported to the next meeting. With regards to the concern over condition of windows at Holloway and York Way estates, the Director for Community and Children's Services advised that approval had been given to accelerate the window replacement programme, and that Holloway would be a priority for improvement work.

7. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no urgent items.

9. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds

that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Item	Paragraph
10 – 11	3
12	1
13 – 16	3

10. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

The non-public minutes and summary of the meeting held on 11 July 2013 were approved.

11. COMPREHENSIVE LIFT MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

The Sub Committee received a report from the Director of Community and Children's Services.

12. CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES - APPLICATIONS TO WAITING LIST

The Sub Committee received a report from the Director of Community and Children's Services.

13. FORMER TENANT ARREARS WRITE-OFF

The Sub Committee received a report from the Director of Community and Children's Services.

14. HOUSING PROJECTS PORTFOLIO UPDATE

The Sub Committee received a report from the Director of Community and Children's Services.

15. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

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

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 2.27 pm

Chairman

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Agenda Item 4

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee	27 November 2013
Subject: Housing Update	Public
Report of: Director of Community & Children's Services	For Information
Summary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is a new, six monthly update on Housing Service performance and management information, to keep Members up to date with progress against key areas of work. The report covers performance for the first half of the financial year – 1 April to 30 September.• Members may wish to note that:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Performance on responsive repairs has met or exceeded targets. We are not currently able to report on satisfaction with repairs, but will do so in the next of these reports;○ Performance on the percentage of properties with gas safety certificates has already improved significantly since last year;○ Performance on rent collection is slightly below target but continues to remain high despite the impact of welfare benefit reforms;○ We have seen a large increase in Right to Buy applications and sales since the Government introduced larger discounts and new eligibility criteria;○ Performance on benefit claims has exceeded targets.	
Recommendation	
Members are asked to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note the report.	

Main Report

Background

1. This is a new report which will be presented to the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee every six months. It provides Members with an overview of Housing Service performance and progress on key issues, plus some additional information of interest.
2. The report covers the period 1 April to 30 September. It has been organised to give Members information on each of 6 areas of work:

- Repairs & Maintenance
- Estate Management, Resident Involvement & Revenues
- Allocations
- Affordable Housing & Major Projects
- Benefits
- Finance

Repairs & Maintenance

3. Performance information on our responsive repairs service is collected and reported quarterly. The service is run by our contractor, Linbrook (shortly to be rebranded Wates).

Performance indicator	Target	Mid-year performance
'Immediate' repairs (complete within 2 hours)	100%	100%
'Emergency' repairs (complete within 24 hours)	95%	98%
'Urgent' repairs (complete within 3 working days)	95%	98%
'Routine' repairs (complete within 5 working days)	93%	98%
'Routine' repairs (complete within 20 working days)	96%	98%
% of jobs for which post-work inspections were carried out	15%	15%
Average time taken to complete works in empty properties to prepare for relet)	10 working days	7.35 working days

4. Gas servicing is done by our contractor, Carillion, who work closely with City staff to gain access to properties and carry out the necessary checks. 98% of our properties now have up to date CP12 gas safety certificates. Our target is 100%, but the performance so far this year is a significant improvement on the 2012/13 figure of 93.4%.

Estate Management, Resident Involvement and Revenues

5. Satisfaction with estate services (cleaning, appearance of the estate and customer service) are measured annually and will be included in this report in May. Performance on other relevant indicators is below:

Performance indicator	Target	Mid-year performance
% Rent collected	98.5%	98.29%
% Tenants with more than 4 weeks rent arrears	<7%	6.6%

6. There were 33 incidents of anti-social behaviour on our estates during the six months. Most of these were minor issues which would not be classed as anti-social behaviour by the police. We are developing a new anti-social behaviour policy to reflect changes in legislation and to ensure we are dealing with and reporting anti-social behaviour consistently and according to good practice guidelines.
7. 24 Right to Buy applications were made during the 6 month period. Four applications resulted in sales. These figures are considerably higher than last year, when a total of 28 Right to Buy applications were received for the whole year, and only one resulted in a sale.
8. Resident involvement is largely carried out on a local basis, and we are developing ways of recording the number of people involved. A new Resident Involvement Plan is being developed and will be brought to Members for agreement in due course.

Allocations

9. The number of people currently on our waiting list is 1182. There have been 88 vacancies during the last six months, including 20 newly built homes. The average time taken to relet a property from the day the keys are handed back to the day they are given to a new tenant during this period was 21 days. The target is 24 days.

Affordable housing & major projects

10. This area of work is the subject of a more detailed six-monthly report to the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee. However, highlights in this area of work are:
 - 20 new properties completed and let on the Middlesex Street Estate
 - The estate office at Avondale Square has relocated, ready for the existing site to be demolished and a new centre and additional homes constructed.

Benefits

11. There are currently 1069 households in the City and on our housing estates claiming benefits. Performance on our indicators is as follows:

Performance indicator	Target	Mid-year performance
Average time taken to process new benefit claims	28 days	16 days
% New claims decided within 14 days	<90%	96%
Average number of days taken to process notification of changes of circumstance	10 days	9 days

Finance

12. Also within this agenda is a report on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital Budgets 2014/15. This sets out the latest approved budget for 2013/14 and the original budget for 2014/15. This will inform members of the HRA'S latest financial position.

Appendices

None

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Committee(s):	Date(s):
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee	27 November 2013
Subject: Welfare Benefits Update	Public
Report of: Director of Community & Children's Services	For Information

Summary

This report presents an update on national changes to the welfare benefits system. It outlines the measures being taken to support our residents through these changes, and what the impact has been to date.

Measures taken so far include identifying every household affected and allocating a specific officer to work on each case, as well as an extensive programme of information and advice work.

The report shows that 80 households have been affected by the Bedroom Cap. Of these, 17 are no longer affected, partly as a result of support from the Housing Service.

The report also advises Members on measures currently being taken to help tenants affected by the Bedroom Cap avoid eviction and under what circumstances we would be prepared to take steps to evict.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. In 2010, the government announced a programme of changes to reform the welfare benefits system. Chief amongst these were:

- Reductions in housing benefit to households considered to be occupying accommodation with more bedrooms than needed – known as the Bedroom Cap;
- An overall cap on total benefits payable to a household, limiting these to £500 per week for couples and lone parents and £350 per week for single adults – known as the Benefits Cap;
- The introduction of a new benefit, Universal Credit, designed to replace housing benefit, income support and other types of payment. This will not be introduced in the City of London until 2014 at the earliest.

2. The lead role in co-ordinating the City's response to these changes was taken by the Housing Service. A number of briefing sessions have been held for staff, a working group was set up, incorporating officers not only from the City but from the City Advice service run by Toynbee Hall, and an action plan developed.
3. We are now some months into the start of the changes, and are in a position to update Members on what actions have been taken to support residents and what the impacts have been so far.

Actions taken to date

4. An extensive communications campaign has taken place to make residents aware of the changes. Articles have been published in 'Your Homes', leaflets distributed to all households and a regular newsletter introduced. We have adopted the slogan "Pay your rent to keep your home" to make sure people understand how serious the impact of the changes can be. This is now being used on all publications.
5. Officers have identified all the households in the City and on our housing estates affected by the Bedroom Cap and Benefits Cap. Each household has been allocated to a named officer who is responsible for making contact with the household and engaging them in discussions about the changes and how they will deal with them. Contact is made by letter, telephone and visit, and strenuous attempts are made to establish a dialogue with the tenants.
6. We have increased staffing resources to help as many of our tenants as possible retain their homes. We have appointed an additional Income Recovery Officer to work on preventing rent arrears and are about to appoint an additional Tenancy Support Officer to work with our most vulnerable tenants.
7. Tenants wishing to move to a smaller property in order to avoid financial loss under the Bedroom Cap are prioritised under our Allocations policy. Where such a transfer is organised by us, a shift allowance is payable to the tenant to assist with the costs of the move.
8. Staff have been given briefing sessions on the benefit changes and provided with information to help them support residents. As Estate Officers have carried our routine home visits or met with residents on other matters, they are taking the opportunity to discuss the changes and raise awareness.
9. We have worked very closely with the City Advice service. City Advice staff and our own benefits Team have run surgeries and advice sessions on our estates. Take up has been high.
10. The City has been allocated a grant of £36,373 in 2013/14 to provide Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs). These can be given to help people on Housing Benefit who have a shortfall between their Housing Benefit and their rent. We have put in place new procedures for assessing and allocating DHPs. Since April, we have had 57 requests for DHPs. 43 were successful, and the

others were turned down because they had sufficient income to meet the shortfall in their rent. So far, we have awarded £24,247 in DHPs.

11. We have also entered into a partnership with the London Borough of Lambeth, who are administering crisis payments on our behalf under the Emergency Support Scheme

Impact to date – Bedroom cap

12. The Bedroom Cap was introduced in April 2013. It is estimated that more than 600,000 social housing tenants are affected nationally by this change, which will require them to either move home or pay an average of £14 extra per week to pay for spare rooms in their homes. In a study by the professional journal 'Inside Housing', ten social landlords reported that 53% of their tenants affected by the Bedroom Cap are now in rent arrears, compared to 35% in March 2013. It is reported that many of these households have never been behind with their rent before. [Inside Housing, 21/06/13].
13. A total of 80 households in the City or on our housing estates have been affected by this cap.
14. So far, 17 households have been supported and are no longer affected:
 - 5 have been rehoused into smaller properties
 - 5 have taken in lodgers or had additional family members move in so are no longer under-occupying;
 - 2 have moved away to housing elsewhere in the country;
 - 1 has reached pension age and the cap no longer applies;
 - 1 has had a child reach the age where they qualify for an extra bedroom;
 - 1 has started work and is no longer claiming Housing Benefit
 - 1 now needs an overnight carer, so it permitted an extra bedroom;
 - 1 withdrew their Housing Benefit claim.
15. We continue to work with the remaining 63 households. Most of these are currently proposing to remain in their homes and cope with the reduced benefit. However, we are already seeing an increase in rent arrears amongst these households. A sample taken in week 17 of the financial year showed that arrears in the households affected had risen by an average of £54 per property. Clearly, this is a worrying trend, and one we are monitoring closely.
16. DHPs have been used so far to help 21 households affected by the Bedroom Cap. The support can help households on a temporary basis. This is particularly useful for a transition period, for example, until a smaller property can be found for them or where a child is close to the age where they are entitled to their own room and the family is no longer affected by the Bedroom Cap. Payments have been reviewed in October and further attempts made to help households find more permanent solutions like moving to a smaller property.

Impact to date – Benefits Cap

17. The Benefits Cap was introduced for City of London tenants and residents on 15 July 2013.
18. Only 8 households have been identified as being affected and we have offered support to these households to help them cope.

Universal Credit

19. The next challenge facing us will be the introduction of Universal Credit in October 2014. Universal Credit will be a single monthly payment to each household which will replace:
 - Jobseekers Allowance
 - Employment Support Allowance
 - Income Support
 - Child Tax Credit
 - Working Tax Credit
 - Housing Benefit
20. It will be personalised according to every household's circumstances and is designed to make sure that households are better off in work than unemployed. It will not affect people of pension age.
21. Unlike Housing Benefit, which is paid direct to the landlord to pay rent, Universal Credit will be paid direct to the claimant, who will be responsible for managing all their household costs, including rent, themselves.
22. Whilst many households will be capable of dealing with this, there will be others who struggle and, in the face of competing demands for their money, may prioritise the most immediate pressures and not their rent. Pilots running in six local authority areas have found a significant increase in rent arrears, and this will have a serious impact on the business plans of social landlords.
23. The government has now changed its policy so that if a tenant has the equivalent of one month's rent arrears, the decision to pay Universal Credit directly to them will be reviewed, and if the arrears reach the equivalent of two months' rent, the payment of housing related support will automatically revert to the landlord. This is welcome news, but direct payments will still pose many challenges for landlords.
24. To prepare for the introduction of Universal Credit, officers are planning a number of measures. These include:
 - organising debt counselling and money-management training for front-line staff so that they can assist tenants with advice and information;
 - reviewing arrangements for the collection of rent, making sure that as many people as possible pay by direct debit and considering other means of payment;

- promoting the changes to residents to help them prepare.
25. We are also exploring work with a number of partners, including Trading Standards, Toynbee Hall, RBS and the Big Issue to develop a package of financial inclusion measures to support residents. We will update Members on these plans as we move forward.

Evictions as a result of Bedroom Cap

26. A number of local authorities have announced that they will not evict tenants for rental arrears incurred as a result of the Bedroom Cap. The City does not currently have a specific policy on this matter.
27. Over the next few months, officers will be developing a Rents Policy and this will be brought to Members for agreement early in 2014, to be implemented from 1 April. This policy will cover a range of rent and tenancy related issues, including arrears and evictions.
28. In the meantime, we are working with residents and doing everything we can to engage with them and help them to either move home or find a way of making up the shortfall in benefits – perhaps through finding employment or taking in a lodger. We are also using Discretionary Housing Payments to support them whilst they find a solution to their problem. By working with tenants in this way, we seek to prevent them falling into serious arrears and therefore to avoid having to seek the permission of the courts to evict.
29. We would not at this time propose the adoption of a blanket ‘no eviction’ policy for people affected by the Bedroom Cap as it would allow some tenants to simply ignore the changes and to accrue major arrears without consequence. This would be extremely unfair on those tenants who have taken action and moved to smaller properties, taken in lodgers, increased their earnings or found another solution.
30. Should tenants fall into serious arrears before our new Rents Policy is in place, we would consider each case individually. However, generally, we would expect only to consider seeking permission to evict if the tenants have been offered alternative accommodation suitable for their needs and have refused it without reasonable grounds. If no suitable accommodation is available but they are willing to move, we would expect to offer Discretionary Housing Payments to cover the shortfall until we have a property available.
31. The Rents Policy will provide for a long-term protocol for dealing with households affected by benefit reform, and will also look at other households in adverse circumstances outside their control, but the current practice allows us to deal sensitively but fairly with households affected at present.
32. Because we are able to offer Discretionary Housing Payments at present, there is no financial risk to the City of this practice. In the longer term, a financial impact assessment will need to be carried out as part of the development of the Rents Policy.

Consultees

The Chamberlain, Comptroller and Town Clerk have been consulted in the development of this report.

Appendices

None

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Committee(s):	Date(s):
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee	27 November 2013
Subject: City of London Almshouses Update	Public
Report of: Director of Community & Children's Services	For Information
Summary	
<p>This report gives Members an information update on the City of London Almshouses, in Lambeth. Some of the information in the report also relates to the eight Gresham Almshouses on the estate.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the report. 	

Main Report

Background

1. In February 2013 the City of London Almshouses Trustees Committee was merged with the Housing Management Sub Committee to form the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee. This report is presented to alternate meetings of the Sub Committee. It updates Members on operational matters relating to the Almshouses and their residents, and highlights any issues of concern, particularly where funding is required for which is not included in the current year's budget.

Social events

2. Residents enjoyed a trip to Sissinghurst Castle in the summer. One of the trips requested earlier in the year was for a shopping trip and this will take place in November in time for some Christmas shopping. Following last year's successful Christmas lunch, residents are in the process of picking which restaurant they would like to visit this year.
3. Unfortunately Lambeth Community Transport is no longer available (due to funding cuts the transport is only now available for school trips) Using the Community Transport allowed us to keep costs low, however residents were very happy with the alternative transport the Matron booked for their trip to Sissinghurst. This transport company is used by other sheltered housing estates so the Matron was confident the residents would have safe and comfortable trips.

4. Residents expressed thanks to the Trustees for the Social Fund which continues to support building a community spirit.

Christmas hampers

5. The order for Christmas hampers will be placed before the end of October to enable an "Early Order" discount to be claimed. The date for delivering hampers will be agreed with the Chairman of the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee, and all Members of the Sub Committee will be invited to attend.

Garden work

6. The Trustees agreed an additional budget of £25,000 to carry out landscaping to the gardens. Residents have had three meetings and a ballot to discuss what shape the landscaping should take. There are a few residents who would like to keep the grounds untouched, although several are keen to have seating areas as well as vegetable patches and possibly a greenhouse. During the summer due to such excellent weather there has been an increase in the number of trespassers on the grounds. This has caused many residents to become anxious about their security and although the local Safer Neighbourhood Team have been informed and have increased their presence in the area as a deterrent, the presence of trespassers continues to cause distress to the most vulnerable residents. The residents have requested that we defer the improving garden facilities until we are able to investigate options for improving site security with electronic opening gates and possibly CCTV installation. Proposals and options are being sought to bring to Members for consideration shortly.
7. The last visit from the company treating the Japanese Knotweed problem has taken place. We are hoping for clearance from the company to enable maintenance to be undertaken on the affected areas.
8. A large number of bulbs have been purchased and are ready for planting over the next few weeks. This will bring some welcome spring colour into the garden in the New Year.

Community Facility & Office

9. A planning application has been submitted to the London Borough of Lambeth, to change the former Deputy Matron's flat to an office and community meeting place. This was agreed by Trustees at the last meeting of the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee. Work will commence as soon as we have permission, but, in the meantime, we are consulting with residents about what they would like to have in the new facility.

Supporting People funding

10. Officers have had several meetings with officers of the London Borough of Lambeth regarding the withdrawal of the Supporting People grant in 2014. Much work has been undertaken on assessing costs currently covered by the Supporting People grant and transferring these costs to Housing Benefit funding.

This will cover some of the shortfall from the loss of the grant. A template form has been developed for testing the process to ensure the computer system will calculate the costs which residents will be able to claim. A further report will be brought to the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee if the testing shows a significant adverse impact on residents.

Essential works to Rogers properties

11. Following extensive work to identify the source of damp problems and water ingress to a block of two-storied cottages known as the 'Rogers Cottages', our Property Services Team have received a surveyor's report specifying works required to address the problems. Most of the proposed works are not urgent and will be included in the capital programme for future years. However, there are some essential works which must take place as quickly as possible and which will make a considerable difference to the residents.
12. The overall programme of work needed is estimated to cost in the region of £125k over 5 years. The urgent phase of work is currently out to tender, and estimates suggest that it will cost a maximum of £30k. However, there will be considerable disruption to residents. In order to minimise this, we will need to bring in a removal company to pack, remove and store belongings, and to return these to their original positions following the work. We will need to insure belongings, and to bring in professional cleaners when the work is complete.
13. The work will be done to one property at a time, and the work is expected to last a week in each property. Some of the residents are particularly vulnerable, and we may need to provide additional care and support, either within their homes if they prefer to remain there whilst the work is carried out, or in an appropriate location such as a respite centre if they need to be moved out.
14. Taking into account the additional support needs, the total package of work required in the next year will cost in the region of £50k. This sum has been included in budget estimates for 2013/14, which will be presented to the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee at the same meeting as this report.

Staffing

15. The Sheltered Housing Officer post previously notified to Members has been advertised and an appointment made. Elise Cassar, one of our Apprentices, is the successful candidate. Elise has spent the last year working on our sheltered estates and is looking forward to working at the Almshouses. We are now reviewing gardening arrangements to increase the gardening support on the estate.

Vacancies and applications

16. There are currently no vacancies. There are 4 applicants on the Waiting List, all of whom have been approved, and two other applicants in the assessment process.

Financial implications

17. The work required to the Rogers cottages as outlined in paragraphs 10-13 above will be included in the budget for 2013/14.

Consultees

The Chamberlain, Comptroller and Town Clerk have been consulted in the development of this report.

Appendices

None

Jacquie Campbell

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Committee(s):	Date(s):
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee	27 November 2013
Subject: Community Projects on Estates	Public
Report of: Director of Community & Children's Services	For Information

Summary

- This report tells Members about a range of community projects which have taken place on particular housing estates in 2012 and 2013.
- Most of these projects have been run in partnership with Waste Watch, under their 'Our Common Place' programme, and their report of the work they have done is attached as Appendix A. They worked with local staff and residents to run projects on three estates; Golden Lane, Avondale Square and Dron House.
- The Housing Service has also launched its own Good Neighbour Scheme, on the Middlesex Street Estate. This is now being extended, first to Golden Lane, and then to all our estates.
- The success of the community work led to the creation of a 2 year Community Development Manager role to work with all estates to encourage volunteering and develop projects to bring the community together.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. From extensive consultation, we know that one of the things our residents value most about their estates is that they are safe, friendly places to live. Nevertheless, in recent years, we have listened to residents who feel that the estates no longer have the sense of community spirit that they used to, and that neighbours no longer look after each other as much as they did in the past.
2. Much of this is simply the impact of modern living. Families are dispersed and people work longer hours, with many more women, who might in the past have supported neighbours, working outside the home. Technology, whilst having many benefits, can cause social isolation.

3. Housing officers felt that it would be useful to trial some community development work on specific estates to see if we could support and encourage residents to come together to support each other and become more involved with their estate, so that they had a stronger sense of ownership and belonging. We wanted to have a 'green' theme to some projects to develop stronger support for recycling and environmental sustainability.
4. Crucial to the success of any projects would be persuading residents to volunteer in their community, and so SPICE have been an integral part of this work throughout, using time credits to reward and motivate and helping us to promote volunteering.
5. Waste Watch was already doing some work with residents on Golden Lane Estate on environmental projects, and we felt it would be sensible to build on this partnership. They had already developed a programme of community building for social housing estates called "Our Common Place", and we felt this was a good model. We commissioned them to continue their work on Golden Lane, but also to work on two other estates. Avondale Square Estate was chosen as our largest estate, and Dron House because there had been some anti-social behaviour there. This was being tackled by managers, and we felt that residents would benefit from some additional support.
6. At the same time, we set up a pilot Good Neighbour Scheme at Middlesex Street Estate, to link volunteers wishing to help their neighbours with vulnerable people and newcomers to the estate. We have worked in partnership with Broadway and Community Service Volunteers on this project, which was provided with seed funding from the Small Grants Scheme.

Our Common Place

7. The 'Our Common Place' programme ran from June 2012 for one year. The aims we agreed with Waste Watch for the work were:
 - To engender a sense of ownership of the estate by involving people in caring for it;
 - To encourage residents to respect each other and their environment;
 - To engage particularly with young people and short-term residents, to encourage consideration for neighbours and for their estate;
 - To improve the appearance of the estate through environmental projects;
 - To promote energy conservation, recycling and environmental responsibility.
8. £25k funding for the projects was provided by the Housing Revenue Account, with a further £5k being contributed by the City's Recycling Team.
9. Waste Watch started their year by engaging with staff and residents, running workshops, meetings and drop in sessions and going door to door to seek views and ideas. Through this process of listening to people, they developed posters which set out the values of the people living on each estate, to provide inspiration for projects. They then held an exhibition on each estate to discuss these values and officially launch the programme.

10. The next part of the process was for residents to identify the projects and initiatives that they wished to have on their estate. Waste Watch facilitated this, but the emphasis throughout was that the residents decided what they wanted and were in control, not Waste Watch or the City.
11. As a result, a programme of initiatives was developed for each of the three estates. This was adapted during the year, as priorities changed and in response to practical issues. A detailed description of the projects can be found in the 'Our Common Place' report attached at Appendix 1, but they included:
- The establishment of a composter, with training and promotion across the estate, at Golden Lane;
 - A Christmas event and summer barbeque at Dron House;
 - The setting up of a community garden at Avondale Square, with plots for individuals and families as well as for all residents;
 - A gardening Buddy scheme at Golden Lane;
 - Bingo sessions to bring together sheltered housing residents at Avondale Square with neighbours elsewhere on the estate;
 - A toy and book swap as part of the Golden Lane Christmas Fayre;
 - A project at Avondale Square to collect memories and thoughts about living on the estate from residents and to produce a CD of these. The title of the CD was taken from a quote from one long-term resident who said "The estate has changed.....and so have I!"

12. A year is a very short time in community development terms, and the amount which could be achieved was, inevitably, limited. Although Waste Watch carried out pre and post project surveys, responses were low and it would not be possible to draw conclusions based on statistical evidence. However, there has been considerable positive anecdotal feedback, which has been encouraging. Quotes from residents about the projects include:

"Golden Lane had its community networks consolidated as a result of the project and this helped strengthen our community."

"Being part of the Dron House Film Club has helped me meet my neighbours who I'd never made an effort to build a relationship with due to coming home from work and making no effort to get to know the community I live in."

"I am now more confident at meeting people, and have a desire to encourage children to get more involved in community projects."

"I have increased my sense of value of my local community."

"We knew we could do things like this as a group of residents but it has been your involvement that has made it happen. Being involved in the project has made us think differently."

"It was nice to get involved and to know someone was looking out for residents needs in some way. Having things like this happen are great for taking loneliness away."

I have lived here for 14 years and there has never been any community at Dron House before this.”

Good Neighbour Scheme

13. The Good Neighbour Scheme was set up by officers at Middlesex Street Estate to see if we could encourage people to support individuals in their community. We felt that by providing support and a framework for people, we would make it easier for them to volunteer.
14. The scheme recruits volunteers and matches them to vulnerable people who would like some support, or to newcomers who would appreciate a welcome. As well as promoting the scheme, we provide guidelines, so that volunteers have clear boundaries and understand their roles, and ongoing staff support. Working with Community Service Volunteers, we provide training for the volunteers, including in safeguarding issues, and we also organise security checks. We offer expenses and are providing equipment for tasks like gardening.
15. Good Neighbours may undertake a range of volunteering. Some might focus on befriending – simply calling in to see an isolated neighbour and perhaps taking them out occasionally. Some run errands, such as fetching library books, posting letters and doing small amounts of shopping. They might introduce a newcomer to the estate to neighbours or take them to an event or estate meeting, to help them settle in. Others are happy to do light gardening on behalf of neighbours. The Scheme has also encompassed a gardening group, which works on communal gardens for the benefit of all residents.
16. All Good Neighbours receive time credits for every hour of time that they give and can spend these on a variety of local activities.
17. The Good Neighbour Scheme is currently involving a small number of residents but is steadily growing. Residents at Golden Lane Estate started some ‘buddying’ as part of the Our Common Place programme and we are now supporting them to establish this as a Good Neighbour Scheme. There has been considerable interest from other estates, and we now propose to roll the scheme out further over the next 2 years.

Next steps

18. The outcomes of the pilot community projects have been encouraging and we will now be building on this work. As part of the Estates Management Restructure, it was agreed that a post of Community Development Manager would be established on a two-year, fixed-term contract. The purpose of this post will be to extend and embed the use of time credits in the City and its estates, and to work with staff and residents on all estates to develop projects which will strengthen communities.
19. 50% of the funding for the post is coming from the Community & Children’s Services Department, rather than the Housing Revenue Account, as the post will

be promoting time credits across the City, not only on our estates. Although the operational management of the post will be carried out within Housing, the role and job description has been developed jointly with SPICE, and the programme of work will be managed in partnership with SPICE.

20. Part of the role will be to help residents take on long-term responsibility for the continuation of projects. We hope, for example that, eventually, residents will co-ordinate and run their own Good Neighbour Schemes. This will require support and capacity building but will benefit residents by giving them new skills and experience, and will allow the work to continue beyond the 2 years of the Community Development Manager post.

21. At time of writing, interviews for the post have not yet taken place. We hope to be able to verbally inform Members of the appointment and the new Community Development Manager will present reports to the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee to update them on progress during the two year period.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Our Common Place – Community Development Projects on Estates, City of London 2012/13

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**Community Development Projects on Estates
City of London 2012/2013**

Written by Douglas Kemp, Our Common Place Programme Officer, September 2013

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1. Introduction

This report details the engagement work carried out by Waste Watch (part of Keep Britain Tidy) as part of the City of London’s community development projects on estates. The engagement took place over 12 months on three estates managed by the City of London: Golden Lane within the City boundaries, Dron House in Tower Hamlets and Avondale Square in Southwark. This project sits alongside other work carried out by Waste Watch as part of the Our Common Place Programme on City of London Estates in 2011/2012; in the East London Waste Authority area as part of the ‘Recycle for Your Community’ programme from 2011 onwards; and in the Western Riverside Waste Authority area from 2011 – 2013.

This report outlines the ‘Our Common Place’ approach taken, the initiatives delivered and the benefits accruing to those involved. Our approach enabled participants to collectively and practically explore ways to help build strong communities, through developing a shared local identity for residents whilst simultaneously improving recycling performance and supporting residents to develop more sustainable lifestyles.

With expert guidance and advice, each community led, developed and delivered several initiatives based around fostering community cohesion and/or sustainable lifestyles. Communities were encouraged to explore and act on issues relating to community wellbeing that also provided wider social, environmental and economic benefits to that community. Waste Watch facilitated the process, but, as far as possible, initiatives were designed, delivered and led by the community themselves. A diverse set of initiatives emerged over the course of the project ranging from a film club and market day, to holding a summer BBQ and community gardening. In addition, Waste Watch was able to develop the capacity and operations of various residents groups, collaborate with partner organisations, attend and present at community meetings and work alongside council staff to assist in service delivery. Our Common Place closely follows the Waste Watch principle of ‘working from values’¹

¹ Waste Watch (2011) *Discussion Paper 1: Working from Values*. Available online at: <http://www.wastewatch.org.uk/data/files/resources/59/Working-with-values.pdf>

1.1 The Our Common Place Approach

Our Common Place² (OCP) connects people with where they live. It is an approach taken towards working with communities which attempts to engage people in the set-up, promotion and running of successful community led projects. As far as possible, engagement work is long-term rather than 'one-off', such as engaging with residents through a one off public roadshow. The programme aims to inspire and encourage people to get involved in their communities not just as recipients of a service but as fully involved co-producers. Over a period of nine to twelve months, community members work alongside Waste Watch staff to design and deliver a series of initiatives that contribute to global sustainability and community wellbeing. The approach is unique in that through recognising the important role our values play in shaping our attitudes, behaviours and involvement in community life, initiatives inspired and driven by OCP emphasise and reinforce intrinsic values such as care, respect, pride, creativity, tolerance, empathy, sharing and kindness.

By connecting more environmentally sustainable ways of life with community cohesion and an increase in personal wellbeing the innovative work of OCP seeks to help create stronger communities that are happier, more resilient and more sustainable. It relies on an action-learning process involving the co-production of community activities and events. The Our Common Place approach has been recognized as one of the first examples of community engagement work that embeds learning from the influential WWF report Common Cause.³

2. Project Outline

The project aimed:

- To engender a sense of ownership of the estate by involving people in caring for it
- To encourage residents to respect each other and their environment
- To engage particularly with young people and short-term residents, to develop consideration for neighbours and for their estate
- To improve the appearance of the estate through environmental projects
- To promote energy conservation, recycling and environmental responsibility

2.1 Gaining an understanding of the community

Identification of the estates chosen to participate was undertaken by City of London staff. Waste Watch began the project by starting process of 'listening' to get to know each community. Through attendance at community meetings, browsing of locally focused social media sites and door to door visits, Waste Watch staff conducted an exercise in learning about community life on each estate. This 'listening' process allowed Waste Watch to gain a deeper understanding of the concerns, hopes, fears and lives of community members.

A key component of this listening process was the creation of values posters. Residents were asked to write or draw what was important to them in life or what they really cared about. These values were then used to create a display or exhibition at an event on each

² Phillips, M. (2012) *Our Common Place overview and summary report* Available online at: <http://www.wastewatch.org.uk/pages/what-we-do-our-common-place-282.html>

³ Ter Kuile, C. (2012) *Campaign Case Study: Waste Watch*. Available online at: <http://valuesandframes.org/campaign-case-study-waste-watch/>

estate and would hopefully provide inspiration into the initiatives residents chose to work on. It was also part of a process whereby intrinsic values were reinforced and stimulated throughout the course of the project.



Figure 1: Avondale Square values 'wordle'

This 'listening was complemented and delivered, as part of the baseline monitoring for the project. Baseline monitoring included a survey of local environmental quality, observation of recycling bin use and a door to door questionnaire (for details of methodology see section 4).

2.2 Values Exhibitions

Each estate held a values exhibition to officially begin Waste Watch’s engagement with the community and to act as a launch to the project.

Through the launch, Waste Watch and those engaged were to agree on three initiatives to run over the course of the project. Each initiative would need to be focused on strengthening the community and encouraging sustainable behaviours. In the following ten months community group members, partner organisations and individuals would co-design and deliver these initiatives, supported by Waste Watch.

During a brief introduction the aims, rationale and structure of the project were outlined at each launch event. Waste Watch explained that the Our Common Place approach involves the co-design and delivery of initiatives. As a facilitator, Waste Watch does things *with* communities rather than *to* them. Community members were encouraged to think of initiatives which would be fun, exciting and/or useful’ but, in their design and delivery, be mindful of the wider environmental and social impacts that might accrue. These ground rules would ensure that initiatives would serve the dual objectives reinforcing the values of community, kindness, care for others and the environment, trust, respect and empathy that underpin strong communities as well as recycling performance and sustainable behaviours.

Each values exhibition took on a different guise:

2.2.1 Golden Lane

Waste Watch hosted a standalone event and facilitated group discussions during which residents drew up a long list of potential initiatives that would improve sustainability, recycling and/or community wellbeing. These were put to the Golden Lane Estate Residents Association (GLERA) for a chance to gain extra input.



2.2.2 Dron House



The values exhibition was complimented with a display of photographs from the most recent Dron House event: a Jubilee summer party. This was intended to stimulate positive memories of a recent, highly successful community event. The values exhibition was combined with early consultation about the change of use of the Dron House Estate Community Hall⁴. Waste Watch staff facilitated a drop in session during which residents gave their ideas for potential initiatives that would improve

community wellbeing in the first instance, alongside consideration for sustainability and recycling. Further contact details were gathered and a first community gathering was scheduled to take place before the end of the calendar year.

2.2.3 Avondale Square

The values exhibition was organised as a drop in event. Waste Watch staff explained the rationale behind the values exhibition, gathered further contact details and ideas for initiatives from residents. Again, the emphasis was placed on initiatives which would improve community wellbeing in the first instance alongside consideration for sustainability and recycling benefits. A list of ideas was then presented to the Avondale Square Residents Association AGM where residents voted on which initiatives they were most in favour of.



⁴ The Dron Community Hall was part of the ground floor of one block of flats. Due to a shortage of flats with multiple bedrooms the space was earmarked for redevelopment. An office, toilets, kitchen workshop space and the community room were to be redeveloped to provide a dual purpose office/meeting room, smaller toilet facilities and two potential dwellings. It was deemed sensible to outline the plans at an early stage of the project given that action would be taken and consultation started at some point over the next 12 months.

2.3 Initiatives design

The design and delivery of the initiatives formed the central part of the engagement phase, stretching from August/September 2012 to June 2013. The term initiative is used here to describe an event, activity, consultation process, proposal development or workshop that was run as part of the project. In following the Our Common Place approach initiatives would ideally be co-designed and delivered by community members and facilitated by Waste Watch. However, where engagement of the community in the project proved harder, initiatives were designed and delivered by Waste Watch for the community. Other initiatives ran on a weekly or monthly basis, such as a club, for a set period of time, with the potential for them to run indefinitely into the future. Lastly some initiatives were a one-off, but were preceded by a series of planning meetings and promotion.

2.4 Wider context of OCP

A complimentary piece of research was carried out alongside the London wide Our Common Place 2012/2013 project delivery looking at the impact the Our Common Place approach could have on Local Environmental Quality⁵

3. Initiatives

Across the three estates a total of 14 initiatives were run. During the project approximately 570 people were spoken to, in person, about the project, their community and environmental behaviours. 288 of these people were in attendance at events and activities run as part of the initiatives, of whom, 30 were directly involved in the co-design and delivery process.

3.1 Breakdown of initiatives

The scope and variety of activity that emerged is a reflection of the diversity of needs and interests of the communities. The flexibility of Waste Watch staff and the openness of the project design meant that communities were able to follow their interests. Waste Watch took the role of facilitator, helping the community to take the initiatives forward. Waste Watch also aimed to ensure that the initiatives ran smoothly and had the right elements in place to ensure they would have life beyond the period of Waste Watch's involvement. The full range of initiatives is listed in table 1, they are categorised by colour based on the degree to which initiatives were community or Waste Watch led according to the following scale



⁵ Kemp, D. (2013) Improving LEQ: The case for the Our Common Place approach. Available Autumn 2013 – email douglas.kemp@keepbritaintidy.org for more information

Table 1 : Breakdown of OCP initiatives by estate

<i>Estate</i>	<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Participants</i>
Golden Lane	Compost training – to accompany new composter	One-off	8
Golden Lane	Garden group composting efforts as part of their usual gardening jobs	Ongoing	Up to 30
Golden Lane	Toy and Book Swap Stall – encouraging reuse at Christmas Fayre event	On-off	2
Golden Lane	Market Day: co-designed and delivered with residents	One-off	40
Golden Lane	Garden volunteering – residents volunteering to help others who are less able with their gardening	One-off	4
Golden Lane	Buddy scheme / Good neighbour scheme – co designed with residents.	Ongoing	2
Dron House	Christmas Event – residents get together	One-off	30
Dron House	Film Club equipment repair session	One-off	1
Dron House	Film Club – films shown in community hall on estate	Fortnightly x 3	5
Dron House	Film Club - Barbican cinema outing	One off	2
Dron House	Summer BBQ – residents get together	One-off	30
Avondale	Bingo – resident run Bingo in sheltered housing block	Fortnightly	10-15
Avondale	Gardening Group – Gardening group area set	Ongoing	6-10
Avondale	Avondale Stories CD – Audio CD created to share stories from residents across the estate. CD delivered to all flats to help connect residents with their community	Ongoing	600+

3.2 Case studies

3.2.1 Golden Lane

Golden Lane comprises 557 flats and is located on the Northern boundary of the City of London. It shares a boundary with the London Borough of Islington. Golden Lane benefits from a community centre, meeting room, bar and sports centre on site. A variety of ongoing and one off initiatives were established on Golden Lane. Several initiatives grew organically throughout the project alongside those discussed at the Values Exhibition.

3.2.1.1 Composting

The Golden Lane Estate has a Capital Growth⁶ supported community garden area known as the Golden Lane Allotment run by the estate Gardening Group. Members from the Gardening Group attended the launch event and expressed an interest in developing a community composting system for the allotments. At the



⁶ See <http://www.capitalgrowth.org/> for more information

time all green waste generated by the allotments was disposed of in the estate's residual waste collection.

Waste Watch supported the Gardening Group to purchase a composter from Bankside Open Space Trust⁷. To compliment the arrival of the composter at the allotments, Waste Watch delivered a compost training session for members of the gardening group. Eight members of the Gardening Group attended. The compost training covered the fundamentals of home composting: how composting works, what ingredients make up great compost and different types of compost systems available.

Resources and compost literature was provided so that Gardening Group members could pass compost training and information on to others. Organic waste from other residents on the on the estate were accepted – although these were closely monitored to make sure correct type and amount of materials was accepted – further reducing the amount of waste to landfill or reliance on food waste collection service.



Establishing composting at the allotment area diverted waste from landfill, provided a fantastic resource for the garden group to use in the compost itself and acted as a catalyst for the Gardening Group to start to see itself as more of a unified group and more involved in other estate activities. Residents remarked through a questionnaire at the end of the project that the composter and workshop has been excellent for the garden - *“it galvanised the garden group to get together and go on to do more for the community”*

3.2.1.2 Toy and Book Swap

Residents had already organised a Christmas Craft Fayre on the estate. Golden Lane resident Anna was keen to include a children's toy and book swap stall at the event to encourage reuse amongst residents looking for Christmas gifts for children. Waste Watch supported Anna in setting up the stall providing a small amount of donations. It was hoped residents would donate unwanted toys and books in exchange for others.

A donations box was set up in the Estate Office and publicity asking for donations was spread around the estate. On the day actual toy and book swaps were changed to toys and books being available in exchange for a donation towards the Cystic Fibrosis Trust⁸ which proved a more popular way to redistribute the items. A large amount of toys and books were passed on setting a good example of a simple reuse strategy which could be applied to future community events. Residents involved their children in the running the stall and said it was *“a fantastic opportunity for them to learn about helping the community, reuse and recycling”*. Any remaining items were donated to Oxfam by residents.



⁷ <http://www.bost.org.uk/> made a generous donation to the cost of the composter.

⁸ See <https://www.cysticfibrosis.org.uk/> for more information.

3.2.1.3 Buddy Scheme

A request from a concerned neighbour highlighted to Waste Watch the fact that an elderly gentleman had weeds growing up and obscuring his window from sunlight. Being unable to manage this himself, Waste Watch recruited residents to help clear the weeds and give his garden a tidy up. Four residents volunteered two hours of their time and the weeds were cleared and bulbs were planted.



Residents coordinated the volunteering on the day and felt inspired to build on the momentum and make community volunteering like this it more of a regular occurrence through the formation of a 'Buddy Scheme'. The Buddy Scheme would be an excellent way for residents to help build strong community relationships between each other. It was also an excellent example of intrinsic values playing a part in motivating individuals whilst also being strengthened through their involvement in a community initiative.

Younger residents were involved with one resident commenting that the volunteering provided *"a great opportunity for my son to get involved in community projects and see the benefit in helping others"*.

At the time of writing the realisation of the scheme was still outstanding, however, the City of London have recently trialled a similar volunteering programme titled 'The Good Neighbour Scheme'⁹ on a nearby City of London estate. Residents involved in the formation of the Buddy Scheme have enthusiastically welcomed the idea of The Good Neighbour Scheme as a suitable platform to take the Buddy Scheme idea forwards.

3.2.1.4 Market Day



Golden Lane Estate residents had organised Market Day events in the past. GLERA had purchased a set of trestle tables to encourage residents to organise more community events. Previously the hiring and storage of tables had been a barrier to organising regular community events.

Throughout the engagement phase on Golden Lane, the Market Days had been referred to fondly by

⁹ <http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/housing-and-council-tax/council-housing/housing-estates/Pages/Middlesex-Street.aspx> explains the principals Good Neighbour Scheme as it was when introduced on the Middlesex Street Estate

residents. Hosting another Market Day seemed to offer a good chance to bring the community together as well as by providing another good opportunity for reuse of household items. Residents were involved in planning the day, carrying out a risk assessment and all on the day practicalities such as setting up and packing away. Waste Watch supported them by helping to promote the event and managing stallholder applications. By involving residents as volunteers Waste Watch helped build their capacity as community organisers who would be well placed to run future community events.

The full allocation of stalls was taken up and extra residents turned up on the day eager to take part as a seller. A local band provided acoustic childrens entertainment on the day.

Residents commented that the Market Day had been “a friendly community experience” and that “I think residents enjoyed the experience”.



Early feedback suggested ideas for future events *“How nice today was! Bigger and better next time maybe have more music”*

3.2.2 Dron House

Dron House Estate is comprised of 79 flats and is located near Whitechapel station in the borough of Tower Hamlets. Dron House possesses a community hall for residents to use.

3.2.2.1 Christmas Event



Residents were keen to organise a get together for Dron House Estate that would mirror and build on the success of the Jubilee Party which took place in the summer 2012. The Christmas event was co-designed by Waste Watch and Dron House residents. The event was attended by approximately 30 residents from a wide range of backgrounds including residents from English, African, Caribbean, and Bangladeshi communities and ages from the under 5s to some residents in their 90s!

Waste Watch supported the event running a Christmas decoration making workshop using recycled materials. This engaged younger residents with the topic of recycling as well as encouraging them to explore their creativity. Decorations were used on the day to decorate

the hall then taken home to be used as gifts. Residents were encouraged to bring a dish of food to share.

The event brought residents together for only the second time in recent years. It enabled new friendships to be formed and for residents to see they had the potential to organise community events in the future. One resident remarked that he had *“spent some very good time with people from our estate.”*

3.2.2.2 Summer BBQ

After trialling a Film Club in the first few months of 2013 interest from residents had trailed off in regard to community initiatives. This turn of events actually galvanised residents, who had seen potential to build on the Christmas event to put out a passionate call to action to their fellow residents. Waste Watch facilitated the meeting and encouraged residents to pursue attempts for action as a community despite difficulties. Overall a successful meeting was held and plans were made to try to simply get residents together to meet up once again. The rationale was that until residents felt more unified as a community attempts at community projects which went beyond simply getting together would be hard to realise. Through facilitation of a subsequent planning meeting Waste Watch worked to build the capacity of residents and estate staff to organise future community events. Residents were also encouraged to use their new found desire to act collectively to reinstate regular meeting between a residents association and City of London estate management staff. The Dron House Estate Officer reflected on the project – *“As Estate officer it had considerably broadened my relationships with a number of residents. I have always got on well with most of the residents here but this project has brought a few more on board and I have enjoyed undertaking something positive with them which is not strictly work related; to mix with them as part of their community rather than just’ The Caretaker.”*

3.2.3 Avondale Square

Avondale Square is large estate comprising of 640 homes. It is located on the Old Kent Road in South Bermondsey.

3.2.3.1 Bingo

The most popular choice of initiative from residents was to establish a bingo event. Throughout the listening phase of engagement it became apparent that bingo had been popular with many residents over the years.

The lounge area in Avondale Square’s sheltered housing block (Harman Close) was suggested as a potential venue for afternoon bingo events. The first event took place with residents from another City of London sheltered housing scheme (Isleden House), who lent their bingo equipment on the day, also attending. Waste Watch facilitated the first two events until residents were keen to take over organising bingo themselves. Residents purchased their own bingo equipment and have continued to run the bingo as a fortnightly, afternoon session.



One resident remarked of the first session: *“lovely afternoon, terrific company”*.

Attendees are mostly from Harman Close with some coming from elsewhere on Avondale Square. This has provided an opportunity for Harman Close residents to spend more time with other residents, forming new friendships. One resident fed back that *“I wouldn’t normally get involved in so many community activities but bingo has provided me with the confidence and opportunities to meet new people and get more involved in community life on the estate.”*

Residents and Harman Close staff have worked closely to keep the event running, which has helped strengthen their relationship. Harman Close Scheme manager reported that she was *“Glad to report that Bingo is going well each fortnight - we have about 12 residents each time with 4 or so from Avondale Estate.”* Another resident related that bingo had *“kept me busy when other interests had dropped off [and] organising bingo has made us think differently about what we can organise, get involved with and who our friends are”*.

Residents from Harman Close have since gone on to reinstate a quiz night which runs more occasionally and engaged in the new community gardening opportunities on the estate. Through supporting the residents to establish their own bingo events Waste Watch helped unlock the potential of residents and staff to organise events, have fun and build meaningful relationships as a community.

3.2.3.2 Community Garden

Community Gardens offer a multitude of benefits to the community. These can be seen very much in relation to the five ways to wellbeing as outlined by the New Economics Foundation paper ‘Five Ways to Wellbeing’¹⁰. They help people connect and take notice with nature and where their food comes from, in particular fruit and vegetables which can impact on gardener’s diet and nutrition. They also prompt people to become more aware of their surroundings, the weather and changing seasons in particular. They provide an opportunity for participants to become more physically active. Social benefits are felt too as people working together to organise the garden.



Sharing of skills and resources is often common amongst community gardens as is sharing produce when fruit and/or vegetables are harvested. For many gardening is a learning process too with novice and experienced gardeners alike always learning new things.

Avondale Square Residents Association meetings revealed the residents plans to start a community garden on the estate. The Estate Office staff had made application for funding and set out a plan of action. However, the timescale involved meant that funding would not be available until later on in the year and the 2013 growing season would be missed. Waste Watch worked closely with

¹⁰ NEF(2008) *Five ways to wellbeing*, Available online at: <http://neweconomics.org/projects/five-ways-well-being>

estate office staff to find a way to help the garden project develop sooner rather than later. This resulted in the City of London providing financial support to kick start the project.

Discussions with Harman Close about practicalities of setting up a garden area revealed some 'dead space' which could be taken over for garden use, as well as desire for Harman Close residents to have their own garden area. Harman Close residents and staff set about funding and organising their own garden area. Waste Watch engaged with residents of



Harman Close to establish which residents were interested. These residents helped build the raised beds for the Harman Close garden, fostering a sense of ownership in the new garden. Again residents and Harman Close staff worked closely together.

Harman Close Staff commented that *“Planters are all up and running! We shifted 12.5 tonnes of topsoil and gravel last weekend - 3 shovels and 3 wheelbarrows did the trick! Several*

residents helped out and one did food in the lounge for lunch time. Really hard work but brilliant fun - great teamwork! “

Waste Watch supported plans for the garden area to be cleared by the estate porters. Their job was normally based around cleaning so to get involved with a project with a positive benefit for the community helped reinforce their role as caretakers rather than 'simply estate cleaners'¹¹.

News of the garden area spread and many residents became keen to be involved. It is hoped that the desire to be part of the estate community garden will snowball, resulting in the creation of other new gardening areas. By supporting staff and residents with the creation of the community gardens a physical legacy is now in place for the estate to benefit from year after year.



3.2.3.3 Avondale Stories

A communications budget was available to help promote community participation and positive engagement with where residents lived. This was directed at producing some form of multimedia for Avondale Square. Initial attempts to engage residents in a video project on Avondale had limited success. Attention was then focused on a project where residents were interviewed and asked to share their stories about life living on the estate. Waste Watch carried out these interviews as a mixture of vox pops gathered in and around the square, park and shops of Avondale and organised sessions at Harman Close.

¹¹ Kemp, D. (2013) Improving LEQ: The case for the Our Common Place approach. Available Autumn 2013 – email douglas.kemp@keepbritaintidy.org for more information

The interviews would be loosely structured but throughout residents were encouraged to think about the estate in terms of the values brought up during the values poster exercise. Honesty was encouraged so as not to leave an overly rose tinted view of the estate which could have been poorly received. In particular, kindness, sharing and community spirit were discussed. The interviews also provided an opportunity for older residents to reflect on their memories of living on the estate – some for as long as 72 years.



One interesting comment came from Avondale resident, Brenda. She remarked that *“the estate has changed, but so have I”*. This became the subtitle for the CD project. Many of the concerns expressed by residents were focused on the sentiment of the estate ‘not being as good as it used to be’. Brenda acknowledged this but also that she had changed as well which meant that she was far more tolerant of the changes taking place on the estate.

Through the process of carrying out the interviews between Waste Watch and residents, values such as caring, kindness and empathy were being discussed and potentially reinforced. Even residents who thought there were issues with where they lived usually reflected that Avondale was a good place to live.



These audio clips were collected and edited into a 30 minute long piece of audio and recorded onto a CD. Some challenging points were chosen for the final edit as many residents thought there were things that could be improved upon for Avondale however, on the whole however the discussions were positive and a picture of an estate which was a good place to live was presented.

Packaging was designed which told the story of the CD and how residents could get involved in their community if they wanted to do so. Co-design of the project between estate staff and Waste Watch led to the expectation that by distributing the CD to all households and new residents in the upcoming year it would provide an opportunity for residents to feel a connection with their community, realise that lots of their neighbours shared some of their concerns but that their overall feeling was a positive one.

Early suggestions of the success of the CD were observed at the final ASRA meeting where the CD began acting as a catalyst for discussions about how to add value to the new community centre scheduled for completion in 2014.

4. Monitoring impacts

To monitor the success of the work carried out Waste Watch carried out pre and post project monitoring on all three estates. Golden Lane also had monitoring specific to the recycling

performance. Dron House and Avondale, situated in Tower Hamlets and Southwark, respectively do not have their recycling collected by City of London service and therefore this was not monitored.

4.1 Wellbeing and sustainability literacy

The Our Common Place approach enables participants to collectively and practically explore sustainability issues, while simultaneously developing a shared identity and thus greater community cohesion. To measure outcomes in these areas three questionnaires were carried out. Before the project began residents from each estate were taken through a questionnaire designed to establish their understanding of the following:

- Recycling
- Perceptions of community wellbeing
- Their own wellbeing
- Perceptions of LEQ

An identical questionnaire was carried out with residents post project. The pre and post project questionnaires were analysed and give an indication of levels of personal and community wellbeing and levels of sustainability literacy.

At the conclusion of the project Waste Watch engaged with those most active in the delivery of the project, either in small groups or individually. This was an opportunity for those involved to provide feedback on the structure, organisation and concepts behind the project. Secondly, it gave a chance to plan for the future, to assign responsibilities and to ensure the initiatives continued. Finally, Waste Watch staff took participants through an additional outcomes questionnaire designed to allow reflections on the impact that the project had had on those directly involved.

4.1.1 Pre and post project questionnaires

Questionnaires were carried out with thirty residents of Golden Lane and Avondale. Fifteen questionnaires were carried out on Dron House due to the smaller size of the estate. The sample of residents was taken randomly and mostly conducted on the doorstep. Pre project questionnaires also formed part of the listening phase of the project and provided an opportunity to have residents complete a values poster, be invited to the launch event and exchange contact details if they were interested in staying involved with the project.

Respondents were made aware that they were answering questions anonymously. A total of 75 people answered the questionnaire (attached in appendix 1) pre and post intervention.

NB: Constraints on Waste Watch staff time meant that the sample sizes at this stage were perhaps smaller than ideal¹².

¹² Results reported here should not be read as statistically significant due to the small sample size. For this reason it can be difficult to fully attribute findings to the impact of OCP intervention. In addition, residents who responded to the post-project questionnaire had not been directly involved in the project. A result of this is that with a 12 month intervention period, the wider benefits the OCP approach can have on communities may not have rippled through beyond those more directly involved. See limitations and recommendations sections for more detail.

4.1.2 Attitudes to recycling

Analysis of the data indicates there was a positive shift in all measured recycling behaviours for residents from pre to post project. An example being that 72% of resident respondents regarded recycling as very important or quite important pre project, whilst this had increased to 91% of residents post project.

4.1.3 Social and Environmental Behaviours

Residents were also asked to identify if they participated in other pro-social and environmental behaviours. Specifically whether or not they made an effort to conserve energy in the home; compost their food waste; shop at local, independent shops or a market; buy locally grown fruit and vegetables; buy Fair-trade products; and lastly predominantly walk, cycle or use public transport rather than drive a car. Residents stated 251 and 237 incidents of pro social environmental behaviours pre and post project respectively.

4.1.4 5 ways to wellbeing

The New Economics Foundations' (NEF) 5 ways to wellbeing were identified by NEF and the Government as:

1. Connect
2. Keep learning,
3. Take notice
4. Giving
5. Be active

Participating in activities which include any or all of the '5 ways' contribute towards individual wellbeing. NEF argue that once individuals have met their basic physical needs (shelter, food, clothing) they need to attend to their emotional wellbeing. The remaining questions in the pre-engagement questionnaire aimed to explore the five ways to wellbeing.

Connect

To assess how *connected* residents are to their neighbours, they were asked how many people they knew by name on the estate. Combining responses from before and after the project 64% of people reported knowing between one and fifteen other people in their community, 29% knew between 16 and 50 people and 7% reporting knowing 51 or more people.

Keep Learning

32% of residents reported being involved in some form of informal *learning* pre project. This figure was lower from the post project monitoring sample with only 23% claiming to take part in some form of internal learning.

Take notice

To create a picture of the extent to which residents *take notice* of their local surroundings, monitor their perceptions of the local environmental quality and general wellbeing of the community, they were asked to rate the estate on a sliding scale of 1 to 6 for ten variables. Figure 2 display resident's perceptions, on average, for the nine variables pre and post project. Figure 2 also shows the actual template used with each resident during the questionnaire.

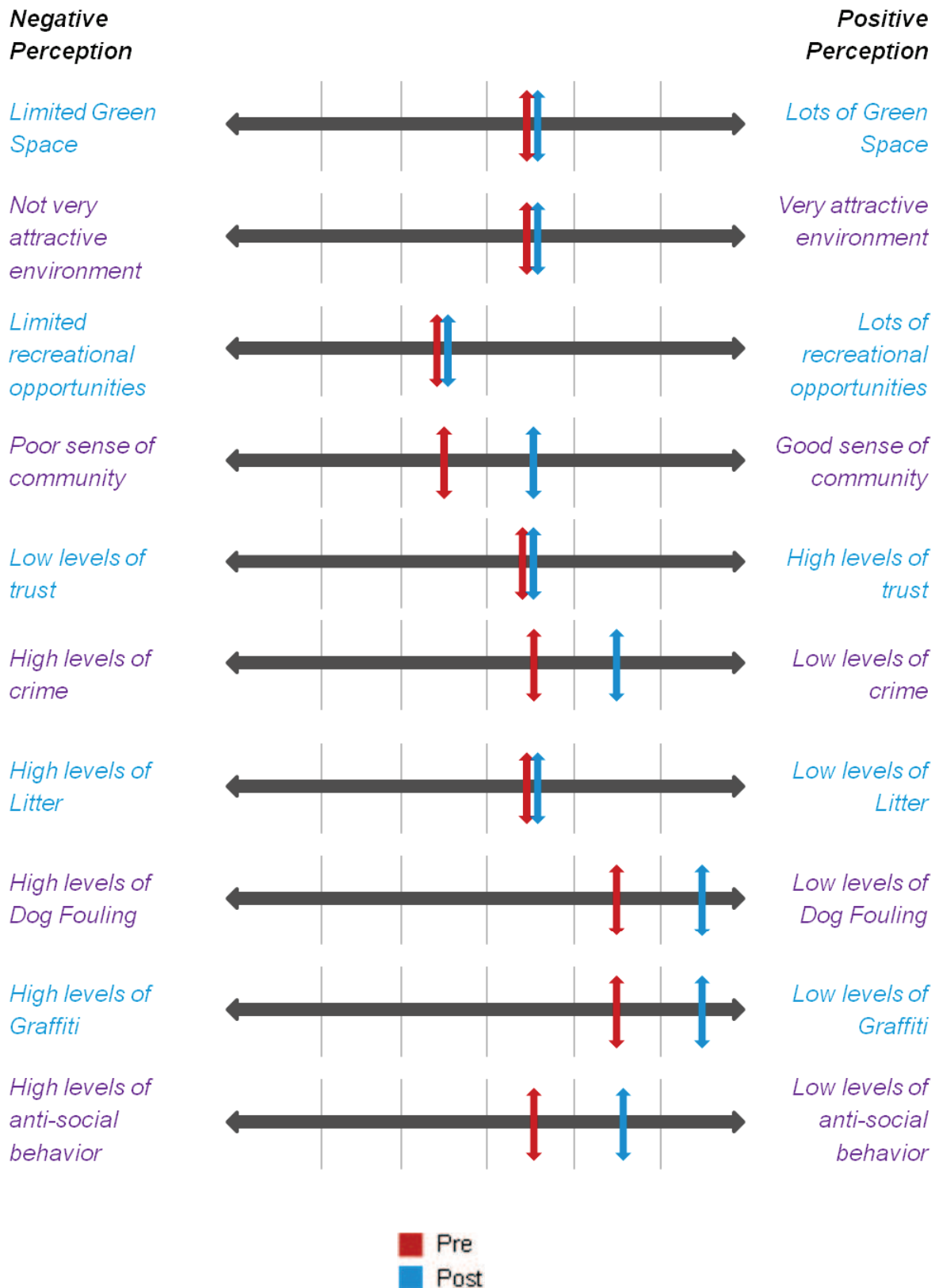


Figure 2: Residents perceptions of local environmental quality and community wellbeing

Figure 2 shows residents were generally happy with LEQ and community wellbeing on their estates. a positive increase in resident’s perceptions for: the sense of community, levels of crime, levels of dog fouling and levels of antisocial behaviour for all estates, pre and post

project. All other perceptions remained at the same level pre and post project. The area which residents gave the lowest score to was recreational opportunities available on their estates.

Give

Every resident spoken to reported *giving* in one or more ways. Figure 3 illustrates the different ways in which people give. Respondents were asked to tick as many answers as were relevant.

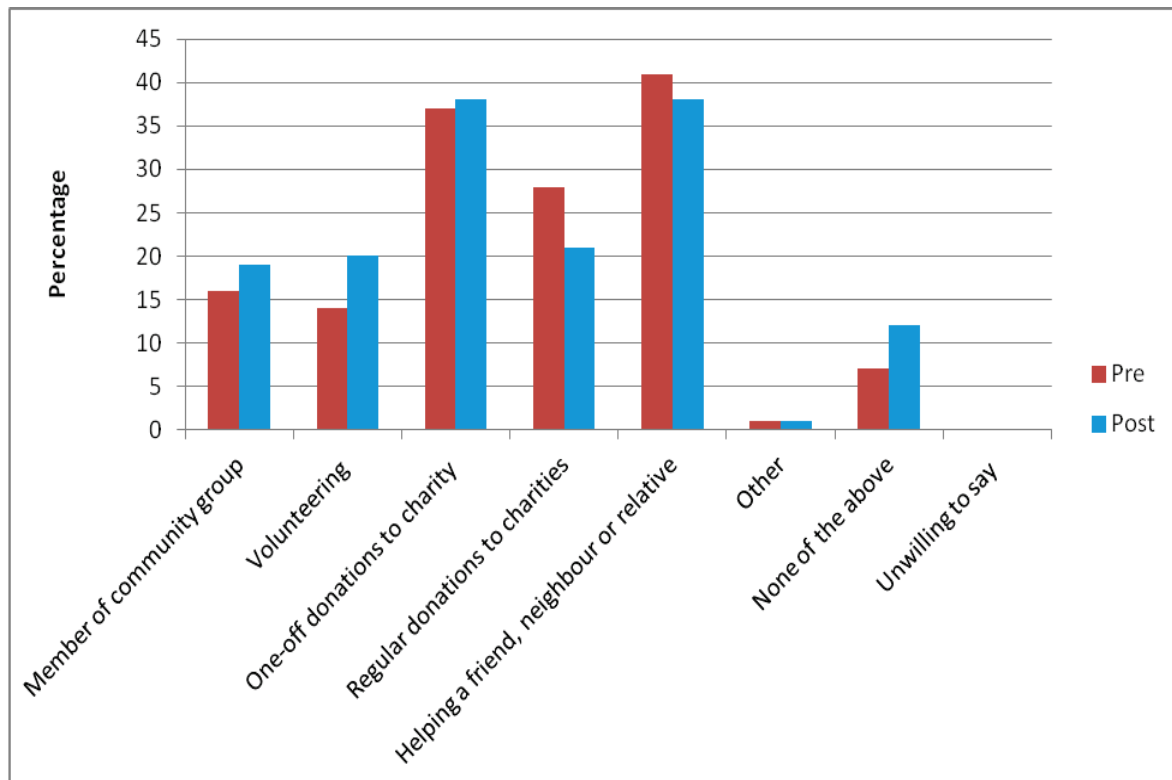


Figure 3: Percentage of people who reported giving in one or more of the ways listed

4.1.5 Post-project outcomes questionnaire

Tying in with Waste Watch’s efforts to monitor the impact of our projects on those directly involved in them, a detailed post-engagement questionnaire was conducted with 18 people from across the estates. The survey was limited to individuals involved in the co-design and delivery of the project. This enables Waste Watch to gather evidence of the impacts a project such as Our Common Place has on those who commit significant time and effort to them.

The questionnaire (included in Appendix 2) was conducted during end of project focus groups and meetings. Participants were asked to provide written answers to a series of questions and rate the extent to which they had noticed changes in their knowledge and wellbeing over the period of their involvement in the project.

When asked to describe their most significant gain from the project, participants responded positively as the following quotes illustrate:

Most significant gain from the project:

“Compost knowledge, practical skills and desire to work together”

Participant on Golden Lane / Composting initiative

“Golden Lane had its community networks consolidated as a result of the project and this helped strengthen our community”

Resident, Golden Lane

“Good company, lots of fun, lots of laughs”

Participant on Avondale Square / Bingo

“Realised the importance of recycling and what products are fit for this procedure in Tower Hamlets borough. Being part of the Dron House Film Club has helped me meet my neighbours who I’d never made an effort to build a relationship with due to coming home from work and making no effort to get to know the community I live in. Being part of a group that helped set up our first Christmas party for the estate.”

Resident, Dron House

“As estate officer it has considerably broadened my relationships with a number of residents. I have always got on with most of the residents here, but this project has brought a few more on board and I have enjoyed undertaking something positive with them which is not strictly work related; to mix with them as part of their community rather than just ‘the caretaker’.

Estate Officer, Dron House

“Spent some very good time with people from our estate.”

Participant in Dron House Christmas Event

Skills gained or enhanced as a result of involvement in the project

“I am now more confident at meeting people, and have a desire to encourage children to get more involved in community projects”

Resident, Golden Lane

“I have spoken out and made myself heard more in meetings related to this project than I generally do in work related meetings. I have found it’s gone some way to improving my confidence in this respect”

Estate Officer, Dron House

“Increased my communication skills and motivation to promote sustainability where I live”

Participant Golden Lane / Market Day

“I have gained new confidence in speaking to others and feel I have more skills necessary to promote community involvement where I live.””

Resident, Avondale Square

“I have increased my sense of value of my local community”

Resident, Dron House

Other comments

“We knew we could do things like this as group of residents but it has been your involvement that has made it happen. Being involved in the project has made us think differently!”

Resident who calls the Bingo games at Avondale Square

“It’s the only time the City seems to have promoted community cohesion – it would have been good to carry on for longer”

Resident involved in co-designing and delivering ‘Compost training and the toy and book swap, Golden Lane

“It was nice to get involved and to know someone was looking out for residents needs in some way. Having things like this happen are great for taking loneliness away.”

Participant, Bingo and Avondale Stories, Avondale Square

“All in all it was a valiant effort, unfortunately for some reasons the residents failed to respond in great numbers. Notwithstanding that, the events and projects were very enjoyable and it has improved my relationships with many of the people who did attend and I would gladly do it again”

Estate Officer, Dron House

“I have lived here for 14 years and there has never been any community at Dron House before this. We have our own community hall that apart from the Jubilee celebrations a couple of years and I had never been to until now where we are starting to see things happen”

Resident, Dron House

Participants were then asked a series of multiple choice questions to assess the extent to which the project had an impact on their knowledge of recycling and five ways to wellbeing.

100% of participants reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that they had enjoyed themselves being involved in the project on their estate.

Each person directly involved in the co-design and delivery of the project initiatives reported how being involved in Our Common Place increased opportunities for them to Connect, Be active, Take notice, Keep Learning and Give. Gains were less significant in relation to being more active. This is likely to be because of the nature of the initiatives chosen. Results are in figure 4.

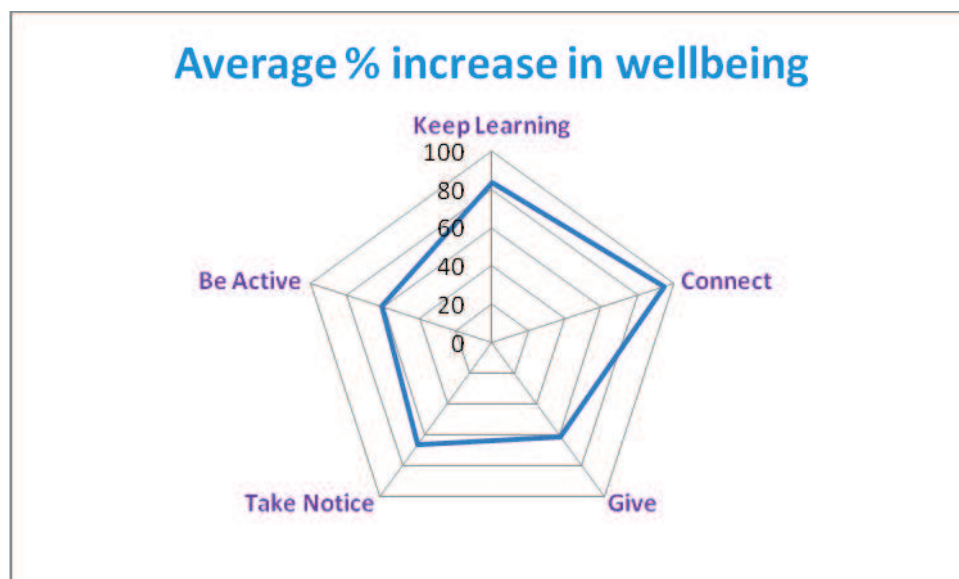


Figure 4: Residents reported impacts on the five ways to wellbeing

4.2 Recycling on Golden Lane

Golden Lane had its recycling performance monitored pre and post project. This monitoring looked at fill rate and contamination of recycling placed out for collection. The monitoring took place on three consecutive collections both pre and post project.

Recycling was placed out by residents in a clear sack that the Corporation of the City of London provides. This sack was then collected by a member of staff from the contractor responsible for collecting household recycling in the City. This was taken to one of seven locations on the estate. Locations consisted of either 1110 litre bins, paladin style bins, 240 litre recycling bins or designated areas for the loose bags to be placed.

4.3 Fill Rate and contamination

Collection areas and bins therein showed similar fill rates pre and post project. 79% and 80% of the bins were recorded as either full or overflowing pre or post project respectively. This coupled with the fact that contamination was low suggest recycling is done to a high standard by residents of Golden Lane. Figure 5 shows 34 incidents of contamination were recorded pre project, whilst 17 incidents of contamination were recorded post project.

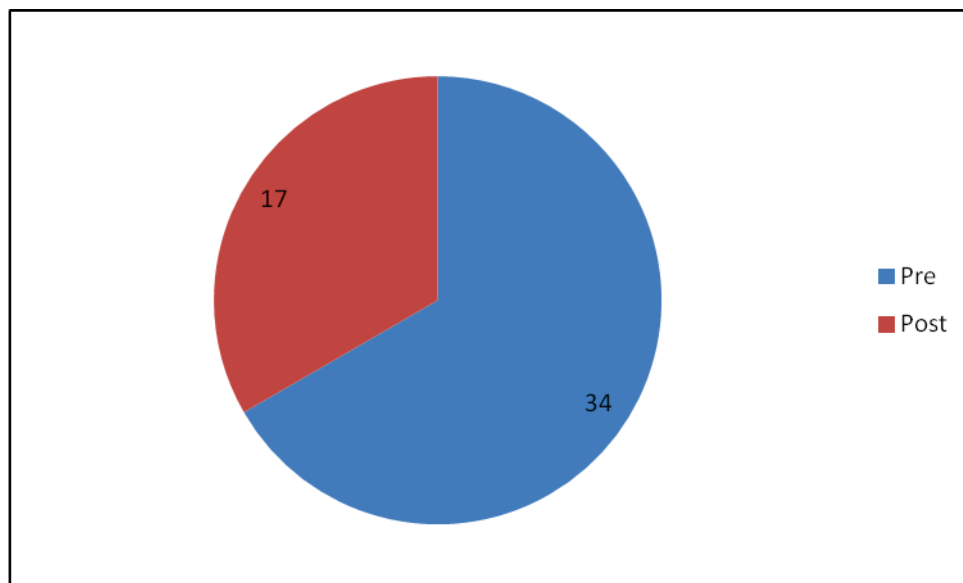


Figure 5: Occurrences Incidents of contamination

The most common type of contamination was plastic wrapping which accounted for 24% of the incidents of contamination.

4.3.1 Locking, Appearance, Type of damage, Bin Size

The above remained consistent pre and post project and did not generally present a large barrier to effective recycling.

The most notable area which required signs of improvement pre project was the WEEE recycling bin. This had high contamination and a low fill rate pre project. This could be attributed to having no lid during pre project monitoring. Post project a new bin had been provided, however, the lid was not lockable and contamination was still higher than in recycling bins across the rest of the estate. The fill rate remained low.

4.3.2 Number of recycling bags

Figure 6 shows the number of occurrences that certain quantities of recycling bags were placed out at the collection points. The number of bags placed out increased post project with twenty or more bags being present on seven occasions as opposed to 4 occasion's pre project.

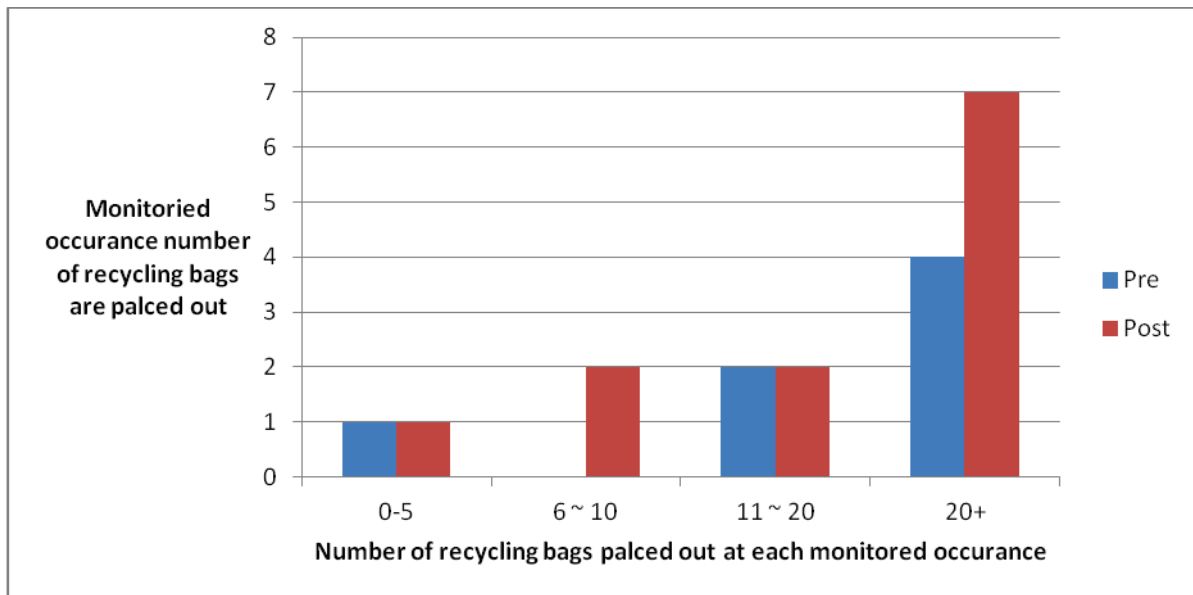


Figure 6: Occurrences and number of recycling bags placed out

4.3.3 Conclusions

The recycling performance at Golden Lane was noted to be of a high standard pre project. Recycling was clean and contamination was low. Each bin or collection point was either full or overflowing, showing a good use of the service by residents. Thus the compost, toy and book swap and market day initiatives all had a focus on reuse and waste minimisation. Post project the standard remained high with an increase in the amount of recycling being placed out by residents and incidents of contamination also showing signs of reduction.

5. Conclusions

By applying the Our Common Place approach to estate engagement work in the City of London, Waste Watch has successfully demonstrated the benefits of a values-based approach to helping residents increase community wellbeing and adopt more sustainable lifestyles.

Across the three estates there has been an increased coming together of members of the community which helped foster pride of place and ownership of the estate. The approach encouraged co-production which enabled responsibility from the residents and some estate staff in developing and delivering the initiatives. Through involvement in the initiatives residents have reported on an increased level of satisfaction with the estate as a place to live/work.

Of the initiatives implemented the following offer a legacy for the community:

- Bingo
- CD for Avondale residents
- Avondale garden areas
- Dron twice yearly 'get togethers'
- Dron Residents Group
- Golden Lane Composting
- Golden Lane Buddy Scheme
- Golden Lane Market Day

Building intrinsic values into the project design encouraged residents to choose project activities that were highly conducive to developing community spirit and increasing well-being. By promoting and reinforcing empathy, kindness, altruism, respect, friendship and pride of place the Our Common Place approach has enhanced the commitment to values that underpin strong communities and sustainable lifestyles.

6. Recommendations

Waste Watch would recommend that when working towards a specific outcome, consideration is given to how an open-ended approach to engagement similar to Our Common Place can simultaneously bring about chosen outcomes and numerous other community benefits. For example by focusing on community composting waste reduction is an outcome as well as increased knowledge, skills and community spirit. Similarly, engagement should be something done with a community rather than to it; this helps develop community ownership of the project and increases the likelihood of it being sustained by the community.

6.1 Time

Time is the largest constraint on running the project. As the project neared its twelve month end relationships with residents were beginning to flourish. Levels of trust with involved residents as well as the wider community were stronger than ever. An extra six months to overall project length would enable ideas and enthusiasm generated as the project came to an end to be supported by Waste Watch.

6.2 Community Spaces

The existence or not of accessible community spaces were important influences on the scope and development of initiatives. Communities need spaces to meet and it is important that cost, location, and comfort are not prohibitive factors. Hosting and planning events and meetings needs to be as straightforward as possible if projects and initiatives are to be discussed and realised. How and when long term plans are presented to the community should be considered closely. The Dron House Community Consultation Process for the redevelopment of the community hall presented as a competing priority for residents due to its timing at the start of the project, and this may have discouraged some residents from taking part.

6.3 Community Groups

A more sustained period of engagement is likely to be necessary when community groups are absent. Similarly a good level encouragement should be made to get existing groups to fully support the project.

6.4 Promotion

Consideration should be given to ways to promote the project on estates. Whilst producing and delivering posters and leafleting as effective and should not be ignored time spent on the ground stimulating 'word of mouth' often yields the best results in terms of spreading a messages and generating interest.

6.5 Volunteers

An attempt was made at partnership working with a University. Through this was not particularly successful in this instance, further opportunities to work with university populations could be explored where appropriate in attempt to help delivery; students of social and environmental disciplines could provide a valuable volunteer base.

6.6 Post intervention

Waste Watch has built relationships that, although established, need further nourishment to bring about deeper engagement in existing and potential new initiatives. Further training and capacity building with estate staff is something we would recommend.

7. Appendix 1: Pre and Post Project Questionnaire

Our Common Place, baseline monitoring Questionnaire 2012

Hello, my name is _____. I am from a charity called Wastewatch; we are working on behalf of _____ Council to deliver a new 12 month project on recycling and community building.

We're conducting a questionnaire with a few residents here to gather opinions on issues such as community strength, environment and happiness. We will be conducting another questionnaire at the end of the project to see if we have made a difference in any of these areas.

If there are any questions you would rather not answer, please just let me know and we will move straight on to the next question.

We won't ask you your name and all of the data we collect will be used anonymously. However, to monitor diversity, we would however like to record some basic demographic information.

We'll start with some questions about recycling:

- 1. Thinking about recycling household waste, which of these statements best describes how important recycling is to you personally?**
 - a) Very important
 - b) Quite important
 - c) Not very important
 - d) Not at all important

- 2. Which of these statements best describes your attitude to recycling?**
 - a) I recycle even if it requires additional effort
 - b) I recycle if it does not require additional effort
 - c) I do not recycle

- 3. Which of these statements best describes how much you recycle?**
 - a) I recycle everything that can be recycled.
 - b) I recycle a lot, but not everything that can be recycled.
 - c) I recycle sometimes.
 - d) I do not recycle.

- 4. How many people do you know by name on your estate?**
 - a) 1 – 5
 - b) 6 – 10
 - c) 11 – 15
 - d) 16 – 20
 - e) 21 – 30
 - f) 31 – 50
 - g) 51 - 99
 - h) 100+

- 5. Are you involved in any informal learning?**
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

- 6. Do you give time or money in any of the following ways? (Multiple answers are OK)**
 - a) As an active member of a local community group
 - b) By volunteering for a charity
 - c) By making occasional one-off donations to a charity or charities
 - d) By making regular donations to one or more charities
 - e) By regularly helping a friend, neighbour or relative in need

- f) Other, please state
- g) None of the above

7. Which of these statements best describes your involvement in local events and activities?

- a) Yes I try to get involved in everything that goes on here
- b) I sometimes get involved depending on what the event or activity is
- c) I very rarely get involved
- d) I never get involved
- e) There is nothing going on

8. Overall, how happy are you with your life these days?

(5 is very, 1 is not at all)

- a) 1
- b) 2
- c) 3
- d) 4
- e) 5

7.1 Appendix 2: Outcomes Monitoring Questionnaire

Project feedback

Project / Initiative		Date	
Estate			

A. Project Feedback

1. **Overall I have enjoyed myself on this project / initiative on my estate** (please mark the extent you agree with this)

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
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2. **What have you gained during this project / initiative you have recently been involved in?**

(This could include skills, knowledge, experience or anything else you can think of).

3. **As a result of working on this project / initiative, have you experienced a change in any of the following?** (please tick the relevant box for each)

	Large decrease	Small decrease	No change	Small increase	Large increase
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Knowledge of ways I can get involved in my community					
Level of involvement with others in your local community					
Willingness to share your time or skills with others					
Taking notice of the world around me					
Level of physical activity					
Level of satisfaction with the estate as a good place to live					

4. As a result of being part of this project I have.....

Please tick the boxes of **all** that are relevant

Increased my confidence in speaking to others	Increased my sense of value of my local community	
Improved my communication skills	Formed new friendships	
Increased my motivation to promote sustainability where I live	Learned new skills	
Increased my knowledge	Increased my motivation to promote community involvement where I live	

5. Is there anything else you feel you have gained as a result of being part of this project that you consider useful in other areas of life? e.g. skills for jobs

6. Could anything have been done differently during the project to improve it?

7. Any other comments?

B. Further Contact? (optional)

Given the chance, would you be interested in taking part in a project with Waste Watch again? (or continuing if this is the case)			Yes / No
If yes, please enter* ¹³	Name		Email and/ or telephone number
Would you be interested to be added to the Waste Watch newsletter to find out more about our various projects? (your email address would be added as above)			Yes / No / Already

C. A bit about you (optional)

What is your age?

13-16		17-24		25-34		35-44	
45-54		55-64		65-74		75+	

What is your gender?

Male		Female	
------	--	--------	--

How would you describe your ethnicity?

A.White	English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/British	
	Irish	
	Gypsy or Irish Traveller	
	Other (please specify)	

B.Mixed/ multiple ethnic groups	White and Black Caribbean	
	White and Black African	
	White and Asian	
	Other (please specify)	

C.Asian/ Asian British	Indian	
	Pakistani	
	Bangladeshi	
	Chinese	
	Other (please specify)	

D.Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	African	
	Caribbean	
	Other (please specify)	
E.Other ethnic group	Arab	
	Other (please specify)	

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes		No	
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During your participation in this project what was your occupation?

Full-time student		Part-time student		Full-time employed	
Part-time employed		Retired		Unemployed	
Self employed		Full- time carer/ Stay at home parent		Other (specify)	

¹³ If you would like to be notified of our other projects and/or news but would prefer to remain anonymous for this survey then please email us at info@wastewatch.org.uk

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Agenda Item 8

Committee: Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee	Date: 27 November 2013
Subject: Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital Budgets 2014/15	Public
Report of: The Chamberlain and The Director of Community & Children's Services	For Decision

Summary

1. This report is the annual submission of the revenue and capital budgets overseen by your Committee. In particular it seeks approval for the provisional revenue budget for 2014/15, for subsequent submission to the Finance Committee. Details of the HRA draft capital budget are also provided.
2. The provisional nature of the revenue budgets particularly recognises that further revisions might arise from the necessary budget adjustments resulting from corporate projects.
3. Business priorities for the forthcoming year include how we deal with the effects of Welfare Benefit Reform. The planned changes will have a significant financial impact on many of our tenants and this may well affect income to the Housing Revenue Account. A number of development opportunities and major projects will require considerable resource input but will result in increased social housing capacity and improvements to our properties, particularly in terms of energy efficiency.
4. The General Housing Revenue Reserve position is summarised below:-

Table 1 General Housing Revenue Reserve	Latest Approved Budget 2013/14 £000	Original Budget 2014/15 £000	Movement
Service Expenditure	10,433	11,378	945
Service Income	(13,622)	(14,304)	(682)
Other Movements	75	68	(7)
Transfer to Major Repairs Reserve	2,453	2,453	0
Surplus in year	(661)	(405)	256
Balance brought forward	(5,999)	(6,660)	(661)
Balance carried forward	(6,660)	(7,065)	(405)

5. Overall, the 2014/15 provisional budget indicates an increase in the carried forward HRA surplus of £405,000. Revenue Reserves at 31 March 2015 are now expected to be £7.065m. The increase is a combination of
 - The brought forward balance from 2013/14 £661,000 being higher than expected due to deferral to 2014/15 of some repairs and maintenance

projects.

- An increase of £874,000 in the repairs and maintenance programme due to the change in projects.
- An increase of £363,000 in tenant rents resulting from the annual rent review which is based on the Governments rent formula plus new dwellings being completed at Middlesex St.
- An increase of £285,000 in service charge income mainly due to the increase in repairs and maintenance referred to in point one above.

6. The overall Major Repairs Reserve (MRR) position is summarised below:-

Table 2 Major Repairs Reserve	Latest Approved Budget 2013/14 £000	Original Budget 2014/15 £000	Movement
Transfer from General Housing Revenue Reserve (see contra Table 1)	(2,453)	(2,453)	-
Net capital expenditure	749	5,056	4,307
Movement in MRR in year	(1,704)	2,603	4,307
Balance brought forward	(2,824)	(4,528)	(1,704)
Balance carried forward	(4,528)	(1,925)	2,603

- The budgeted reduction in the Major Repairs Reserve relates mainly to the significant investment in Great Arthur House windows/cladding due in the year.

Recommendations

7. The Committee is requested to:

- review the provisional 2014/15 revenue budget to ensure that it reflects the Committee's objectives and, if so, approve the proposed budget for submission to the Finance Committee
- review and approve the draft capital budget;
- authorise the Chamberlain to revise these budgets to allow for further implications arising from departmental reorganisations and other reviews.

Main Report

Management of the Housing Revenue Account

8. The HRA is ring-fenced by legislation which means that the account must be financially self-supporting. To enable this, a 30 year plan has been produced. The budgets in this report are included as the first years element of the plan. Although the “capital account” is not ringfenced by law, the respective financial positions of the HRA and the City Fund have meant that capital expenditure is financed without placing a burden on the use of City Fund resources. HRA related capital expenditure continues to be funded from the HRA, including the Major Repairs Reserve and certain capital receipts from sales of HRA assets, with homeowners making their appropriate contributions. In practice, therefore, the capital account is also ring-fenced.

Business Planning Priorities

9. The key issue for Housing in 2014/15 will be how we deal with the effects of Welfare Benefit Reform. The planned changes will have a significant financial impact on many of our tenants and this may well affect income to the Housing Revenue Account. A number of development opportunities and major projects will require considerable resource input but will result in increased social housing capacity and improvements to our properties, particularly in terms of energy efficiency.

Proposed Budget Position 2013/14 and 2014/15

10. The detailed budgets are set out in table 3 over the page.

Actual 2012-13 £000	Table 3 - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT	Latest Budget 2013/14 £000	Original Budget 2014-15 £000	Movement 2013-14 to 2014-15 £000	Paragraph Ref
	LOCAL RISK				
	Expenditure				
3,302	Repairs, Maintenance & Improvements	4,452	5,326	874	13
3,682	Supervision & Management	3,473	3,489	16	
	Specialised Support Services				
550	Central Heating	566	577	11	
211	Estate Lighting	238	243	5	
1,262	Caretaking & Cleaning	1,298	1,328	30	
119	Community Facilities	97	100	3	
140	Welfare Services	119	121	2	
191	Garden Maintenance	190	194	4	
2,473	TOTAL Specialised Support Services	2,508	2,563	55	
9,457	TOTAL Expenditure	10,433	11,378	945	
	Income				
	Rent				
(8,900)	Dwellings	(9,183)	(9,546)	(363)	13
(514)	Car Parking	(479)	(489)	(10)	
(111)	Baggage Stores	(113)	(113)	0	
(1,093)	Commercial	(1,070)	(1,092)	(22)	
	Charges for Services & Facilities				
(100)	Community Facilities	(104)	(106)	(2)	
(2,401)	Service Charges	(2,570)	(2,855)	(285)	13
(258)	Other	(103)	(103)	(0)	
(13,377)	TOTAL Income	(13,622)	(14,304)	(682)	
(3,920)	NET INCOME FROM SERVICES	(3,189)	(2,926)	263	
76	Loan Charges – Interest	55	54	(1)	
(154)	Interest Receivable	(198)	(200)	(2)	
(3,998)	NET OPERATING INCOME	(3,332)	(3,072)	260	
223	Loan Charges – Principal	218	214	(4)	
2,249	Transfer to Major Repairs Reserve	2,453	2,453	0	
(1,526)	Surplus for the year transferred to the Housing General Revenue Reserve	(661)	(405)	256	

Actual 2012-13 £000	HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT	Latest Budget 2013/14 £000	Original Budget 2014-15 £000	Movement 2013-14 to 2014-15 £000	Paragraph Ref
	MAJOR REPAIRS RESERVE (MRR)				
(2,249)	Transfer from HRA	(2,453)	(2,453)	0	
3,502	Capital Expenditure	6,766	7,302	536	14
(1,978)	Section 106	(5,818)	(190)	5,628	14
(238)	Reimbursements from homeowners	(199)	(2,056)	(1,857)	14
(963)	Transfer from/(to) reserve for year	(1,704)	2,603	4,307	
(1,861)	Balance Brought Forward	(2,824)	(4,528)	(1,704)	
(2,824)	MRR BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD	(4,528)	(1,925)	2,603	
	GENERAL RESERVE				
(4,473)	Balance Brought Forward	(5,999)	(6,660)	(661)	
(1,526)	Housing Revenue Account	(661)	(405)	256	
(5,999)	GENERAL RESERVE BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD	(6,660)	(7,065)	(405)	
(8,823)	TOTAL RESERVES CARRIED FORWARD	(11,188)	(8,990)	2,198	

11. Income and favourable variances are presented in brackets. Only significant variances (generally those greater than £50,000) have been commented on in the following paragraphs.
12. Overall there is a decrease in reserves of £2,198,000. This is the combination of an increase of £405,000 in the General Housing Revenue Reserve and a decrease of £2,603,000 in the Major Repairs Reserve.
13. The main elements which make up the £405,000 increase in the General Housing Revenue Reserve is the increase in repairs and maintenance expenditure £874,000, partly offset by increases in dwelling rents, £363,000 and service charge income, £285,000 plus the £661,000 brought forward balance from 2013/14.
14. The main elements which make up the £2,603,000 decrease in the Major Repairs Reserve is the net increase in capital expenditure of £4,307,000 which is partly offset by higher than budgeted surplus brought forward balance from 2013/14, £1,704,000. A list of the capital projects for the two years is set out in table 5 below, the most significant item of capital expenditure in 2014/15 relates to a £3.943m investment in Great Arthur House window/cladding.

15. Analysis of the movement in manpower and related staff costs are shown in Table 4 below. These costs are spread across repairs, maintenance and improvements, supervision and management, caretaking and cleaning, welfare services and garden maintenance in table 3.

Table 4 - Manpower statement	Latest Approved Budget 2013/14		Original Budget 2014/15	
	Manpower Full-time equivalent	Estimated cost £000	Manpower Full-time equivalent	Estimated cost £000
Supervision and Management	31	1,201	31	1,225
Estate Officers	12	417	12	425
Porter/Cleaners	22	585	22	598
Gardeners	5	128	5	131
Wardens	2	74	2	75
Technical Services	27	1,098	27	1,146
TOTAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT	99	3,503	99	3,600

Potential Further Budget Developments

16. The provisional nature of the 2014/15 revenue budget recognises that further revisions may be required, including in relation to:
- Budget reductions to capture savings arising from the on-going PP2P reviews; and
 - Budget adjustments relating to the implementation of the City of London Procurement Service;

Revenue Budget 2013/14

17. During the year a budget exercise was undertaken on all estates and sections of the HRA to align budgets with current pattern of service provision and expenditure. The forecast outturn for the current year is in line with the Latest Approved Budget.

Draft Capital and Supplementary Revenue Budgets

18. The Committee's draft capital and supplementary revenue project latest estimated costs are summarised in the Tables below. All of these schemes are contractually committed apart from the Avondale Estate windows and roofs project, which is due to commence its implementation phase in 2014/15.

Table 5 - Draft Capital Budget								
	Exp. Pre 01/04/13 £'000	2013/14 £'000	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	Later Years £'000	Total £'000
Decent Homes	117	380	1,926					2,423
Great Arthur House windows/cladding	292	174	3,943	1,669	110			6,188
Avondale Estate windows/roofs - George Elliston/Eric Wilkins		45	285	1,115	510			1,955
Holloway - Electrical rewiring			650					650
Golden Lane - Door Entry			460					460
Externally Funded:	2,492	1,060						3,552
Avondale Square Estate lifts	1,684	61						1,745
Other	13	318	38					369
Bridgemaster's Car Park	21	4,728						4,749
Total	4,619	6,766	7,302	2,784	620	0	0	22,091

Table 6 - Draft Supplementary Revenue Budget								
	Exp. Pre 01/04/13 £'000	2013/14 £'000	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	Later Years £'000	Total £'000
Externally funded:								
Avondale Estate Community Centre S.106	89	62						151
Islington Arts Factory S.106		45						45
Richard Cloudesley School S106		55						55
Middlesex Street affordable housing S.106 Option Appraisal Costs	19	11						30
Other	20	30						50
Total	128	203	0	0	0	0	0	331

19. In addition to approved items the above includes a number of Decent Homes projects planned within the next few years, together with general CCTV upgrades, electrical rewiring on Holloway Estate and an upgraded door entry system on Golden Lane Estate .

20. The latest Capital and Supplementary Revenue Project budgets will be presented to the Court of Common Council for formal approval in March 2014.

21. HRA related capital expenditure continues to be funded from within the HRA, including the Major Repairs Reserve, the 25% element of HRA right to buy capital receipts that do not have to be pooled and homeowners' contributions. No subsidy is currently being received (nor presently anticipated) from the City Fund towards HRA related capital expenditure.

22. Details of the repairs, maintenance & improvements are set out in Appendix A.

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REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS		Latest Approved Budget	Original Budget
Responsible officer is the Director of Community and Children's Services		2013/14 £'000	2014/15 £'000
GENERAL			
BREAKDOWN AND EMERGENCY REPAIRS			
Building	E	1,297	1,323
Electrical	E	350	357
Lifts	E	9	9
Heating and Ventilation	E	200	204
		1,856	1,893
CONTRACT SERVICING			
Building	E	162	165
Electrical	E	134	137
Lifts	E	135	110
Boilers	E	-	100
Ventilation	E	100	50
Heating	E	560	420
		1,091	982
CYCLICAL WORK AND MINOR IMPROVEMENTS			
Elderly/Disabled - Internal Redecorations	E	50	50
- Decoration Allowance	E	50	50
Portable Appliance Testing	E	2	2
Asbestos Management Contingency	E	50	50
Accessibility Adaptations	E	120	120
Disability Discrimination Act Compliance Works	E	20	20
Fees for Feasibility Studies	A	40	40
Energy Performance Certification Work	E	30	30
Estares' External and Internal Redecoration (Consultant Fees)	E	-	50
Health and Safety Contingency	E	30	50
Water supply works	A	80	80
Drainage and gullies	A	-	150
		472	692
TOTAL GENERAL		3,419	3,567
ESTATE SPECIFIC CYCLICAL WORKS AND MINOR IMPROVEMENTS			
AVONDALE SQUARE ESTATE:-			
Longland Court - 2nd Floor External Landings Covering Replacement & Stair Tile Repairs	A	10	-
Various Blocks External and Internal Repairs and Redecoration	A	-	244
5 Year Electrical Test and Inspections (Tenants' Flats)	E	40	-
5 Year Electrical Test and Inspections (Landlords' Installations)	E	15	-
Door Entry Repairs (Consultant Fees)	E	15	-
Door Entry Repairs	E	230	-
Avondale Replacement Heating Scope Study	E	-	5
TOTAL AVONDALE SQUARE ESTATE		310	249
DRON HOUSE:-			
5 Year Electrical Test and Inspections (Tenants' Flats)	E	2	-
5 Year Electrical Test and Inspections (Landlords' Installations)	E	2	-
TOTAL DRON HOUSE		4	-

REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS		Latest Approved Budget	Original Budget
		2013/14 £'000	2014/15 £'000
Responsible officer is the Director of Community and Children's Services			
GOLDEN LANE ESTATE:-			
<i>Curtain Wall Monitoring (Including Repairs) - Gt Arthur House</i>	E	8	-
All Blocks - Water Tank Repairs for Safety Compliance	E	32	-
Various Blocks External & Internal Repairs & Redecoration	A	-	200
Replacement Heating & Associated Components Scope Study	E	30	-
Repairs to Balconies	E	-	300
TOTAL GOLDEN LANE ESTATE		70	500
HOLLOWAY ESTATE:-			
All Blocks - Water Tank Repairs for Safety Compliance	E	10	-
Internal and External Redecorations	A	-	320
TOTAL HOLLOWAY ESTATE		10	320
ISLEDEN HOUSE:-			
All Blocks - Water Tank Repairs for Safety Compliance	E	5	-
Fire Alarm and warden call out works	E	80	-
TOTAL ISLEDEN HOUSE		85	-
MIDDLESEX STREET ESTATE:-			
Consultants fees	E	-	50
TOTAL MIDDLESEX STREET ESTATE		-	50
SOUTHWARK ESTATE:-			
All Blocks - Water Tank Repairs for Safety Compliance	E	13	-
TOTAL SOUTHWARK ESTATE		13	-
SYDENHAM HILL ESTATE:-			
All Blocks - Water Tank Repairs for Safety Compliance	E	10	-
Fire Alarm and Warden Call Out Works - Mais House	E	50	-
TOTAL SYDENHAM HILL ESTATE		60	-
WILLIAM BLAKE ESTATE:-			
<i>5 Year Electrical Test & Inspections (Tenants' Flats)</i>	E	5	-
<i>5 Year Electrical Test & Inspections (Landlords' Installations)</i>	E	3	-
TOTAL WILLIAM BLAKE ESTATE		8	-
WINDSOR HOUSE			
Internal and External Redecorations	A	-	70
TOTAL WINDSOR HOUSE		-	70

REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS		Latest	Original
		Approved Budget	Budget
Responsible officer is the Director of Community and Children's Services		2013/14 £'000	2014/15 £'000
YORK WAY ESTATE:-			
All Blocks - Water Tank Repairs for Safety Compliance	E	36	-
<i>5 Year Electrical Test & Inspections (Tenants' Flats)</i>	E	15	-
<i>5 Year Electrical Test & Inspections (Landlords' Installations)</i>	E	6	-
Communal Heating & Ventilation Replacement Feasibility	E	-	20
Internal and Redecorations	A	-	150
TOTAL YORK WAY ESTATE		57	170
TECHNICAL SERVICES AND CITY SURVEYOR'S COSTS		691	680
GRAND TOTAL REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS		4,727	5,606
RECONCILIATION OF GRAND TOTAL			
MAIN PROGRAMME		4,452	5,326
CENTRAL HEATING		260	265
COMMUNITY CENTRES		10	10
GUEST ROOMS		5	5
		4,727	5,606

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Agenda Item 12

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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