



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

Date: MONDAY, 12 JANUARY 2015
Time: 1.45 pm
Venue: COMMITTEE ROOMS, WEST WING, GUILDHALL

Members: Virginia Rounding (Chairman)
Revd Dr Martin Dudley (Deputy Chairman)
Deputy Billy Dove
Alderman David Graves
Deputy the Revd Stephen Haines
Ann Holmes
Deputy Henry Jones
Gareth Moore
Dhruv Patel
Adam Richardson
Elizabeth Rogula

Enquiries: Philippa Sewell
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Lunch will be served in the Guildhall Club at 1pm
NB: Part of this meeting could be the subject of audio video recording

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 20th November 2014.

For Decision
(Pages 1 - 6)
4. **CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES UPDATE**
Report of the Director of Community & Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 7 - 12)
5. **REVIEW OF CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**
Report of the Director of Community & Children's Services.

For Decision
(Pages 13 - 18)
6. **NEW HOUSING SERVICE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) POLICY**
Report of the Director of Community & Children's Services.

For Decision
(Pages 19 - 38)
7. **WELFARE BENEFITS UPDATE & FINANCIAL INCLUSION PROGRAMME**
Report of the Director of Community & Children's Services.

For Information
(Pages 39 - 46)
8. **CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES REVENUE BUDGETS 2014/15 AND 2015/16**
Joint report of the Chamberlain and Director of Community & Children's Services.

For Decision
(Pages 47 - 54)
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.

Part 2 - Non-Public Reports

12. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

To approve the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2014.

For Decision
(Pages 55 - 56)

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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HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB (COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE

Thursday, 20 November 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub (Community and Children's Services) Committee held at Guildhall on Thursday, 20 November 2014 at 1.45 pm.

Present

Members:

Virginia Rounding (Chairman)
Revd Dr Martin Dudley (Deputy Chairman)
Alderman David Graves
Ann Holmes
Deputy Henry Jones
Dhruv Patel
Adam Richardson
Elizabeth Rogula

In Attendance

Officers:

Ade Adetosoye	- Director of Community and Children's Services
Jacquie Campbell	- Community and Children's Services
Amy Carter	- Community and Children's Services
Kirsty Leitch	- Community and Children's Services
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerk's
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Adam Richardson and Gareth Moore. Deputy Billy Dove, Alderman David Graves and Deputy, the Revd Stephen Haines submitted apologies as they had been required, at short notice, to attend another urgent meeting. (Alderman David Graves left the meeting at 2pm.)

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES RESOLVED, that:

The public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 10 July 2014 be approved.

4. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (30 YEAR BUSINESS PLAN)**

Members received a presentation of the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) in respect of the City of London Corporation's Housing Revenue Account's 30-Year Business Plan.

Members noted the following headlines:

- The significant revenue repairs increase next year and an increase in capital contribution, also next year.
- That after a peak in spending on asset management in years 1-3 of the plan, for which significant investment in properties was planned, there would be a decrease in the funding required for asset management.
- The impact of Universal Credit on income collection.
- The City of London Corporation has a relatively high borrowing capacity. Members noted that there was a perception that the debt cap was unfair on some local authorities and the Chartered Institute of Housing supported increasing the limit. However, in the current financial climate, borrowing had decreased but this position might change after the 2015 General Election.
- The Richard Cloudesley site development represented an innovative approach to relieving London's housing shortage and the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee would receive a further 'gateway' report in due course.

In concluding, the CIH representative commended the City of London Corporation's robust and sustainable Business Plan and placed it in the top 3 out of 70 presented to the CIH.

5. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2015/16**

Members considered a joint report of the Chamberlain and the Director of Community and Children's Services, presenting the annual submission of the revenue (HRA) and capital budgets. The report also sought approval for the provisional revenue budget for 2015/16, for subsequent submission to the Finance Committee. Members noted that details of the HRA draft capital budgets had also been provided.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The proposed 2015/16 revenue budget be approved, for submission to the Finance Committee.
2. The draft capital budget be approved.
3. The Chamberlain be authorised to revise these budgets to allow for further implications arising from the departmental reorganisations and other reviews.

6. **HOUSING UPDATE REPORT**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, presenting the 6-monthly update on housing service performance and management information, which provided an update on progress against key areas of work. The report covered performance for the first half of the financial year (1st April to 30 September 2014).

During the discussion on this report, the following matters were noted:

- Members were very pleased to note that gas safety compliance was up 2% to 99%.
- Rent collection was on target and above the same period last year. However, Members noted that welfare reforms and the introduction of Universal Credit have an impact on rent collection and the target will need to be adjusted accordingly.
- Members asked if 'Housemark' could be invited to a future meeting to give a presentation on benchmarking.
- Members received a tabled copy of the latest 'Annual Report for City Tenants'.
- Post inspection pass rates had improved considerably in the past 6 months.
- The Residents' Celebration Day on 18 October 2014 had been very successful and the Director and Chairman commended officers for their hard work.

RESOLVED, that:

The Housing update report be noted.

7. **REMEMBERING YESTERDAY, CELEBRATING TODAY (AND FILM)**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, providing an overview of the City of London's Estates First World War centenary activities. Members also watched a short film, depicting the hard work and commitment shown by residents and officers. Kirsty Leitch was very highly commended for co-ordinating the project. Members noted that the project was also representative of current community initiatives; i.e. the pooling of time credits by Avondale residents, to assist a local school.

RESOLVED, that:

The report of the First World War centenary activities be noted.

8. **HOUSING ESTATES - ALLOCATED MEMBERS REPORT**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which provided an update on the City of London Corporation's Social Housing Estates. The report had been compiled in collaboration with allocated Members, who take an active interest in their estates; championing residents and local staff and engaging with residents.

Members suggested that shopkeepers be included in the next report and a Member be allocated to them. In response to further questions, Members noted that work to the Almshouses Community Hall was on-going and Horace Jones House would be handed over on 12 January 2015. Members would shortly receive an invite to visit the development on 14 January 2015.

RESOLVED, that:

The Allocated Members report be noted.

9. **PROJECT PROPOSAL (GATEWAY 1/2) - INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL REFURBISHMENT WORKS AT THE MIDDLESEX STREET ESTATE**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, in respect of the internal and external refurbishment works programme at the Middlesex Street Estate.

RESOLVED, that:

The report be noted.

10. **ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, which presented the Housing Asset Management Strategy and 5-Year Work Programme. Members were pleased to note that the strategy would enable officers to communicate with residents about the 5-Year Work Programme in more detail than before. The Director of Community and Children's Services advised that he would be chairing the Housing Programme Board and 2 full-time Surveyors had been appointed to deliver the work. Members commended the clear presentation of the document, which was exemplar to similar documents for other committees. In response to a question about the Middlesex Street balcony doors, officers advised that this work would cover windows that had not already been replaced with triple glazing.

RESOLVED, that:

The Housing Asset Management Strategy and 5-Year work programme be noted.

11. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

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

There were no items of urgent business.

13. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

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

Item no (s)
15

Para no (s)
3

14. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that:

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2014 be approved.

15. **HOUSING PROJECTS PORTFOLIO UPDATE**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of housing projects which were being managed by the Housing Property Services Team or the City Surveyor.

16. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

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

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 3.05 pm

Chairman

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Committee:	Date:
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee	12 January 2015
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>	
Recommendation	
<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.

Office & Community Facility

2. We are delighted to say that the new office and community facility, converted from the former Assistant Matron's flat, was completed in early December, in time for the presentation of the Christmas hampers. The office has provided an appropriate place for the Matron and other staff to work and see residents. The Communal Hall was much needed, and has provided residents with a lovely, bright, spacious place to hold social gatherings, as well as an area with a more cosy, lounge-like feel.
3. Rather than rushing into buying furniture, we brought some chairs and tables from Isleden House to begin with, so that residents could get the feel of the new space and decide what would be the best type of furniture. They have now chosen a mixture of armchairs, tables and upright chairs.

4. Residents are now busy organising new social activities to make the most of their new Communal Hall. Activities planned so far include coffee mornings, a book club, a chair exercise class, a gardening club and a craft club. Residents are very much enjoying their new facility.

Christmas hampers

5. Residents enjoyed their hampers and would like to thank the Trustees for their generosity. As always there are a few items in the hampers not to individual residents taste, however Matron placed a "swap box" in the Hall for residents to bring their goods and swap them for items they preferred. There were a few items left which Matron took to the local food bank.
6. Due to the unexpected death of a resident there was a spare hamper which officers decided to raffle for residents in other sheltered housing managed by the City (Isleden House, Mais House and Harman Close). The tickets were £1 each and proceeds were given to The Royal British Legion as housing staff have adopted this charity in the centenary year of World War 1.

Garden work

7. The only small area of Japanese knotweed has responded to treatment and the remaining garden is still clear.
8. A recent review of Health & Safety issues on all estates identified a need for training on the proper use of garden equipment. Our gardener undertook this training in December, so we can now be confident that all equipment used at the Almshouses is done so in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and H&S regulations.

Essential works to Rogers properties

9. Following our previous update regarding the damp and water ingress issues at the 'Rogers Cottages', work has progressed well with four properties completed prior to Christmas.
10. Flat 25 was refurbished to make a comfortable temporary home for the duration of the work, and each resident has moved in there whilst the work on their own home was carried out. Each resident has received a "Disruption" payment of £250 as a good will gesture.
11. The remaining two properties will be complete by February 2015. Both the remaining residents have difficult health issues and need extra support from Matron during their temporary move. Although officers had hoped the work to be complete by Christmas it was considered more supportive to allow residents to remain in their homes over the festive period; the remaining two residents and their families expressed their gratitude for this temporary halt in the work.

12. Matron has worked extremely hard to support residents throughout this work and officers were able to draft in cleaning staff from another estate to support the turnover of the temporary accommodation. Once the work is complete, Flat 25 will be available to the next person on the waiting list. At the end of the work, the furnishings will be used to support future residents who may have to rely on charitable sources for household items when they are allocated a home at the Almshouses (for example if they had previously been homeless).

Road repairs and lighting

13. Officers previously reported deterioration in the roadway on the estate, as well as a proposal to improve the lighting for residents' safety and security at the same time as repairs could be effected.

14. Due to the remedial work at the Rogers Cottages and the communal hall project, the survey was delayed. However, quotes have now been received for the installation of lighting around the inner path of the garden. The lighting quote is to provide a power source from the office building, across the internal road, with ducting buried in the garden encasing power cables for 22 low level lights over 320 metres at a cost of £24,000.

15. In discussions with several residents, concerns were expressed regarding the height of the lights and how brightly they might shine in resident's homes. After a review of options with the contractors, officers decided that low level lighting would be the most effective and appropriate and we will proceed on this basis.

16. Our Property Services Manager, has investigated the possibility of providing some temporary lighting until the work can be commenced. Unfortunately the only type of temporary lighting available involves daily removal and charging of the light units from a mains source. As the only source currently available is through the garage where the garden equipment is stored, this option was not possible. Officers are still investigating other temporary options until the lighting can be undertaken with the road repairs.

17. The cost of the road repairs work will be approximately £30,000. This work will involve removing the current road surface, regulating lower areas and repairing potholes, adjusting any ironworks in the roadway and then laying a new surface.

18. It is considered prudent to undertake both lighting and road repairs at the same time which will minimise disruption to the estate. Extra care will be taken to seek advice regarding any issues over the tree roots which are part of the cause of the degradation to the current road surface.

19. The total cost of improving lighting and repairing the roads, then, will be £54k. This will be incorporated into the budget for 2015/16.

Networking Group

20. The Sheltered Housing Manager has joined the East London Almshouses Group and attended their last meeting in October. Staff from The Mercers Company provide the administration function for the Group, arranging meetings at different Almshouses and inviting external speakers each quarter.
21. The meeting was held at Edward Edward's House, one of Southwark Charities properties. These flats were remodelled and refurbished from bedsits into one bed properties several years ago and have since been maintained to a high standard. Residents were very happy to show us round their homes which were spacious and light. There were about 20 other Almshouses officers present and all participated in lively discussions regarding common issues, such as managing residents with deteriorating health, and maintenance of buildings. There were also two outside speakers at the meeting from the Alzheimer's Society and a company detailing how to manage building maintenance for Legionella issues.

Performance Information

22. Rent arrears at the almshouses at 7 December 2014 stood at £8,322.49. 14 tenants were in arrears. However, much of this sum will be offset by housing benefits which are due to the individuals and which are not received until four weeks after rent is payable. One tenant is paying of substantial arrears at a rate of £10 per week.
23. Former tenants' arrears stood at £1,475.58.
24. Repairs and maintenance work in recent months has focused on the Rogers properties and the creation of the new office and community hall. We will provide data on repairs done in 2014/15 in the next report.
25. No formal complaints have been received since this was last reported.
26. A review of reports to the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee is being carried out to ensure that Members continue to receive all information which was previously presented to the City of London Almshouses Trustees Sub-Committee, except where Members have decided that they no longer need to receive it. The outcome of this review will be reported in the next Almshouses Update paper.

Vacancies and application

27. There are currently two vacant properties. There has been one vacant Gresham property which was advertised in the City at the request of the Gresham Trustees. Unfortunately officers did not receive any applications which fitted the eligibility criteria and the property has been offered to an Almshouse resident who has previously expressed an interest in moving into a Gresham bungalow. Remedial and repair work took longer than expected due

to the dry rot issues found in the property however this has been treated and a new kitchen and wet room have been installed, as well as full decoration throughout the bungalow. The second property has been offered and accepted and a moving date to be agreed shortly. When work on the Rogers properties is complete, there will be another flat available.

28. There are currently 5 approved applicants on the waiting list.

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Committee:	Date:
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee	12 January 2015
Subject:	Public
Review of City of London Almshouses Eligibility Criteria	
Report of:	For Decision
Director of Community & Children's Services	

Summary

The current eligibility criteria for applicants to the waiting list for City of London Almshouses was set at a time when the almshouses were in low demand.

This has now changed, and there are increasing numbers of people applying to the list. Many of these come from outside London, with no connection to the area, and are of working age. This paper sets out proposals for changes to the eligibility criteria, in order to focus the provision of almshouse accommodation on those in greatest need.

Officers propose that:

- the age threshold for applicants be raised from 55 to 66, in line with the state retirement age (this might be in two stages);
- applicants be required to either:
 - be living in Greater London;
 - have been working in the City for at least the 12 months prior to the application;
 - have a child or sibling living in the City or the London Borough of Lambeth;

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- agree, in principle, the proposed changes in eligibility criteria for applications to the City of London Almshouses waiting list and to instruct officers to implement these, subject to there being no questions raised by the Charity Commission.

Main Report

Background

1. At its meeting on 25 September 2014, Members of the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee received a report entitled 'Reduction in external funding to Almshouses residents'. This report outlined changes in the way the London Borough of Lambeth provides financial support to

vulnerable residents and explained the impact on working residents at the City of London Almshouses.

2. Members approved recommendations regarding funding to these individuals, and asked officers to review the eligibility criteria for the City of London Almshouses, with a view to preventing the situation where residents require top-up funding occurring in the future.
3. A review has now been carried out. As well as looking at the issue of financial arrangements for residents who are employed, officers have looked at the current waiting list, the demand for places at the almshouses, and trends in housing applications generally. It has also taken into account the strategy agreed by the Community & Children's Services Committee in November 2014, that the City will, in the future, provide housing suitable for older people on all estates, rather than focusing provision on specific sheltered housing schemes.
4. This paper sets out the findings of the review and proposals for changing the criteria for admission to the City of London Almshouses waiting list. It does not propose amendments to the criteria for the Gresham Almshouses waiting list, as this is the responsibility of the Gresham Trustees, and the terms of letting for those almshouses are different.

Current Position

5. Currently, the criteria for applicants to the waiting list for the City of London Almshouses is that they must be:
 - Aged 55 or over;
 - On an income which is below average or receiving welfare benefits;
 - In proven need of housing;
 - Wishing to live in sheltered accommodation.
6. There is no geographical restriction – applicants can come from anywhere in the country.
7. The age threshold of 55 is very low, especially for current times. It was lowered, and geographical criteria abandoned, some years ago, at a time when there was a low number of applicants to the Almshouses waiting list. Almshouses were not seen as particularly desirable properties at that time, as private rented accommodation was more affordable than it is now.
8. However, since then, things have changed. In recent years, we have had a significant increase in people applying to go on the waiting list. Figures from the last three years are below:

	Approved applicants	Applications awaiting interview
2012	4	16
2013	6	21
2014	8	29

9. Applicants are interviewed and then their applications put forward to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee for approval. As we already have eight people on the approved waiting list, we have not undertaken any further interviews to put prospective residents forward for approval to the Trustees in recent months. We do not wish to raise expectations too high, as, even when someone is on the approved waiting list, it may still be years before a property becomes available for them.
10. With no geographical restriction and a very low age limit, we are receiving an increasing number of applications from people of working age, who wish to move to London for employment, but cannot afford private rents.
11. Most of these applicants are not considered to be elderly and are not in need of sheltered or supported housing. They are unable to claim state retirement benefits until age 66 and many are still working. Currently more than a third of the residents at the Almshouses do not require any support from staff as they are either at work or have no requirement for staff support.
12. The impact of the changes in funding for housing support from the London Borough of Lambeth is that residents who work and cannot claim benefits are having this portion of their service charges funded by the City of London Almshouses Trust, even though they may not be in need of the actual support. The more people of working age we have living at the almshouses, the more this top-up funding will be needed.
13. As a result of these changes, there is an increasingly noticeable difference within the demographics of the community at the Almshouses, and a distinct separation between younger residents who are working (in the main) and able-bodied with interests outside the community, and the older, mainly retired, community who are not always so fortunate health-wise. Whilst we wish to encourage a mix of residents, this is creating a two-tiered community.
14. Members may also feel that the current criteria, whilst reasonable when demand for the almshouses was low, are no longer in keeping with the intent of the original benefactors, which was to provide accommodation for “poore and impotent” people.

15. Priority is currently given to applicants who are Freemen of the City of London and their families and to existing tenants of the City of London. It is not proposed that this should change.

Options

16. There are a number of options open to Members.
17. Regarding age:
- a. To leave the threshold at 55, as at present.
 - b. To increase the age threshold to the state retirement age of 66.
18. Regarding geographical spread:
- a. To leave the criteria as at present, accepting applicants from anywhere.
 - b. To only accept applicants from the Greater London area, and giving priority to City residents and tenants of City of London homes in other London boroughs.
 - c. To restrict eligibility to applicants from Greater London, applicants who have worked in the City for the previous 12 months and applicants from elsewhere who have close family (child or sibling) living in the City or Lambeth).
19. Regarding income:
- a. To accept any applicant on a low income, whether working or retired.
 - b. To only accept applicants who are in receipt of the state pension.
20. It is the view of officers that a combination of options 17b, 18c and 19b would provide the most appropriate set of criteria. The criteria for applicants would then be that they:
- Are at the state retirement age;
 - Currently live in Greater London; or have worked in the City for at least the 12 months prior to the application; or have immediate family (child or sibling) living in the City or the London Borough of Lambeth for the last 12 months;
 - Are in receipt of the state pension;
 - Are in proven need of housing;
 - Wish to live in sheltered accommodation.
21. Members may wish to phase in the new age threshold rather than moving straight to the state retirement age. The risk of this is that people who are below 66 are still subject to welfare benefits reform changes, and this may impact upon their ability to pay rents and service charges. However, should Members feel that the change from 55 to 66 is too rapid an increase, then officers will manage the impacts.
22. Officers would review the current applicants who are awaiting approval interviews to consider a reduction in the list. The applicants who have already

been approved would remain on the waiting list; it would be unfair to remove them after approval had been granted.

23. These changes fall within the charitable objects of the City of London Almshouses Trust, as set out in the Charity Commission Scheme of 1991 (amended 2011), and so it is not anticipated that any questions would be raised by the Charity Commission. However, should there be any questions raised, we will bring the proposals back to Members to review.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

24. agree, in principle, the proposed changes in eligibility criteria for applications to the City of London Almshouses waiting list and to instruct officers to implement these, subject to there being no questions raised by the Charity Commission;

Implications

25. There are no financial implications of making this change. Officers from the Chamberlain's dept have highlighted that people who are at or above the state retirement age are exempt from welfare benefit reforms, so will not be in need of any funding from trustees to bridge any shortfall between their income and charges. However, should Members wish to phase in the change in age threshold, then officers will work with individuals to minimise any impact.
26. There are no legal implications, as the proposals fall within the existing Charity Commission Scheme for the City of London Almshouses and the new criteria would only apply to applicants who have not already been accepted onto the waiting list.

Jacquie Campbell

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Agenda Item 6

Committee: Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee	Date: 12 January 2015
Subject: New Housing Service Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) Policy	Public
Report of: Director of Community & Children's Services	For Decision

Summary

This report introduces a new Anti-social behaviour (ASB) Policy, which is specific to the Housing Service. The development of the policy, which is attached as Appendix 1, has been prompted by legislative changes set out in the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. A report summarising the new legislation and how it will impact the Housing Service was brought to this Committee in September 2014.

A requirement of the Act is that all Social Landlords prepare and publish their policy and procedures in respect of ASB. This, along with the new measures introduced by the 2014 Act, has prompted the Housing Service to develop an ASB Policy which brings our service provision in line with the new legislation.

The key new measures are:

- The introduction of a Community Trigger gives which victims the ability to demand action, starting with a review of their case, where a locally defined threshold is met;
- The introduction of a Community Remedy which gives victims a say in the out-of-court punishment of perpetrators for low-level crime and ASB;
- Civil injunctions – powers have been delegated to local authorities to enforce these;
- A new 'absolute' ground for possession where ASB or criminality has already been proven by another court. This aims to expedite the eviction of the most anti-social tenants to bring faster relief to victims.
- New 'discretionary' grounds for possession, strengthening the ability of local authority landlords to recover possession of properties from tenants who have been involved in crime or ASB.

Detailed procedural guides for Housing staff regarding ASB are currently being developed in line with this policy. This is being done in consultation with Estate Management and the Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department. These procedures will be brought to this Sub-Committee for approval. A leaflet for residents will also be produced and made available in all new tenant handbooks and in all estate offices.

If approved in principle by Members, the draft policy will be taken to the new Housing User Board (HUB), a resident consultation panel, for feedback. If any major changes are suggested as a result of the consultation, amended versions will be brought back to a future meeting along with the detailed procedural guidance.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report;
- Agree, in principle, the draft ASB Policy which forms Appendix 1 to the report.

Background

1. In September 2014 a report was brought to this Sub-Committee highlighting the new Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 and the measures that would directly impact the work of the Housing Service. This led us to develop a draft ASB Policy and undertake consultation with staff to develop comprehensive procedural guides.

2. The Act is intended to introduce simpler, more effective powers to tackle ASB that provide better protection for victims and communities. The Act streamlines existing procedures to allow a quicker response to ASB. The government envisages that these powers will make it easier for victims and communities to take action against ASB and reduce repeat violations.

3. The Act adopts most of the recommendations contained in the 2010 Home Office review of the tools and powers used to formally intervene to tackle and reduce ASB, which found that:

- there were too many tools and powers, with practitioners tending to focus on using the measures with which they were most familiar
- the bureaucracy and cost associated with some of the court orders (especially the Anti-social Behaviour Order) may encourage practitioners to use informal or voluntary tools to deal with serious incidents instead of formal and more controlling orders
- the growing number of people who breach their ASBO conditions suggests the potentially serious consequences are still not deterring a persistent minority from continuing ASB
- the tools that were designed to help perpetrators of ASB deal with the underlying causes are rarely used

Key elements of the proposed policy

4. The policy sets out our aims regarding how our Housing Service staff will respond to reports of ASB and makes a clear distinction between 'estate management nuisance' and ASB. This is to clearly differentiate between activity which is often of a criminal nature, requiring a multi-agency approach, and behaviour which whilst causing nuisance or annoyance to others that can be dealt with quickly and efficiently by a responsive housing management service.

5. The policy also explains that ASB reports will be assigned as 'Category 1 - Urgent' or 'Category 2 - Non-urgent'. 'Urgent' reports relate to any violent behaviour or threat of violence against a person or property and action will be taken within 24 hours of the incident being reported to estate staff. These reports will most likely be regarding hate crimes, hate related incidents and/or domestic abuse and the police may already be involved before estate staff are notified. Any threat of, or actual violent behaviour towards a member of staff or any employee acting on behalf of the City of London Corporation will also be considered as urgent. 'Non-urgent' incidents (e.g. dumping rubbish/littering, failure by tenants to observe any ASB-related tenancy conditions or use of premises for illegal or illicit purposes) will be acknowledged within two working days and responded to within five working days.

6. A summary is given of the measures available to us as a landlord to tackle ASB, including the new 'absolute' and 'discretionary' grounds for possession which were introduced by the 2014 Act. These are expanded upon in the Overview document which is attached as Appendix 2 and which will form the final Appendix to the policy - but a key point is that the new 'absolute' ground removes the need for landlords to prove to the court that it is reasonable to grant possession, where ASB or criminality has already been proven by another court. This means the court will be more likely to determine cases in a single, short hearing. This will offer better protection and faster relief for victims and witnesses of ASB, reduce landlord costs, and free up court resources and time.

6. Details of the new Community Trigger are also set out, explaining that it offers the ability to trigger a review of management of ASB complaints in certain circumstances, including the actions of registered providers. A Community Remedy has also been introduced to tackle the effects of low-level ASB by enabling those affected to influence what actions can be required of the perpetrator.

7. The policy explains that the City's Scheme of Delegation has been amended in accordance with the new Act to reflect that the Director of Community & Children's Services (or his authorised deputy) now has the delegated authority to (amongst others):

- seek an Injunction to Prevent Nuisance and Annoyance
- issue Closure Notices and apply for Closure Orders
- authorise officers to serve Community Protection Notices and Fixed Penalty Notices in the event of a breach.

8. Our approach to supporting witnesses and victims of ASB, particularly if legal action is being pursued, is explained. Where circumstances warrant, we will consider the use of injunctions, emergency/temporary re-housing or any other action that might help witnesses/victims through this stressful process. If there are no witnesses willing to give evidence and there is a clear issue of ASB, we will consider whether the use of professional witnesses is appropriate.

ASB Procedure & Leaflet

9. It is vital that staff understand what action must be taken and the different measures available to them, particularly in light of the recent legislative changes. We are currently working with staff to create a suite of procedure guides relating to ASB in its various forms so we can offer our staff clear, comprehensive guidance on how to tackle these issues. The procedures will be led by the draft ASB policy.

10. It is also important that our intentions and commitments regarding ASB are open and transparent, and that residents have access to these so that they understand the channels open to them. To this end we are developing a leaflet for residents explaining the process for reporting ASB and how we will support victims through the process.

11. If Members agree the draft policy in principle, we will apply it immediately, but will publish it as a draft and seek feedback from residents via the Housing User Board (HUB). The final version will be brought back to the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee for signing off once feedback has been considered and incorporated.

12. The Policy will be made available on the City's website and in all estate offices. The leaflet explaining how to report ASB and how we tackle it will also be published online and included in all new tenancy welcome packs.

Next steps

13. Work with the HUB to incorporate residents' feedback on the draft ASB Policy.

14. Work with Housing Service staff and the Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department to develop the procedural guides to accompany the new ASB policy.

15. Publish and distribute a new leaflet for residents.

16. Review the policy and accompanying documents every two years.

Consultation

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

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Draft Housing Service ASB Policy

Appendix 2 - Overview of ASB remedies and actions

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City of London Housing Service

Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) Policy

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Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to outline the way in which we will manage and address Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) on our housing estates and wherever Housing Service staff are working. This policy ensures our approach to ASB is in line with the new measures set out in the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, and provides a partnering framework within which we can act to prevent and address ASB in our communities.

This policy applies to all tenants living in City of London residential property. For the purpose of this document, the term tenant refers to all rented tenants, shared owners and leaseholders.

Policy Statement

The City of London's Housing Service is committed to ensuring that all residents enjoy their right to peace, quiet and security in and around their homes. We recognise that ASB can have a severe effect on the wellbeing of residents and that we have a duty to take action to minimise it. We are dedicated to looking after the neighbourhoods for which we are responsible, making sure they are safe and working to develop the sense of community which makes them a great place to live. We take all reports of ASB, domestic abuse and hate crime very seriously and will investigate any incidents reported to us. We will work in partnership with other agencies, such as the police, to prevent and tackle such behaviour with a robust approach.

Our aims regarding ASB

- We will not tolerate any ASB inflicted on or by our customers.
- We will provide relevant training to our staff so they are confident in executing our ASB policy effectively.
- We will deal with all cases of ASB in accordance with our Equality & Diversity Policy.
- We will adhere to and follow our Domestic Abuse Policy when reports of domestic abuse are received.
- We will adhere to and follow our Hate Crime Policy when reports of hate crime and hate incidents are received.
- We will investigate all reports of ASB and will respond efficiently and effectively by adhering to the corresponding urgency timescale, working with external agencies where appropriate.
- We will identify any possible safeguarding issues and act in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy.
- We will provide support and advice to victims and witnesses engaging with and making referrals to external agencies where appropriate.
- We will, where appropriate, encourage our customers to resolve their own disputes amicably.

- We will attempt to resolve ASB through prevention, early intervention, working with our customers and in partnership with other agencies.
- We will pursue proportionate enforcement actions making reasonable judgements to effectively tackle ASB based on the severity and frequency of the offence.
- We will give consideration to a range of enforcement tools, dependent upon the type of issue presented (including but not limited to civil injunctions, possession action, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and mediation).
- We will aim to focus on the sustainment of tenancies by balancing prevention and enforcement.
- We will make referrals to internal and external partners as necessary in order to establish the underlying cause of the ASB.
- We will record, monitor and evaluate ASB reports and actions and take into consideration customer feedback in order to improve and develop the service.
- We will respect individuals' confidentiality, where appropriate, not sharing information unless consent is given or unless we are required to by law or where a potential Safeguarding issue has been identified which might mean we are obliged to share the information.
- We will ensure that our residents understand how the City of London deals with incidents of ASB.

Definitions

Definition of estate management nuisance

We make a distinction between what activities are defined as ASB and what constitutes 'estate management nuisance'. The City of London defines estate management nuisance as:

“Behaviour that is a breach of the terms of the tenancy agreement and that causes nuisance or annoyance such as inconsiderate parking, occasional noise nuisance, unkempt gardens and one-off incidents that can usually be dealt with in the first instance by those affected, rather than requiring the immediate intervention of the Housing Service.”

This is to clearly differentiate between activity which is often of a criminal nature, requiring a multi-agency approach, and behaviour which whilst causing nuisance or annoyance to others that can be dealt with quickly and efficiently by a responsive housing management service.

Everyday living noise or minor lifestyle differences are not classed as ASB and will not be investigated under the terms of this policy. For example:

- Noise from people walking across a wooden floor whilst wearing shoes, doors banging, noise from passage up and down stairs.
- Noise from people using washing machines, tumble driers, vacuum cleaners, lawnmowers etc.

- Cooking smells.
- Noise of children playing in or near their own home.
- Vehicle nuisance, revving engines, loud music from in car, careless driving.

The above list is not exhaustive and where we cannot intervene we will explain why and if possible give advice on agencies to contact that may be able to help.

Each borough has an Environmental Health team (or similar) whose remit is to deal with noise nuisance from within the boundaries of a property for example:

- Noisy neighbours (music, shouting, alarms or DIY at unreasonable hours).
- Noise from commercial premises (entertainment, ventilation systems, alarms).
- Noise from industrial premises (factories, construction, demolition, alarms).
- Car alarms or loud stereos (only if vehicle is parked).
- Nuisance barking.

Definition of ASB

The City of London acknowledges that there is no single definition of ASB but favours the definition stated in the Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014:

(a) Conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person,

(b) Conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises, or

(c) Conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.

ASB generally consists of activities that can have a significant impact on people's lives. It can be described as behaviour that causes harassment, alarm or distress, and can be categorised as urgent and non-urgent.

Category 1 - Urgent

Any violent behaviour or threat of violence against a person or property will always be considered as urgent and initial action will be taken **within 24 hours** of the incident being reported to estate staff. Examples of ASB categorised as urgent include, but may not be limited to:

Hate crime	Hate related incidents	Domestic Abuse
Any action which would be deemed to be a criminal offence which is perceived by the victim, or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate on the grounds of (but not limited to) the victim's disability, age, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief.	Any non-criminal incident which is perceived by the victim, or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate on the grounds of (but not limited to) the victim's disability, age, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief.	Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.
Assault	Verbal abuse or insults	Psychological abuse

Criminal damage	Isolation or exclusion	Physical abuse
Robbery	Online abuse	Sexual abuse
Sexual assault	Distributing discriminatory literature	Financial control or limitation
Theft	Bullying or intimidation, damage to home, pets, vehicles etc.	Emotional control
Inciting others to commit hate crimes harassment	Abusive phone calls, emails or text messages/hate mail	

Any threat of, or actual violent behaviour towards a member of staff or any employee acting on behalf of the City of London Corporation will be considered urgent. In addition, the vulnerability of the person reporting the ASB will be taken into account. Estate Managers will use their discretion to treat such cases as urgent if deemed necessary.

Category 2 - Non-urgent

Non-urgent incidents will be acknowledged within two working days and responded to **within five working days**. Examples of ASB categorised as non-urgent include, but may not be limited to:

Environmental	Tenancy related	Other
Unreasonable noise nuisance	Failure by tenants to prevent children or visitors behaving in an anti-social manner	Vandalism and damage
Dumping rubbish & littering	Failure by tenants to observe any ASB-related tenancy conditions	Use of premises for illegal or illicit purposes
Dog fouling	Any act which adversely affects (directly or indirectly) our Housing Management function.	Illegal Drugs use
Graffiti	Misuse of communal areas	Prostitution
Fly-posting	Use of motor vehicles by tenants or their visitors in an anti-social manner	Alcohol related nuisance
Abandoned vehicles	Hoarding to an extent that adversely impacts other residents and/or the condition of the property	

Reporting

Estate staff will log all reports of ASB, even if the only action required is to signpost someone to an appropriate team or person (Environmental Services, Noise Nuisance etc) at a host local authority. This log is held centrally and will be monitored and analysed to identify any trends or risks. Data will be reported to the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee as part of the Housing Update Report, which is presented every six months.

Measures available to tackle ASB

The Housing Service has a range of tools and options available when considering cases of ASB. A full list giving details of each option is attached as Appendix 1. The following is not an exhaustive list but gives an indication of the possible sanctions/actions that the Housing Service's management team may consider:

- Mediation
- Tenancy Support
- Involvement of Social Services
- Voluntary Agreements - Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs)
- Family Intervention
- Parenting Orders
- Tenancy sanctions and/or amendments
- Injunctions
 - Injunctions against unlawful use of premises
 - Exclusion order and power of arrest
 - Injunction against breach of tenancy agreement
- Eviction, including new '**absolute**' and '**discretionary**' grounds for possession introduced in the 2014 Act. The 'absolute' ground for possession applies where ASB or criminality has already been proven by another court. The 'discretionary' grounds for possession strengthen the ability of local authority landlords to recover possession of properties from tenants who have been involved in crime or ASB.
- Community Protection Notices (CPNs)
- Public Spaces Protections Orders
- Penalty notices
 - Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs)
 - Criminal Behaviour orders (CBOs)
 - Dispersal powers
 - Closure powers

What the law says

Any legal action taken in respect of ASB is taken in relation to Housing Acts (1985, 1988, 1996, and 2004), the Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014, or any other legislation relevant to housing management and also with reference to the tenancy terms and conditions.

The Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 replaces the various measures previously available to tackle ASB within the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 with a new set of powers, intended to provide a simpler and more streamlined framework. It introduces new mechanisms with the aim of giving victims and local communities a greater say in the treatment ASB and low-level crime, and it strengthens the ability of landlords to terminate tenancies on grounds relating to ASB

Delegated Authority

The City's Scheme of Delegation has been amended in accordance with the Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 to reflect that the Director of Community & Children's Services (or his authorised deputy) now has the delegated authority to:

- seek an Injunction to Prevent Nuisance and Annoyance
- issue Closure Notices and apply for Closure Orders

- authorise officers to serve Community Protection Notices and Fixed Penalty Notices in the event of a breach.

The changes to the Scheme of Delegation also confirm that the City of London's authorised officers are now also able to delegate the serving of Community Protection Notices to Registered Social Landlords, where appropriate, in accordance with Part 4 of the 2014 Act.

Authorised officers can now also delegate the serving of Community Protection Notices and Fixed Penalty Notices, in the event of a breach, to Police Community Support Officers and (where appropriate) Police Staff, in accordance with Part 4 of the Act.

Community Trigger

In recent years, the police, councils and others have started to adopt a range of effective mechanisms that improve the response they provide to victims. From Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences to taking on board the lessons identified in ASB call handling trials, victims have now become the focus of the response in many areas. This has resulted in an end-to-end Risk Assessment process, ensuring that vulnerable victims are better supported in cases of ASB. The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 introduced a Community Trigger, applicable to all social landlords. This offers the ability to trigger a review of management of ASB complaints in certain circumstances, including the actions of registered providers. A Community Remedy has also been introduced to tackle the effects of low level ASB by enabling those affected to influence what actions can be required of the perpetrator.

For our estates in the square mile, the City's Community Safety Team is the 'Single Point of contact for the Community Trigger. The Chairman of the Safer City Partnership oversees/scrutinises any Community Triggers and appeals. The trigger threshold to be used will be:

At least 3 qualifying complaints from one person within a six month period are made to either the City of London Corporation, police or a registered social housing provider.

Managers of estates situated in other boroughs will need to familiarise themselves with the new Community Trigger protocols in their local area, as they may differ from the City of London's agreed procedures.

Supporting witnesses

To ensure that ASB is tackled effectively, it is often essential for witnesses to give evidence in legal proceedings. This can be extremely stressful for these witnesses and sometimes legal actions fail because of intimidation or a perceived threat of intimidation/violence, or simply because of the stress of the process. Some witnesses can be concerned about revealing their details when reporting ASB for fear of repercussions; these details are normally required to ensure effective action to be taken. Any information relating to ASB is treated with complete confidentiality and only shared if we have permission to do so or if there is a real danger to someone because of not sharing information.

Where legal action is being taken the City of London will keep relevant parties appropriately informed and will endeavour to support witnesses through the process. Where circumstances warrant, we will consider the use of injunctions, emergency/temporary re-housing or any other action that might help witnesses/victims through this stressful process. If there are no witnesses willing to give evidence and there is a clear issue of ASB, we will consider whether the use of

professional witnesses is appropriate. The police are responsible for identifying those witnesses that are likely to be subject to intimidation.

Vulnerable People

The City recognises that vulnerable residents, including those with learning or physical disabilities; mental health illness or other support needs, may have their behaviour perceived as anti-social and in such instances we will work with individuals, support providers and the community to find an effective solution. The needs of the vulnerable person will be handled appropriately and with sensitivity, and whenever appropriate, in partnership with other agencies whose support and input will be actively sought.

Disability or vulnerability however, will not be used as mitigation for ASB, and we will not overlook instances of ASB due to behavioural issues, although it will seek to address matters suitably taking into account the individual circumstances.

The City will take all practical steps to safeguard and protect any victim or perpetrator of ASB who is vulnerable. Should it become necessary to pursue legal action against such tenants the support agencies involved with the tenant will be consulted throughout the process and informed of the outcome.

Multi-agency & Partnership Working

The City of London Housing Service will adopt a multi-agency approach to prevent and resolve ASB, working in partnership with other stakeholders. Key stakeholders may include, but are not limited to:

City of London Police	Metropolitan Police	Other Local Authority Community Safety and ASB Teams
Social Services / Safeguarding Services	NHS Trusts	Youth Offending Teams
Tenancy Sustainment Teams	Environmental Health Teams	Social Landlords
Homeless Teams	Community Mental Health Teams	Substance Misuse Teams
Family Intervention Project	Victim Support	Probation Services

Discretion

This policy commits the Housing Service to dealing with ASB in a way that will always be fair and consistent across all cases of a similar nature. However, our services evolve and each case of ASB is likely to have its own unique set of individual circumstances. This means that, following appropriate consultation, we may occasionally use our discretion to vary our approach. Any changes to our standard approach resulting from such cases will be reflected and formally amended in our Policies and Procedures.

Monitoring this Policy

We monitor our policies to ensure they deliver the expected outcomes. Service standards, key performance indicators, audits and customer satisfaction surveys are typical of the monitoring systems in use but this will vary according to the policy.

Review

We will review this policy when a business need arises. Our review programme is driven by service improvement initiatives, changes to legislation, regulation, practice or as a result of feedback from key stakeholders. Typically we review policies on a two yearly cycle.

Key Legal & Regulatory References

In tackling ASB, the City of London is aware of the requirement to comply with existing legislation and standards, and is aware of its responsibilities in relation to and implications arising from them. The main legislation relating to ASB includes, but is not limited to:

ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014	Human Rights Act 1998	Environmental Protection Act 1990
Equality Act 2010	Protection from Harassment Act 1997	Crime and Disorder Act 1998
Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001	Police and Justice Act 2006	Homelessness Act 2002
Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)	The Mental Capacity Act 2005
The Mental Health Act 2007	Equality Act 2010	NHS and Community Care Act 1990
Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Act 2006	Data Protection Act 1998	Freedom of Information Act 2000

Related Documents, Policies & Procedures

The provisions of this document have operational links to other policies and procedures as follows:

ASB procedure for staff (in development)	Domestic Violence Policy (2014)	Hate Crime Policy (in development)
Noise Nuisance procedure (under review)	Community Trigger procedure (2014)	Estate Management Procedures (handbook/guide)
Equality & Diversity Policy	Attending court guidance	Lettings & Housing Choice Policy
Data Protection Policy	Safeguarding Policy	Resident Engagement & Communications Policy & Procedure
Lone Worker Policy & Procedure	Vexatious Complaints Policy	Hoarding Procedure (in development)

<p>The below summarises the actions and measures available to Estate Management staff and Housing Services senior management when considering cases of ASB, from lower-level incidents to more serious cases. This list is intended to serve as a guide for staff so they are aware what actions and tools are available to them. This list will inform the suite of procedure guides for staff which is currently being developed.</p>	
<p>Mediation</p>	<p>Mediation is a process in which a neutral third party helps two or more people in dispute to seek a mutually acceptable solution informally. Parties will be referred to an independent mediation service (for example Toynbee Hall or Southwark Mediation Service) who will assess the suitability of the people involved and if mediation is an appropriate option will arrange and facilitate meetings with the aim of resolving any issues and where necessary agreeing a solution or course of action that both parties agree to and can realistically achieve.</p>
<p>Tenancy Support</p>	<p>Tenancy Support aims to help people who are finding it difficult to maintain their tenancy and may be at risk of losing their home by providing them with a support worker who will be able to offer practical support and assist them in accessing services in the local community. This service will be built around individual issues contributing to or arising from ASB. The service is provided by the City and aims to work with people for a maximum of six months.</p>
<p>Involvement of Social Services</p>	<p>Local authorities with Social Services responsibilities have a duty, arising from section 17 of the Children Act 1989, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area. If any child under 18 is a perpetrator or victim of ASB, social services may need to assess them to establish if the child is at risk of harm, and if there is a need for social services to become involved with the welfare of the child.</p>
<p>Voluntary Agreements - Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs)</p>	<p>An acceptable behaviour contract (ABC) or acceptable behaviour agreement is a voluntary written agreement between the person who is behaving antisocially and any other relevant parties (for example, the police, the council or social workers). The contract normally lasts for six months, and although not legally binding, if breached, can be used as evidence if enforcement action needs to be taken through the courts. The terms and conditions of the ABC will be discussed, read and agreed by everyone involved before it is signed. ABC's are designed to get the person who is behaving antisocially to take responsibility for their actions and improve their behaviour, and to allow them to understand how it affects other people. ABCs are flexible and informal so that they can be adapted to suit all sorts of situations, and aim to sort out differences and find a solution that helps everyone involved.</p>
<p>Family Intervention</p>	<p>Family intervention is more autocratic than tenancy support, and aims to bring stability to families' lives, prevent homelessness and improve opportunities for children through a 'whole family' approach. They are practical projects which focus on providing a structure for those living in chaotic circumstances. Projects combine intensive support</p>

	<p>with focused challenge, and a key worker is tasked with co-ordinating the delivery of a variety of services designed to address ASB using a combination of support and sanction to motivate the family to change their behaviour. A contract (or behaviour support agreement) is drawn up between the family and key worker setting out the changes that are expected, the support that will be provided in order to facilitate that change and the consequences if changes are not made, or tasks are not undertaken.</p>
<p>Parenting Orders</p>	<p>Parenting orders aim to make parents accountable for the offending of their children, whilst at the same time, giving them the support necessary to take proper care and control of them. They require the Parent or Guardian to attend counselling or guidance sessions in order to receive help and support in dealing with their child(ren), and can also include specific requirements imposed by the Court. These could include seeing that the child/young person attends school each day, or is at home by a certain time each evening. This element can last up to 12 months.</p>
<p>Tenancy sanctions and/or amendments</p>	<p>Tenants can be subject to sanctions and/or amendments. Some of these may require court action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory tenancies make it easier to evict occupiers if they exhibit ASB within the first 12 months of entering into their tenancy agreements. Tenants are offered secure status at the end of 12 months if no problems arise during the term of the introductory tenancy. Local authorities can now extend the initial 12 month period of an introductory tenancy by a further 6 months where there are continuing concerns about a tenant's behaviour. • For existing tenants who already hold an assured shorthold tenancy the City can (without going to court) refuse to allow them to exchange with another social tenant or to transfer or to bid on larger or smaller properties. <p>If we decide to go to court, we can also apply for a court order to suspend a tenant's right to buy, or apply for a court order to 'demote' someone's tenancy. A demotion order has the effect of ending the existing tenancy and replacing it with a less secure demoted tenancy. This removes the tenant's Right to Buy (where it applies) and their security of tenure for at least a year. At the end of a year, if we are satisfied with the tenant's conduct, it will revert back to a secure tenancy. The period of demotion can be extended in certain circumstances.</p>
<p>Injunctions</p>	<p>An injunction is a court order that prohibits a particular activity or requires someone to take action, e.g. to avoid causing a nuisance. Normally the ability to seek an injunction would be limited to the person(s) who actually suffered from the nuisance; however, landlords may apply for an injunction where it can be shown that the tenant in question is in breach of a tenancy condition not to indulge in particular sorts of behaviour, provided tenancy agreements are clearly and unambiguously drafted. Social landlords can now seek injunctions which allow the</p>

	<p>requirement for positive actions, as well as prohibitions, to tackle ASB. These require civil standards of proof (balance of probabilities) to obtain, and are part of the approach to bring about long-term solutions as well as address immediate impacts for individuals/ communities affected by the behaviour.</p>
<i>Injunctions against unlawful use of premises</i>	<p>These are available where the conduct consists of or involves using or threatening to use housing accommodation owned by or managed by the City of London for an unlawful purpose.</p>
<i>Exclusion order and power of arrest</i>	<p>If a court grants one of the injunctions described above it may prohibit the defendant from entering or being in any premises or any area specified in the injunction. Additionally, a power of arrest can be attached to any provision of the injunction where the court is satisfied that either conduct consists of, or includes, the use or threatened use of violence, or there is a significant risk of harm.</p>
<i>Injunction against breach of tenancy agreement</i>	<p>Local authorities and housing providers can obtain injunctions against their tenants for a breach (or anticipated breach) of their tenancy agreements as a result of the respondent engaging or threatening to engage in conduct capable of causing a nuisance or annoyance to any person. Tenancy injunctions may also be granted against a tenant who allows, incites or encourages others to engage in or threaten to engage in this conduct. Courts may attach a power of arrest to these injunctions and/or exclude the respondent from their home or a specified area where satisfied that the conduct includes the use or threatened use of violence or that there is a significant risk of harm to any person.</p>
Eviction	<p>Eviction is the ultimate sanction against tenants who exhibit ASB. Eviction proceedings may be considered if a tenant or any person residing in the property (or visiting the property) has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) been guilty of conduct which is, or is likely to cause, a nuisance or annoyance to a person residing, visiting or otherwise engaged in lawful activity in the locality, or (b) who has been convicted of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) using the property (or allowing it to be used) for immoral or illegal purposes, or (ii) an arrestable offence committed in, or in the locality of, the property. <p>Our tenancy agreements make it clear to tenants that ASB or illegal activity (whether by the tenant, people who live with the tenant or visitors) is not acceptable and may lead to the loss of their home.</p> <p>Local authorities can now expedite possession where a court has proven significant ASB or criminality in the locality of the property. The Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 does this through the introduction of three new grounds for possession, one of which is ‘absolute’ (which means that the court must grant possession if the ground is satisfied) and two of which are ‘discretionary’ (which means that the court will only grant possession if it thinks it reasonable to do so in the circumstances). The purpose of this is to expedite the</p>

	<p>eviction of the most anti-social tenants to bring faster relief to victims.</p> <p>In order to meet the criteria for the new absolute ground for possession, the tenant, a member of the tenant’s household, or a person visiting the property must have met one of the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • convicted of a serious offence (specified in Schedule 2A to the Housing Act 1985); • found by a court to have breached a civil injunction; • convicted for breaching a criminal behaviour order (CBO); • convicted for breaching a noise abatement notice; or • the tenant’s property has been closed for more than 48 hours under a closure order for ASB. <p>The Offence/breach needs to have occurred in the locality of the property or affected a person with a right to live in the locality or affected the landlord or his or her staff/ contractors.</p> <p>The first of the new discretionary grounds arises where the tenant, or a person residing in or visiting the premises, is guilty of conduct causing or likely to cause nuisance or annoyance to the landlord or anyone employed in connection with the landlord’s housing management functions. The conduct must be related to or otherwise affect those functions.</p> <p>The second of the new discretionary grounds arises where the tenant, or an adult residing in the premises, is convicted of an indictable offence which took place during and at the scene of a riot anywhere in the United Kingdom.</p>
<p>Community Protection Notices (CPNs)</p>	<p>CPNs are notices issued by the police or councils including people designated by councils to act for them. A CPN deals with unreasonable and persistent conduct which is detrimental to the quality of life in an area. If someone disagrees with a CPN, they can appeal to a magistrates’ court.</p> <p>A CPN requires the people responsible to stop or to do some action. CPNs can be issued to anyone including people who own or manage land and buildings, and can be posted on a building if the owner is not known. Before issuing a CPN, there must be a warning of the intention to do so. Breaching a CPN is an offence resulting in a fine. There are powers to issue a fixed penalty notice, to confiscate property, and enter property to do work and charge the cost to the offender.</p> <p>A CPN may be issued if the behaviour in question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - has a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is of a persistent or continuing nature; and - is unreasonable. <p>A written warning is issued first, informing the perpetrator of problem behaviour, requesting them to stop, and the consequences of continuing. If this does not stop the ASB, a Community Protection Notice (CPN) is issued including a requirement to stop things, do things or take reasonable steps to avoid further ASB.</p> <p>What happens if the CPN is breached?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A breach is a criminal offence. - A fixed penalty notice can be issued of up to £100 if appropriate. - A fine of up to level 4 (for individuals), or £20,000 for businesses. <p>The CPN can deal with a wider range of behaviours for instance, it can deal with noise nuisance and litter on private land open to the air. The CPN can be used against a wider range of perpetrators than previous legislation allowed for.</p>
Public spaces protections orders	These orders enable local authorities to prevent individuals or groups committing ASB in public spaces.
Involvement of the Police	Where ASB is occurring or has been unable to be resolved, in certain circumstances the police can become involved. Although police have the power of arrest which can be exercised if the situation dictates, often the situation may be dealt with by giving a verbal or written warning to the perpetrator. Unless the crime is sufficient to warrant immediate arrest and/or criminal charges, there are other remedies available to the police:
<i>Penalty notices</i>	Police can issue one-off fines (penalty notices) to people behaving in an anti-social manner. Fixed penalty notices (FPNs) are generally used to deal with environmental offences such as litter, graffiti noise and dog fouling.
<i>Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs)</i>	PNDs are issued for more serious offences, such as throwing fireworks, being drunk and disorderly, petty stealing or damaging property. They can be issued to anyone over 16 years old. Penalty notices are not the same as criminal convictions, but failure to pay the fine can result in higher fines or imprisonment.
<i>Criminal behaviour orders (CBOs)</i>	<p>CBOs replaced Antisocial Behaviour Injunctions (ASBIs), Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) & Criminal Antisocial behaviour Orders (CrASBOs) from January 2015.</p> <p>Issued by any criminal court against a person who has been convicted of an offence to tackle the most persistently anti-social individuals who are also engaged in criminal activity. These can also require positive action to address the behaviour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issued by any criminal court for any criminal offence. - The ASB does not need to be part of the criminal offence. - Order will include prohibitions to stop the anti-social behaviour but it can also include positive requirements to get the offender to address the underlying causes of the offender's behaviour. - Agencies must find out the view of the youth offending team (YOT) for applications for under 18s.

Appendix 2 - City of London Housing Service - Overview of ASB remedies and actions

	<p>What if a CBO is breached?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Breach of the order is a criminal offence and must be proved to a criminal standard of proof, that is, beyond reasonable doubt. - For over 18s on summary conviction: up to six months imprisonment or a fine or both. - For over 18s on conviction on indictment: up to five years imprisonment or a fine or both. - For under 18s: the sentencing powers in the youth court apply. <p>Consultation requirement with YOTs for under 18s. No need to prove “necessity” unlike Anti-Social Behaviour Orders. Scope for positive requirements to focus on long-term solutions.</p>
<i>Dispersal powers</i>	<p>If an area is identified as having a particularly persistent problem with anti-social behaviour then the police can grant a Dispersal Order. This gives police officers and PCSOs the power to direct groups or individuals to leave the area and not return for up to 48 hours. Refusal to leave a dispersal area is an offence and that person can be arrested. This power is aimed at preventing ASB, not at disrupting the lives of the law-abiding community.</p>
<i>Closure powers</i>	<p>These enable the local authority or police to close premises for 48 hours (notices) or up to 6 months, and limit or restrict all access, where disorder or nuisance (serious or criminal in the case of an order) is occurring.</p>

Committee:	Date:
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee	12 January 2015
Subject: Welfare Benefits Update & Financial Inclusion Programme	Public
Report of: Director of Community & Children's Services	For information

Summary

This report is an update on the paper brought to the Sub-Committee in February 2014. It gives Members the latest information about the impact of reforms to date, and also outlines the work now taking place to help residents cope with the introduction of Universal Credit, which will start in March 2015.

Housing Benefit and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for City of London residents, and Housing Benefit for tenants of CoL estates in other boroughs, are administered by the Benefits Team within the Housing Service. Since proposals for benefit reform were first raised, the Benefits Team has worked closely with the Housing Management Team and other colleagues, to ensure that the implications, both for residents and for the City's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) have been identified and addressed.

As a result, we have developed a Financial Inclusion Programme which groups together a number of projects designed to assist residents. The projects include:

- Intensive money management support for households where rent arrears are a continuing problem;
- Money management training for people on the waiting list for housing, so that they are able to budget before being allocated a home;
- Local Welfare Assistance and small grants for households in crisis;
- Collaboration with external organisation like the London Capital Credit Union and the National Illegal Moneylending Team.

Recommendations

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.
2. Extensive work has taken place to support residents affected by the Bedroom Cap and Benefits Cap. A summary of this work was presented to the Housing Management Sub-Committee in February 2014 and an update on the impact so far can be found below. Support for households affected continues.
3. Our focus now is preparation for the introduction of Universal Credit. It was announced at the Conservative Party Conference that the implementation is to be accelerated and that from early 2015, single people seeking work, who would previously have applied for Jobseeker's Allowance, will be directed to apply for Universal Credit.
4. A letter from the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) sent to all local authorities in November 2014 set out the first tranche of authorities where Universal Credit will be implemented in March 2015. After discussions with DWP, the City has now been included in this first tranche.

Bedroom Cap and Benefits Cap Updates

5. As at October 2014, a total of 103 households had been affected by the Bedroom Cap. Of these, 44 are no longer affected. We are continuing to support the remaining 59 households (52 City of London tenants, 9 Guinness Trust tenants).
6. Of the 52 City of London tenants who are currently affected, 23 are in rent arrears, averaging £511 per household. This is an increase since February.
7. We currently have 8 households affected by the Benefits Cap (6 City of London tenants, 2 renting from private landlords).
8. All the 6 City of London households affected are now in rent arrears, averaging £253 per household.
9. Evictions for rent arrears are increasing nationally – an *Inside Housing* survey of 167 households in June 2014 showed an increase of 12.9%, which is an extra

814 households. Our protocol currently is that we only move to serve a notice to quit on a tenant whose arrears are due to benefit changes, if they have been offered a smaller property and have refused to accept it or to engage with us. We use Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) in many cases to cover the shortfall while we work with households to help them decide on a long-term solution. To date, there have been no evictions as a result of benefit reform.

Universal Credit

10. The next challenge facing us will be the introduction of Universal Credit. 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
11. 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. The implementation will be phased in for different categories of claimant, starting with new claims from single jobseekers in March 2015. The City is included in the first tranche of this implementation, so single jobseekers will be receiving Universal Credit from then.
12. Unlike Housing Benefit, which, for social tenants goes 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.
13. 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. A 'Dispatches' documentary shown on Monday 27 October 2014 revealed that 90% of the households currently on Universal Credit are in rent arrears. This will have a serious impact on the business plans of social landlords.
14. 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.
15. A further change, announced in November 2013, is that plans to deliver rent support to people of pension age through Pension Credit Plus have been

abandoned. Housing Benefit will, therefore, remain in place for pensioners for some years.

16. To prepare for the introduction of Universal Credit, the Housing & Neighbourhoods Service is in the process of implementing a Financial Inclusion Programme of measures which are designed to support residents, help them to manage their money effectively, and ensure that rent arrears remain low.

17. We will also be entering into a Delivery Partnership Agreement with the DWP. This commits us to a number of measures to support residents. Most are already covered by our Financial Inclusion Programme and day to day work, but we will work with the DWP to ensure that we provide all the assistance they recommend.

Financial Inclusion Programme

18. The Financial Inclusion Programme has a number of different measures, some of which are aimed at all households and some targeted to meet specific needs. All these measures are in addition to the work already carried out by our estate staff and by the City Advice service. Some have already been implemented, whilst others are planned.

Financial Inclusion Programme		
Project	Outline	Aimed at
Staff training & support	<p>All estate staff have attended basic training on money management to help them to provide a support and signposting service to residents. The Tenancy Support Team, working with the most vulnerable residents, have also attended debt counselling training.</p> <p>We are now increasing this training, in partnership with Toynbee Hall. One and two-day courses are being run for staff so that they can be Money Management Champions and can give practical support to residents.</p> <p>We are also changing the way in which our Income Recovery Officers and Tenancy Support Officers work, equipping them with mobile technology so that they can carry out benefit assessments and help people submit claims online during home visits.</p>	All residents
Benefits Surgeries	<p>Benefits staff hold regular surgeries on our estates. Residents can make an appointment to see an advisor or can drop in and get help to make sure they are claiming all appropriate benefits.</p>	All residents

	<p>We also provide IT facilities and internet access in our estate offices so that residents can be helped to make benefits applications on-line, and have referred residents to Digital Inclusion training run by the Library Service.</p>	
<p>Local Welfare Assistance (LWA) Funding</p>	<p>LWA comes to local authorities in the form of a grant and allows crisis loans and payments to be made to low income families in an emergency. This is entitled the Emergency Support Scheme. Our grant (£24k in 2014/15), is too small for it to be worth us managing the administration, so it is administered on our behalf by the London Borough of Lambeth.</p> <p>Take up of the scheme has been low, so the scope has been widened to make more people eligible. Despite the low take up, this funding can be critical to recipients. The funding from government will cease in 2015. We have identified savings which will allow us to maintain the scheme at the current take-up rate for the next 2 years and will then need to review.</p>	<p>Individuals and families experiencing a crisis or emergency</p>
<p>Pre-tenancy Training</p>	<p>For first-time tenants, moving into a City of London home is their first experience of paying rent and household bills and needing to budget accordingly. We are about to start a project with Broadway St Mungo where we will require first-time tenants to attend a two day money management training course before they are offered a property.</p>	<p>Prospective tenants on the waiting list for a first tenancy</p>
<p>Community Money Mentors</p>	<p>We have just started this project in partnership with Toynbee Hall. A total of 60 hours training is being delivered over 12 weeks to groups of 10-15 residents and leads to a qualification. Residents completing the course not only improve their own money management skills (in Tower Hamlets, 85% of the 290 people who have undergone the training reported that their money management skills had improved and 56% reported that they have begun to save) but are equipped to give basic advice to family, friends and neighbours. Our first courses started this month and we will evaluate these and, if they prove successful, run further courses throughout the year.</p>	<p>All residents</p>
<p>Rental Exchange</p>	<p>We have joined a programme led by Experian, the credit-rating agency, and the investment arm of the Big Issue, to allow all our tenants to have a credit rating. A tenant who has no previous borrowing</p>	<p>All tenants</p>

	<p>history has no credit rating, regardless of their rent payments. This affects their ability to sign up to contracts for services such as mobile phones and utilities. Without a credit rating, they cannot take advantage of cheaper rates offered through contracts and have to use more expensive, pay-as-you-go options. The Rental Exchange project allows rent accounts to be taken into account so that tenants with a good rent payment history can get a credit rating. We are currently piloting the exchange of data and, if that demonstrates significant benefits to our tenants, will be informing them of the scheme, to ensure compliance with data protection legislation.</p>	
Care Leavers Support	<p>A particular problem was identified with looked after children, when they left care and moved into independent living. Within a short time, most of these care-leavers were in rent arrears. We have worked with Children's Services to produce a new policy and procedure, whereby money management support starts to be given to look-after children from the age of 16 onwards. By the time they are 18 and able to leave care, they will have received sufficient support and training to enable them to sustain their tenancy – but we also provide a package of support for a further six months and longer if needed. We have already seen a reduction in rent arrears amongst this group of tenants, and we now monitor the position of each care-leaver carefully, in liaison with their social worker.</p>	Looked-after children and care-leavers
Kineara Rent Support Programme	<p>This project provides intensive support and training over a 10 week programme to households with serious and long term rent arrears. In a pilot, we have identified five households, four of which have engaged with the process and are receiving training.</p>	Tenants at risk of eviction for rent arrears
Illegal Moneylending support	<p>One issue of concern is that illegal moneylenders, or 'loan sharks' will be quick to take advantage of the fact that benefits will be paid direct to recipients. We have been working with the National Illegal Moneylending Team for the past year, to raise awareness of how to spot and deal with illegal moneylending activity. All estate staff have received training and presentations given to residents on every estate at their estate meetings, as well as promotional materials being widely displayed.</p>	All residents

Credit unions	<p>We have worked closely with the London Capital Credit Union (LCCU) for several years. Our original promotion of their services resulted in little take up but, in the last year, there has been much greater interest from residents. LCCU officers have attended estate meetings and held surgeries on our estates, talking to both residents and staff to encourage them to make use of the low-cost loans provided by them and to encourage them to develop a savings habit.</p> <p>LCCU membership forms will be sent to all tenants in January 2015.</p>	All residents
Essential items support	<p>We have earmarked a budget to help residents in financial difficulties to purchase essential items, in particular carpets and curtains. These are often items which are not a high priority for people on low incomes, but they are crucial, not only for comfort, warmth and privacy, but in avoiding prejudice and isolation. Residents often complain to estate staff that neighbours are covering windows with sheets, or that hard floors are noisy. These issues indicate that a household is in poverty. By providing grants to assist households in these circumstances, we can not only help them to avoid being singled out, but by offering this support, we can get access to the household to provide further support.</p>	Residents identified by estate staff as being in need of support
Ongoing information	<p>We provide a range of information for residents to use at any time. We also have a subscription to 'Quids In' magazine, a publication which aims to provide financial information in a chatty, easy to read format, alongside celebrity news and other popular items. We make 'Quids In' available to residents free on a quarterly basis.</p>	

Risks for the City

19. Welfare benefit reform poses a range of risks to all local authorities and housing providers, including the City.
20. The principal risk from a financial perspective is that rent arrears will rise, impacting on the 30 year Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and restricting our ability to carry out repairs and improvements to our homes. An allowance has been made within the current Business Plan for increased rent

arrears and we will continue to monitor this closely and make amendments to reflect changes.

- 21.** Increased rental arrears will result in more evictions – not just from City housing but from privately rented homes and from other housing providers such as the Guinness Trust. This will impact on the City’s Homelessness Service. People evicted due to rent arrears are considered to be ‘intentionally homeless’, which means there is no duty to rehouse them. However, we **do** have a statutory duty to rehome and of those households which contain children and vulnerable adults. At present, we have low numbers of people in temporary accommodation and the budget available reflects this. When the impact of Universal Credit begins to be felt, it is likely that we will see a surge in the demands on the Temporary Accommodation budget and on the staffing resource. We propose a piece of work to profile the risks and likely impacts of the changes and will use this to inform strategy as we move forward.
- 22.** Government funding to support local authorities through the impact of welfare benefit reform is reducing. Our Discretionary Housing Payments budget was reduced by 31% in 2014-15, giving us a budget of just £25,216. In October 2014, this was 86% spent on supporting households with a shortfall between their benefit and their rent, whilst we help them find a long-term solution. DWP have announced that there will be a further cut in 2015/16, which will severely limit our ability to support vulnerable households and may well lead to an increase in evictions.
- 23.** This, in turn, could have an impact on crime and anti-social behaviour. We are already seeing an increase in chaotic lifestyles, as households and individuals are affected by benefits sanctions and struggle to find secure employment, severely limiting their ability to manage their finances. Proposals to reduce and even discontinue support for single males of working age may well increase this problem further, and make them more vulnerable to illegal moneylending activity and drug and alcohol abuse.

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Committee:	Date:
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee	12 January 2015
Subject:	Public
City of London Almshouses Revenue Budgets 2014/15 and 2015/16	
Report of:	For Decision
The Chamberlain and The Director of Community & Children's Services	

Summary

1. This report is the annual submission of the City of London Almshouses revenue budgets overseen by your Committee. In particular it seeks approval for the revenue budget for 2015/16.
2. The overall budget position is summarised below:-

Table 1 : Overall Position	Latest Budget 2014/15 £'000	Original Budget 2015/16 £'000	Movement 2014/15 to 2015/16 £'000
Income	(373)	(372)	1
Expenditure	289	291	2
Surplus on income and expenditure account	(84)	(81)	3
Increase in market value of investments	(23)	(23)	0
Actual/Estimated Reserve brought forward	(1,483)	(1,590)	(107)
Reserve carried forward	(1,590)	(1,694)	(104)

3. Overall, the 2015/16 budget indicates a surplus of £81,000, a reduction of £3,000 compared with the Latest Budget for 2014/15. The main reason for this change is an increase in staffing costs.
4. The reserve is both a contingency against unforeseen expenditure and a provision for the financing of future expenditure.

Recommendations

5. The Committee is requested to:
 - Review the 2015/16 revenue budget to ensure that it reflects the Committee's objectives.

Main Report

Management of the City of London Almshouses

6. In accordance with existing practice, the management costs of Property Services provided by the Community and Children's Services Department are excluded. However, the budgets for the Almshouses do include the costs of Support Services provided by the City of London Corporation's central departments and the Community and Children's Services Department.

Proposed Budget Position 2014/15 and 2015/16

7. The detailed budgets and reserves are set out in Table 2.
8. Income and favourable variances are presented in brackets. Only significant variances (generally those greater than £10,000) have been commented on in the following paragraphs.
9. Officers previously reported deterioration in the roadway on the estate, as well as a proposal to improve the lighting for residents' safety and security at the same time as repairs could be effected.
10. Due to the remedial work at the Rogers Cottages and the communal hall project, the survey was delayed.
11. The quotes have now been received for the installation of lighting around the inner path of the garden and remedial works on the road. The total cost of improving lighting and repairing the roads will be £54k. This has been incorporated into the budget for 2015/16.

Table 2

Actual 2013/14 £'000	City of London Almshouses Trust	Latest Budget 2014/15 £'000	Original Budget 2015/16 £'000	Movement 2014/15 to 2015/16 £'000	Paragraph Ref
	Expenditure				
63	Employees	65	67	2	
57	Repairs and maintenance	148	148	0	14
3	Energy Costs	3	3	0	
8	Rents	8	8	0	
3	Council Tax	3	3	0	
7	Water	7	7	0	
5	Cleaning and Domestic Supplies	6	6	0	
(1)	Grounds Maintenance Costs	9	9	0	
82	Total Premises Related Expenses	184	184	0	
2	Equipment, Furniture and Materials	2	2	0	
6	Communications and Computing	7	7	0	
13	Fees and Services	0	0	0	
0	Advertising	1	1	0	
2	Hospitality	4	4	0	
23	Total Supplies and Services	14	14	0	
13	Recharges for Support Services	15	15	0	
4	Capital Charges	11	11	0	
185	Total Expenditure	289	291	2	
	Income				
(313)	Contributions and Service Charges	(335)	(347)	(12)	13
(43)	Investment Income	(38)	(25)	13	16
(356)	Total Income	(373)	(372)	1	
(171)	Net (Surplus)/Deficit	(84)	(81)	3	
	Reserves				
(1,249)	Balance Brought Forward	(1,483)	(1,590)	(107)	
(171)	Income and Expenditure Account	(84)	(81)	3	
(63)	Transfers and Increase in Market Value of Investments	(23)	(23)	0	
(1,483)		(1,590)	(1,694)	(104)	

12. Overall there is an increase in reserves of £104,000.

13. The contribution and service charge budgets have been increased using the same percentage increases which have been applied to the Housing Revenue Account rent income.

14. Details of repairs, maintenance and improvements are set out in Annex A.

Manpower Statement

15. Analysis of the movement in manpower and related staff costs are shown in table 3 below.

Table 3

	Latest Budget 2014/15		Original Budget 2015/16	
	Manpower Full-Time Equivalent	Estimated Cost £'000	Manpower Full-Time Equivalent	Estimated Cost £'000
Housing Management	0.25	10	0.25	10
Matrons - Employees	0.95	35	0.95	36
Gardener	0.80	20	0.8	21
Total Employee Costs	2	65	2	67

Investments

16. The Trust holds 135,697 units in the Corporation's Charities Pool with a market value as at 30 September 2014 of £1,076,077. The distribution rate for the first six months of 2014/15 was 4.1%. Cash is held by the Chamberlain on behalf of the Trust and is invested with other City of London funds on the London Money Markets. In this way, the Trust benefits from the higher interest rates that the City of London can obtain. The budget assumes interest on cash balances of 0.75% for 2014-15 and 0.50% for 2015-16 onwards. Interest is credited annually based on the Trust's average cash balance.

Background Papers:

Estimate Working Papers Chamberlain's

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REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS		B Latest Budget 2014/15 £'000	C Original Budget 2015/16 £'000	Increase/ (Decrease) Column C/B %
<u>Breakdown and Emergency Repairs</u>				
Building	E	44	45	
Electrical	E	8	8	
		-----	-----	
		52	53	2
		-----	-----	
<u>Contract Servicing</u>				
Building	E	5	5	
Electrical	E	10	10	
		-----	-----	
		15	15	0
		-----	-----	
<u>Cyclical Works</u>				
Disabled adaptations	E	6	6	
Internal decorations	A	5	5	
		-----	-----	
		11	11	0
		-----	-----	
<u>Projects</u>				
External repairs & redecoration	E	5	5	
Asbestos Management	E	5	5	
Road repairs	D	0	30	
Five year electrical test and inspections	E	5	5	
Lighting	D	0	24	
Damp at Rogers	E	30	0	
Staff Flat conversion	D	25	0	
		-----	-----	
		70	69	(1.4)
		-----	-----	
Total Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements		148	148	0

Key: E = Essential A = Advisable D = Desirable

2015/16 REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS -
EXPLANATION OF WORKS

Breakdown and Emergency Repairs

Building - £45,000

Responsive repairs currently undertaken by Linbrook Services Ltd

Electrical - £8,000

Responsive repairs currently undertaken by Linbrook Services Ltd

Contract Servicing

Building - £5,000

Servicing and Maintenance of Gas Appliances: The current contractor is Carillion - Planned Maintenance Engineering operating under a partnering agreement.

Fire extinguishers: The current contractor is L.W. Safety Ltd. The contract is market tested annually.

Chlorination of water tanks: The current contractor is Hertel UK. The contract is market tested annually.

Electrical - £10,000

Fire Alarms and Warden Call Systems: The current contractor is Beacon Alarms and the contract is market tested periodically. Also included is the rental of a British Telecom line in respect of the fire alarm system.

Cyclical Works

Disabled Adaptations - £6,000

Provision for adaptations to the properties when required.

Internal Decorations - £5,000

Provision for internal decoration of properties when required.

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

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