



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

Date: WEDNESDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2020

Time: 1.45 pm

Venue: VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING (ACCESSIBLE REMOTELY)

Members:

John Fletcher (Chairman)	Susan Pearson
Mary Durcan (Deputy Chairman)	William Pimlott
Randall Anderson	Peter Bennett
Mary Durcan (Deputy Chairman)	The Revd Stephen Haines
John Fletcher (Chairman)	Jason Pritchard
Marianne Fredericks	Ruby Sayed
Alderman David Graves	
Barbara Newman	
Dhruv Patel	

Enquiries: Rofikul Islam
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Accessing the virtual public meeting

Members of the public can observe this virtual public meeting at the below link:
<https://youtu.be/WoDtFJx62D4>

This meeting will be a virtual meeting and therefore will not take place in a physical location following regulations made under Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020. A recording of the public meeting will be available via the above link following the end of the public meeting for up to one municipal year. Please note: Online meeting recordings do not constitute the formal minutes of the meeting; minutes are written and are available on the City of London Corporation's website. Recordings may be edited, at the discretion of the proper officer, to remove any inappropriate material.

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 non-public summary of the meeting on Monday, 20 July 2020.
For Decision
(Pages 1 - 6)
4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**
Members are asked to note the Sub Committee's Outstanding Actions List.
For Decision
(Pages 7 - 10)
5. **MAJOR WORKS PROGRESS REPORT**
Report of the Director of Community & Children's Services.
For Information
(Pages 11 - 18)
6. **ESTATE INSPECTIONS PERFORMANCE - NOVEMBER 2019 TO MARCH 2020**
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.
For Information
(Pages 19 - 52)
7. **SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS FOLLOWING THE TENANCY VISITS PROJECT**
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.
For Information
(Pages 53 - 60)
8. **COMPENSATION POLICY REVIEW**
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.
For Decision
(Pages 61 - 74)
9. **MUTUAL EXCHANGE POLICY REVIEW**
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.
For Decision
(Pages 75 - 88)

10. **SOCIAL HOUSING TENANCY FRAUD - 2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT**

Report of the Head of Audit & Risk Management.

For Information
(Pages 89 - 96)

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

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

13. **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

14. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

To approve the non-public minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 20 July 2020.

For Decision
(Pages 97 - 98)

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

16. **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**
Monday, 20 July 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub
(Community and Children's Services) Committee held at VIRTUAL MEETING –
ACCESSIBLE REMOTELY on Monday, 20 July 2020 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

John Fletcher (Chairman)
Mary Durcan (Deputy Chairman)
Randall Anderson
Marianne Fredericks
Alderman David Graves
Barbara Newman
Susan Pearson
William Pimlott
Peter Bennett
Jason Pritchard

Officers:

Rofikul Islam	- Town Clerk
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerk
Gemma Stokley	- Town Clerk
Leanne Murphy	- Town Clerk
Paul Murtagh	- Community and Children's Services
Liam Gillespie	- Community and Children's Services
Jason Hayes	- Community and Children's Services
Jacqueline Whitmore	- Community and Children's Services
Michael Gwyther-Jones	- Community and Children's Services
Lochlan MacDonald	- Community and Children's Services

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies received.

**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 of the meeting held on Monday, 20
January 2020 be approved as a correct record.

4. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Members received the Sub-Committee's outstanding actions list and an
updated version was tabled, showing updates since the dispatch of the agenda.

Tenancy Visits

Members were advised that a report will be presented to the Sub-Committee about the Tenancy visits in the Sub-Committee's next sitting after the recess in September 2020.

Housing Risk Register

The Sub-Committee was informed that a report of the risk register will be presented to the Sub-Committee in September 2020.

New Portsoken Community Centre – Governance options

The Sub-Committee was advised that the developers have accepted responsibilities and the handover of the building is likely to be delayed due to COVID-19.

Housing Revenue

The Sub-Committee was updated on the department appointing an external consultant to review the report. The report of the external consultant to be presented to the Sub-Committee towards the end of the year.

Fire safety

The Sub-Committee was updated that a report will be presented to the Sub-Committee in September 2020, on the additional funding for the sprinklers.

Visit to the north and south estates

The Chairman advised that the visit to the north and south estates would be delayed to 2021 in light of COVID-19, however, should Members wish to make individual visits to the estates they are welcome to do so. Officers can arrange the visits at individual Members request.

Great Arthur House – Recladding Works

The Sub-Committee was informed that as this has now been approved by the Grand Committee, this can now come off the outstanding list. This will now go to the Grand Committee.

Housing Policies Renewal Timetable

The Sub-Committee was advised that the important policies will be reviewed first and as such some of the policies will be presented to the Sub-Committee in 2021. A revised timetable will be presented to the Sub-Committee.

Draft Parades Policy

The Sub-Committee was informed that the Draft Parades Policy date will be reviewed and presented to the Sub-Committee.

Housing Major Works Programme

Members agreed that the Housing Major Works Programme can now come off the outstanding action.

Middlesex Street Garage

The Sub-Committee was advised by the Director that the leak to the podium will be updated with further work being carried out.

5. HOUSING MAJOR WORKS PROGRAMME - PROGRESS REPORT

The Sub-Committee received the report of the Director of Community & Children's Services on the Housing Major Works Programme – Progress Report.

The Sub-Committee was advised that the purpose of the report is to update Members on the progress which had been made with the Housing Major Works Programme and to advise the Sub-Committee on issues affecting progress on individual schemes.

The Sub-Committee was informed that Officers have been working around the design stages and ensuring that work with consultants and external stakeholders continues. The Sub-Committee was further advised that various stages of works within the houses will start again in September to coincide with children being back to school and cause minimum disruptions to the residents.

A Member asked about the consultation taking place before the work restarting. Officers advised that before the internal work commences a survey will be carried out with the residents and ensure that the Department feeds into the views amplified in the survey.

Officers advise the Sub-Committee that some external doors are being replaced within Middlesex Street Estate. Although this is outside of the scope of the current project, the doors are in need of replacement. A Member asked that the Central Government has announced a £5000 Sustainable Energy Projects grants for individual households and if the City of London can tap into this. Officers assured the Sub-Committee to provide a detailed paper to the Sub-Committee at its next meeting, as the information around the Sustainable Energy Project grants needs further clarification.

RESOLVED – That the Sub-Committee notes the report.

6. RENT ARREARS DURING COVID-19

The Sub-Committee received the report of the Director of Community & Children's Services on the Rent Arrears During COVID-19.

The Sub-Committee was informed that the rent arrears have increased due to many tenants being furloughed, made redundant or having their working reduced hours. The current rent arrears for the City of London stand at £329,053. The Sub-Committee was assured that Officers continue to engage with residents and are offering practical support to families who are struggling.

Members were informed that at present there is a "rent holiday" for commercial tenants of the City of London due to COVID-19. A Member asked if the City of London is keeping a track on how much commercial rent it has waived so far. At this point the Chairman mentioned that this will be discussed in detail at the

Grand Committee (Community and Children's Services) on Friday 24 July 2020.

The Sub-Committee was further advised that there are three scheduled eviction cases which pre-date COVID-19, however no legal sanctions are currently being taken on in cases of arrears accrued since COVID-19. Officers informed Members that the City of London applies for very few evictions in general and always works with residents to overcome any difficulties. Eviction proceedings are only issued as a very last resort.

RESOLVED – That the Sub-Committee notes the report.

7. **CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES UPDATE**

The Sub-Committee received the report of the Director of Community & Children's Services on the City of London Almshouses Update. The Sheltered Housing Manager informed the Sub-Committee on the resident's welfare. At present there are three residents the Almshouses Manager is particularly concerned about.

A Member asked if the residents are allowed to sit outside in the garden. The Sheltered Housing Manager mentioned that although the garden is open to the residents it remains unused. In terms of the welfare of the residents the Sub-Committee was informed that conversations have taken place with the resident's families and GP to ensure that adequate level of care are being given to the residents where there are extra concerns about their welfare due to lockdown isolation.

A Member asked if the City of London intends to start the repairs work as planned in August 2020. The Sheltered Housing Manager informed the Sub-Committee, that a survey was carried out with the residents and the majority of the residents are content with the work starting in August 2020, several have agreed to kitchen and bathroom works to commence in their homes.

This was followed by another Member asking, if the Almshouses can be a social bubble itself, therefore allowing the residents to have communal activities. The Sheltered Housing Manager advised that the current residents often do not have shared interests thus to form a bubble may not be helpful as several have already formed their bubbles with families and friends. Additionally, some residents have bubbles with their care support from the local authority and as such staff must be careful about how the bubbles overlap.

RESOLVED – That the Sub-Committee notes the report.

8. **HOUSING DELIVERY PROGRAMME - HOUSING DESIGN GUIDE**

The Sub-Committee received the report of the Director of Community & Children's Services on the on the Housing Delivery Programme – Housing Design Guide.

The Sub-Committee was informed that the City of London's social housing projects are undertaking in compliance with a consistent and comprehensive Housing Design Guide (HDG).

A Member has requested that the Sub-Committee be provided with a presentation on the methods of construction. Another Member commented about the new developments in Woolwich about the 100 new homes on Goldsmith Street being smart, modern and most energy-efficient houses ever built in the UK.

Officer advised the Sub-Committee that the City of London is exceeding regulations in England and going beyond the requirements, as well as ensuring that all our buildings are installed with sprinklers since the Grenfell incident.

RESOLVED – That the Sub-Committee notes the report.

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

There were no questions.

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

There was no other business.

11. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

The meeting ended at 3.30 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Rofikul Islam
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HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB-COMMITTEE (HMASC)
Outstanding Actions – Sep 2020 update

Date Added	ITEM	Action	Officer and target date
22.7.19	TENANCY VISITS	Members requested a themed report, setting out how the data was being used and where improvements had been made.	Dean Robinson/Liam Gillespie On HMASC Agenda for 23 March
22.7.19	HOUSING UPDATE AND RISK REGISTER REPORT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A new regime was being piloted on 2 estates and would be introduced on all estates later this year. 2. Members asked if future reports could have more breakdown in respect of anti-social behaviour, by location, including trends from previous years. 	Liam Gillespie <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Members asked to receive a further report on the new inspection system once it had been fully rolled - expected May 2020. 2. Noted.
16.9.19	NEW PORTSOKEN COMMUNITY CENTRE – GOVERNANCE OPTIONS	Officers are working with 'Locality' in respect of scoping the community work. Handover of the building is expected late 2020.	Carol Boswarthack Governance report expected at either the March or May meeting of the Sub Committee
20.11.19	HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT PARKING	Brief for the Housing Revenue Account Parking Consultant had been drafted and advice would be taken with colleagues in the Commissioning Team, with a view to engaging someone to carry out an initial review.	Liam Gillespie On HMASC Agenda for 23 March
20.11.19	FIRE SAFETY	The sprinkler installation project was underway and a Design Consultant had been appointed.	Paul Murtagh Update Report on agendas for March Community and Children's Services and Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee.

HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB-COMMITTEE (HMASC)
Outstanding Actions – Sep 2020 update

20.11.19	VISITS TO THE NORTH AND SOUTH ESTATES	Members suggested that these be split across 3 visits, possibly before or after a meeting of the Sub Committee.	Liam Gillespie/Julie Mayer To be arranged once the new Sub Committee is elected in May 2020.
20.11.19	GREAT ARTHUR HOUSE – RECLADDING WORKS	1-Gateway 6 Project Report 2-Report on next stages in the legal process, the legal costs to date and Counsel's estimate for potential future legal costs.	Paul Murtagh/City Surveyors 1-On HMASC agenda for 23 March. 2-Members to receive a report as soon as possible.
20.11.19	HOUSING POLICIES RENEWAL TIMETABLE	1-Update to next meeting as to whether all outstanding reviews could be completed by the end of 2020. 2-Members to see a table showing existing policies, with their renewal dates, on a more regular basis. 3-In light of findings from the recent work on social isolation, Pets Policy to be given priority.	Liam Gillespie 1- HMASC on 23 March 2 – tba 3 - tba
20.11.19	DRAFT PARADES POLICY	Draft Policy to be presented to the Community and Children's Services Committee (CCSC).	Liam Gillespie On CCSC agenda for 6 March 2020.
20.1.20	TENANCY RENEWAL POLICY	Work to avoid voluntary homelessness to be more visible in Policy. 'Significant period' and 'appropriate action' should be more specific.	Liam Gillespie/Sonia Marquis Revised report on agenda for HMASC 23 March 2020.

HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB-COMMITTEE (HMASC)
Outstanding Actions – Sep 2020 update

		All references to legislation and available assistance should have a web page link	
20.1.20	HOUSING MAJOR WORKS PROGRAMME	<p>Future estimates to have a health warning that they might be subject to planning delays in other authorities.</p> <p>The Chairman of the Community and Children's Services Committee to speak to the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee about raising this at the Local Authority Leaders' Committee.</p>	<p>Randall Anderson/Paul Murtagh</p> <p>HMASC Agenda for 30 September.</p>
20.1.20	MIDDLESEX STREET GARAGES	<p>Members to be sighted on Memorandum of Understanding</p> <p>The Director agreed to investigate a leak to the Podium, which had just come to his attention.</p>	<p>Paul Murtagh</p> <p>MoU on HMASC Agenda for 23 March</p>

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Committee	Dated:
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee	30 September 2020
Subject: Housing Major Works Programme – Progress Report	Public
Report of: Director of Community & Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Paul Murtagh Assistant Director Barbican & Property Services	

Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the progress that has been made with the Housing Major Works Programme and to advise Members on issues affecting progress on individual schemes.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. At its meeting on 27 November 2017, the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee received a presentation from officers in Housing Property Services on the scope of, and progress with, the Housing Major Works Programme. Members subsequently agreed that it would be useful if further updates and progress reports be brought to future meetings of this Sub-Committee.
2. The first update and progress report was presented to this Sub-Committee at its meeting on 12 February 2018. This fifteenth update report highlights specific areas of 'slippage' or 'acceleration' since the last meeting of the Sub-Committee on 20 July 2020 as well as, progress against the programme as originally reported in November 2017.

Considerations

3. The City of London Corporation (City Corporation) is committed to investing around £55million on a Major Works Programme for the maintenance, refurbishment and improvement of its social housing portfolio. The works, in the main comprise:
 - Window replacements;
 - Re-roofing;
 - Decent Homes (new kitchens and bathrooms);
 - Electrical rewiring and upgrades;

- Heating replacements;
 - Concrete repairs.
4. The funding for these extensive works, which are intended to bring all the City Corporation's social housing stock up to, and beyond, the Decent Homes Standard, comes from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which is ring-fenced solely for housing. The HRA is made up of:
 - Income from rents;
 - Income from service charges.
 5. The Housing Major Works Programme was originally intended to be a 5-year programme however, the size and complexity of some of the projects included, along with initial staff resourcing issues, has meant that it is more likely to take 7 or 8 years to complete.
 6. The Housing Major Works Programme is monitored and managed at several levels both corporately and within the department. This includes:
 - Gateway Process;
 - DCCS Committee;
 - Projects Sub-Committee;
 - Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee;
 - Housing Programme Board.
 7. The Housing Programme Board (HPB) is a cross-departmental group, chaired by the Director of Community & Children's Services and comprising senior officers from:
 - Housing Management;
 - Housing Property Services;
 - City Surveyors;
 - Planning;
 - Finance;
 - Town Clerks;
 - City Procurement.
 8. For the purpose of the HPB, officers have developed detailed report templates that show progress of the various works programmes and these are analysed and discussed monthly. At its meeting on 27 November 2017, following a presentation from officers in Housing Property Services on the scope of, and progress with the Housing Major Works Programme, Members agreed that a simplified version of the progress reports be brought to future meetings of this Sub-Committee.
 9. Attached at Appendix 1 to this report, for Members consideration, is the latest version of the progress report for the Housing Major Works Improvement Programme. This progress report has been submitted to the HPB for consideration at its meeting in September.

10. Members will note from the progress report at Appendix 1 that there are currently two projects that have 'slipped' since the last meeting of this Sub-Committee. Given that we continue to operate in difficult and challenging times as a result of the outbreak of COVID-19, Members will understand the impact this has had on the programme. Members are asked to specifically note the following updates:

Extension of projects in delivery

H46 – Middlesex Street Estate - Communal Heating

It has been agreed with the appointed contractor, TSG Building Services Limited, that the progress and delivery of this project will be delayed due to the 'knock-on' effect of the delays to the various other contracts on the Middlesex Street Estate. It would simply not be advisable to allow a further contractor to actively start work on the Middlesex Street Estate given the number of other on-going projects that have now recommenced. Safe working protocols and social distancing measures would be very difficult to maintain.

Although, we have not, as yet, agreed a revised starting date with the contractor, we are not expecting any additional costs as a result of the temporary suspension of this project.

H52 – Avondale Estate – Communal and Emergency Lighting

A three-month extension has been agreed with the contractor for the delivery of this programme as a result of the impact of COVID-19 and, the need to ensure the work progresses in accordance with the revised safe working protocols.

Progress of note on key projects

H39 – Window Replacement and External Decoration (Multiple Estates)

At its last meeting on 20 July, Members were advised that the COVID-19 situation has meant that slippage on this project generally, across all the estates is around 6 to 7 months than last reported. However, we have made some good progress since the last meeting and, tenders are now being advertised for the works contracts for the Southwark, William Blake and Holloway Estates. The procurement process is due to be completed by the end of September.

H24 – Balcony Doors and Windows – Petticoat Tower

It had been previously reported that this project was 'on hold' until further notice as, it was not possible to comply with the guidelines around safe distancing during the installation process. The project is now set to restart, with initial appointments being made for access with residents during September.

There will be a slight increase in the cost for this project as a result of the extended duration for the hire of the scaffolding and hoist (including the statutory inspection regime). Economically, it was better to leave the scaffolding and hoist in-situ whilst

the project was suspended rather than, remove and then and reinstall once the suspension was lifted.

H25 – Replacement Stairwell Panels – Petticoat Tower

As in the case above, this work was previously reported as being 'on hold' until further notice. However, following discussions and negotiations with the appointed contractor, the project is now set to restart this month (September).

H42 – Petticoat Tower Front Door Replacement

Members have been previously advised that Gerda Security Holdings were to be appointed to carry out the replacement of the front entrance doors in Petticoat Tower. However, this project had also been put 'on hold' as a result of restrictions due to COVID-19. The appointment of Gerda Security Holdings has now been formalised and, the project is expected to commence on site towards the end of September.

H44 – Refurbishment Works - City of London & Gresham Almshouses

Members will be aware that these works were put on hold due to the current health crisis and the number of vulnerable residents in our homes. Following discussions with the appointed contractor and, residents who are due to have works done, work is set to resume towards the end of September.

11. As Members will appreciate, there will always be problems with contracts and projects such as those contained within the Housing Major Works Programme. In addition, we are currently operating in what are, for most of us, unprecedented times. The COVID-19 situation continues to have a significant impact on service delivery and, the Major Works Programme is particularly adversely affected. That said, we continue to meet with our contractors and consultants on a regular basis to see what can be done to get these projects back up and running.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Housing Major Works Programme Progress Report (June 2020)





Paul Murtagh
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GOLDEN LANE ESTATE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME - DELIVERY FORECAST SEPTEMBER 2020

[illegible]

MIDDLESEX STREET ESTATE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME - DELIVERY FORECAST SEPTEMBER 2020

[illegible]

- works delivery baseline (as forecast November 2017)
-  works on site/complete
-  works programmed (current forecast)
-  testing/preparatory/offsite works
- programme slippage from previous report (length of arrow denotes length of delay)
-  programme brought forward from previous report (length of arrow denotes extent)

AVONDALE SQUARE ESTATE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME - DELIVERY FORECAST SEPTEMBER 2020

WORKS TYPE	REF	PROJECT	ESTIMATED COST	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	CURRENT STATUS	SLIPPAGE SINCE LAST REPORT	TIMELINE																																															
							2017/18												2018/19												2019/20												2020/21											
							Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4			Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4			Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4														
							A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M												
INVESTMENT PROGRAMME	H6	Decent Homes Avondale - Phase II	£461,305	£392,780	works complete																																																	
	H20	Redecorations (multiple estate programme)	£607,150	£571,252	works complete																																																	
	H43	Decent Homes Harman Close	£980,000	£792,000	on hold - delay due to covid 19																																																	
	H1	Avondale Square - Window Overhaul	£453,440	£417,000	works complete																																																	
	H26	Water Tank Replacement/Repairs (multiple estate programme)	£92,104	£36,000	works complete																																																	
	H48	Electrical Testing - Phase III (tenanted flats multiple estates)	£555,266	£467,000	on site																																																	
	H47	Electrical Testing - Phase IV (landlords electrics multiple estates)	£355,567	£128,500	on site																																																	
	H54	Fire Door Replacement Programme (multiple estate programme)	£2,790,000	£1,000	procurement																																																	
	H55	Installation of Sprinklers (Point Blocks as part of a multiple estate programme)	£3,200,000	£18,000	design																																																	
	H52	Avondale Communal & Emergency Lighting	£310,000	£96,000	on site - programme extended	3 months																																																
H53	Play and Ball Games Area Refurbishment (multiple estate programme)	£272,000	£3,000	design & consultation																																																		

SOUTHWARK/WILLIAM BLAKE ESTATES INVESTMENT PROGRAMME - DELIVERY FORECAST SEPTEMBER 2020

WORKS TYPE	REF	PROJECT	ESTIMATED COST	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	CURRENT STATUS	SLIPPAGE SINCE LAST REPORT	TIMELINE																																									
							2017/18												2018/19												2019/20								2020/21									
							Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4			Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4			Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4											
A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	
INVESTMENT PROGRAMME	H2	CCTV (William Blake)	£23,301	£16,900	works complete																																											
	H5	Decent Homes - Phase II (Southwark as part of multiple estate programme)	£1,270,000	£762,240	works complete																																											
	H26	Water Tank Replacement/Repairs (multiple estate programme)	£67,900	£25,000	works complete																																											
	H10	Door Entry (William Blake in conjunction with Dron House)	£268,500	£212,000	works complete																																											
	H56	Re-Roofing at Blake House (William Blake Estate)	£396,000	£393,000	works complete																																											
	H48	Electrical Testing - Phase III (tenanted flats multiple estates)	£555,266	£467,000	on site																																											
	H47	Electrical Testing - Phase IV (landlords electrics multiple estates)	£355,567	£128,500	on site																																											
	H39	Window Replacements & External Redecorations (Pakeman, Stopher & Sumner)	£3,330,000	£37,000	procurement																																											
	H39	Window Replacements & External Redecorations (William Blake)	£1,100,000	£52,000	procurement																																											
	H54	Fire Door Replacement Programme (multiple estate programme)	£1,454,000	£1,000	procurement																																											
H50	Southwark Estate Concrete Testing & Repair	£1,500,000	£57,000	specification																																												

HOLLOWAY ESTATE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME - DELIVERY FORECAST SEPTEMBER 2020

WORKS TYPE	REF	PROJECT	ESTIMATED COST	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	CURRENT STATUS	SLIPPAGE SINCE LAST REPORT	TIMELINE																																
							2017/18							2018/19							2019/20							2020/21											
							Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4		Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4		Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4		Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4		
							A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
INVESTMENT PROGRAMME	H36	Electrical Rewire (Tenanted Flats)	£225,000	£205,000	works complete																																		
	H37	Electrical Rewire (Landlords)	£385,465	£373,000	works complete																																		
	H26	Water Tank Replacement/Repairs (multiple estate programme)	£16,722	£3,505	works complete																																		
	H39	Window Replacements & External Redecorations (Holloway)	£1,770,000	£31,100	procurement																																		
	H54	Fire Door Replacement Programme (multiple estate programme)	£537,500	£1,000	procurement																																		

- works delivery baseline (as forecast November 2017)
- works on site/complete
- works programmed (current forecast)
- testing/preparatory/offsite works
- programme slippage from previous report (length of arrow denotes length of delay)
- programme brought forward from previous report (length of arrow denotes extent)

YORK WAY ESTATE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME - DELIVERY FORECAST SEPTEMBER 2020

WORKS TYPE	REF	PROJECT	ESTIMATED COST	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	CURRENT STATUS	SLIPPAGE SINCE LAST REPORT	TIMELINE																														
							2017/18							2018/19							2019/20							2020/21									
							Q1			Q2		Q3		Q4		Q1			Q2		Q3		Q4		Q1			Q2		Q3		Q4					
A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M		
INVESTMENT PROGRAMME	H5	Decent Homes - Phase II (multiple estate programme)	£608,000	£574,297	works complete		ELEC TESTING			YORK WAY				OTHER ESTATES																							
	H20	Redecorations (multiple estate programme)	£596,000	£541,000	works complete									OTHER ESTATES				YORK WAY WORKS																			
	H26	Water Tank Replacement/Repairs (multiple estate programme)	£130,653	£49,000	works complete													YORK WAY				OTHER ESTATES															
	H48	Electrical Testing - Phase III (tenanted flats multiple estates)	£555,266	£467,000	works complete																																
	H47	Electrical Testing - Phase IV (landlords electrics multiple estates)	£355,567	£128,500	on site																																
	H45	Communal Heating	£3,087,990	£152,500	on site																	DESIGN & LEAD IN															
	H54	Fire Door Replacement Programme (multiple estate programme)	£1,112,500	£1,000	procurement																													PROGRAMME TBC ➡			

SYDENHAM HILL ESTATE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME - DELIVERY FORECAST SEPTEMBER 2020

WORKS TYPE	REF		ESTIMATED COST	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	CURRENT STATUS	SLIPPAGE SINCE LAST REPORT	TIMELINE																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																														
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INVESTMENT PROGRAMME	H5	Decent Homes - Phase II (multiple estate programme)	£173,315	£46,472	works complete		ELEC TESTING						SYD H																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																								

SMALL ESTATES (DRON, WINDSOR, ISLEDEN, COLA, GRESHAM) INVESTMENT PROGRAMME - DELIVERY FORECAST SEPTEMBER 2020

WORKS TYPE	REF	PROJECT	ESTIMATED COST	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	CURRENT STATUS	SLIPPAGE SINCE LAST REPORT	TIMELINE																																																			
							2017/18				2018/19				2019/20				2020/21																																							
							Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4																																				
A		M		J		A		S		O		N		D		J		F		M		A		M		J		J		A		S		O		N		D		J		F		M														
INVESTMENT PROGRAMME	H5	Decent Homes - Phase II (Dron & Windsor as part of multiple estate programme)	£686,216	£451,412	works complete		ELEC TESTING				WIN. & DRON																																															
	H26	Water Tank Replacement/Repairs (multiple estate programme)	£15,810	£15,810	works complete										ISL/DRN				OTHER ESTATES																																							
	H48	Electrical Testing - Phase III (tenanted flats multiple estates)	£555,266	£372,000	works complete																																																					
	H10	Door Entry (Dron House in conjunction with William Blake)	£120,000	£120,000	works complete						SURVEY												LEAD IN																																			
	H56	Re-Roofing at Dron House	£404,000	£363,000	works complete																																																					
	H47	Electrical Testing - Phase IV (landlords electrics multiple estates)	£355,567	£128,500	on site																																																					
	H39	Window Replacements & External Redecoration (Dron)	£950,000	£22,000	procurement						DETAILED DESIGN & PLANNING																																															
	H39	Window Replacements & External Redecoration (Windsor)	£890,000	£21,000	procurement						DETAILED DESIGN & PLANNING																																															
	H54	Fire Door Replacement Programme (multiple estate programme)	£890,000	£1,000	design																																																					
	H53	Play and Ball Games Area Refurbishment (multiple estate programme)	£272,000	£3,000	design & consultation																		DESIGN																																			
H44	COLA & Gresham Refurbishment	£838,669	£122,000	on site																																																						

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Committee: Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee	Date: 30/09/2020
Subject: Estate Inspections Performance – November 2019 to March 2020	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children’s Services	For Information
Report authors: Liam Gillespie, Head of Housing Management Greg Nott, Estate Services Project Manager	

Summary

In November 2019, the Housing Service introduced new objective standards for estate cleaning and grounds maintenance on its housing estates. A new regime of scheduled estate inspections was started and Estate Officers now complete inspections on handheld devices.

The attached report shows performance data from the first five months of the new inspection regime (November 2019 to March 2020).

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Housing Service introduced a new set of standards (“the Estate Service Standards”) for cleaning and caretaking in November 2019, as part of a review of its estate management procedures.
2. The Estate Service Standards form the basis of a new inspection regime, in which Estate Officers conduct regularly scheduled inspections of communal areas on the City’s housing estates, using online inspection forms. These inspections can then be monitored centrally by senior management. The system used, iAuditor, allows us to monitor performance and direct resources to the right tasks and locations. It also allows officers to report on statistical data and identify trends in the completed inspections.

3. There are two estate inspection templates (one for communal areas within buildings, and another for external areas). The new procedure is also used to inspect children's playgrounds, communal fire doors and fire boxes (the red boxes at each site containing relevant information for the emergency services in the event of a fire).
4. Members requested a progress report on the first six months of the new regime. Due to the introduction of lockdown, full estate inspections were suspended at the end of March 2020, so the attached report is based on five months' worth of data (November 2019 to March 2020). This still offers an accurate picture of performance.
5. Inspection reports and performance summaries are available to view online on the Housing pages of the City's website (under 'Estate Services Reports').

Current Position

6. A report summarising the results of the various inspections is contained in **Appendix One**.
7. Overall, it can be noted that our estates are generally maintained at a very good standard of cleanliness, with a high (80%+) average score overall.
8. The inspections have enabled us to identify areas for improvement and, following the implementation of improvement plans in some areas, standards have increased.
9. Members may also wish to note that:
 - 522 individual inspections were carried out over the reporting period
 - The average score for internal areas across all sites was 84.3%
 - The highest scoring estate overall was Avondale Square Estate
 - The most common issue of anti-social behaviour was graffiti and criminal damage
 - The most common repairs issues logged on internal inspections were faults with main entrance doors; on grounds inspections, the most common repairs related to car parks and roads
10. The full inspections regime recommenced in September 2020, having been suspended during lockdown. During this time, estates were still regularly inspected but full scheduled inspections were not completed due to staff workloads.
11. It is proposed that officers submit a regular update to Committee as part of the twice-yearly Housing Update and Risk Register report, as the performance data gathered during the inspections can easily be incorporated into the performance dashboard used in that report.

Future Developments

12. This is a new way of working for the Housing Service and we want to make the inspections system as useful as possible and continuously improve on working practices and performance reporting. As we get more accustomed to the new procedures, we want to look at further improvements such as:
- Resident involvement in scrutinising results and performance
 - Improving the way we publicise inspection results and the improvements we make in response
 - Improving how anti-social behaviour is logged during inspections
 - Looking at ways of including the quarterly resident and Member estate walkabouts in the inspection regime, to better track actions and outcomes, and improve how these are communicated
13. Once we have more comprehensive data, we can use it to identify trends and issues, which can then be used as a basis for directing resources. For example, the data we have collected so far identifies main entrance doors as being a major source of repairs raised during inspections. This could be used as a basis for identifying and surveying hotspots in order to plan potential improvements to security and inform a repair or replacement programme.
14. Officers welcome ideas from Members on how the inspections regime (and reporting of performance and results) might be improved.

Conclusion

15. The new estate inspections regime introduced in November 2019 has been successfully embedded and officers are confident that it is going to prove to be a useful tool for managing our housing estates.
16. The data shows that, overall, our estates are maintained to a very good standard of cleanliness. Where standards are not being met, the inspections data allows us to put in place action plans to address specific concerns.
17. As we continue with the inspections from September 2020, thought will be given to how the inspections regime can be improved, in order to ensure that it provides the best information possible to enable us to report on performance.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Estate Services Performance Report, Nov. 2019 – Mar. 2020

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Estate Services Report

Nov 19 – Mar 20

City of London
Author: Greg Nott
Estate Services Project Manager



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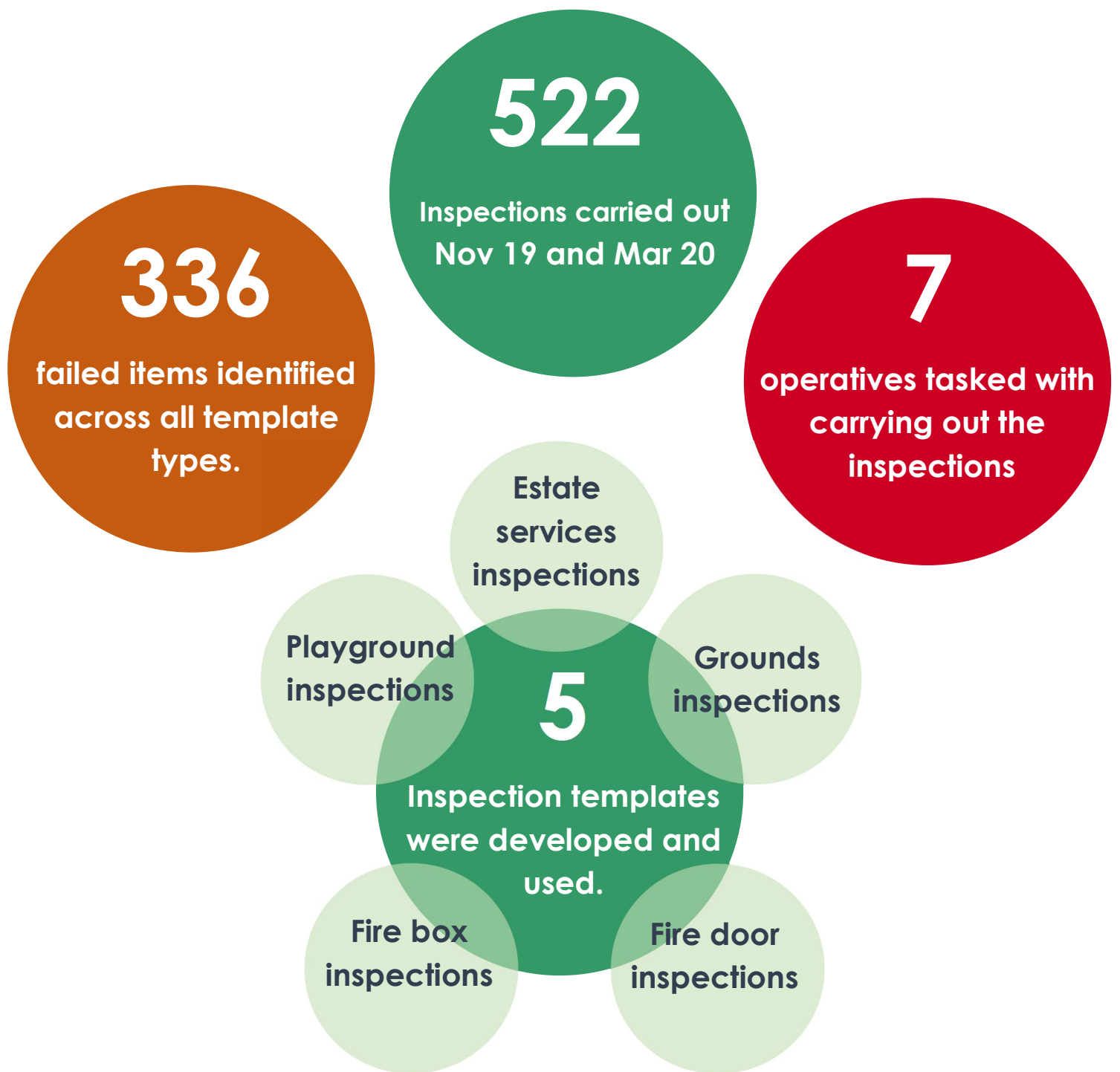
Introduction

On 1st November 2019, the Housing Division introduced a new estate inspections program designed to standardise our approach to inspections and compare our estates against new objective cleaning and caretaking standards. This report provides an update on the first five months of the new regime and includes data taken from the iAuditor inspections system.

The report gives an overall picture of our performance and gives details on how our estates have been graded. It also explains some trends we have identified, which we will use to inform decisions on estate services operations and effective use of resources.

The first five months has been a success and the system has been well-received by the staff who use it. We aim to build on this success and refine the inspections as we go. Some ideas for future development are discussed later in this report.

Overview



Estate Services Inspections

Internal areas – residential blocks

294 completed inspections.

84.63% average score.

197 failed items identified. Failed items can range from below average scoring of areas against the Estate Standards, to areas identified as requiring a repair.

Cleaning

Most common low scoring areas

1-Windows in stairwells

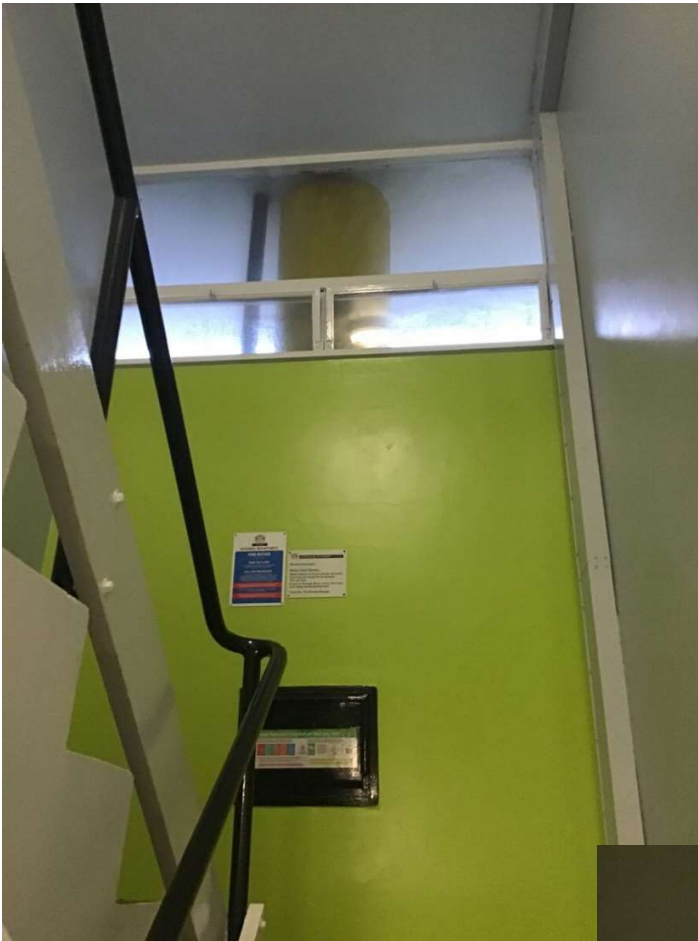
2-Entrance lighting

3-Stairwells

4-Bin chambers

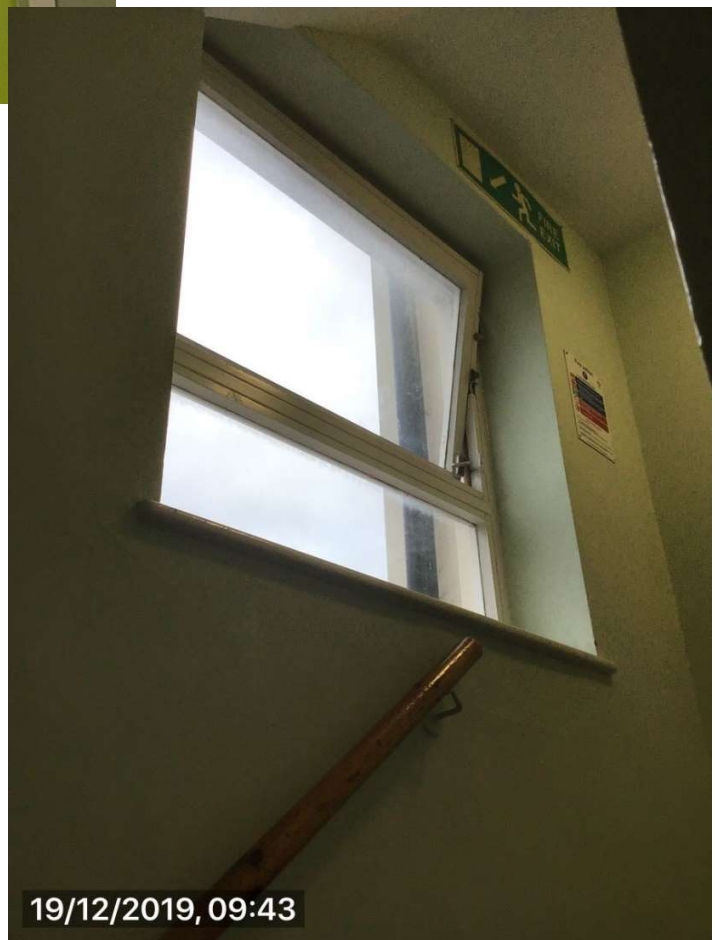
5-Lighting in landing, balconies and corridors

In general, our residential blocks are clean and score consistently well across the estates. The most common low-scoring element is windows in communal stairwells. On investigation, we have determined that this is largely caused by a significant number of 'difficult to reach' windows, which have often been neglected. Using this information, we can look at solutions to the problem and incorporate them into our review of the window cleaning contract.

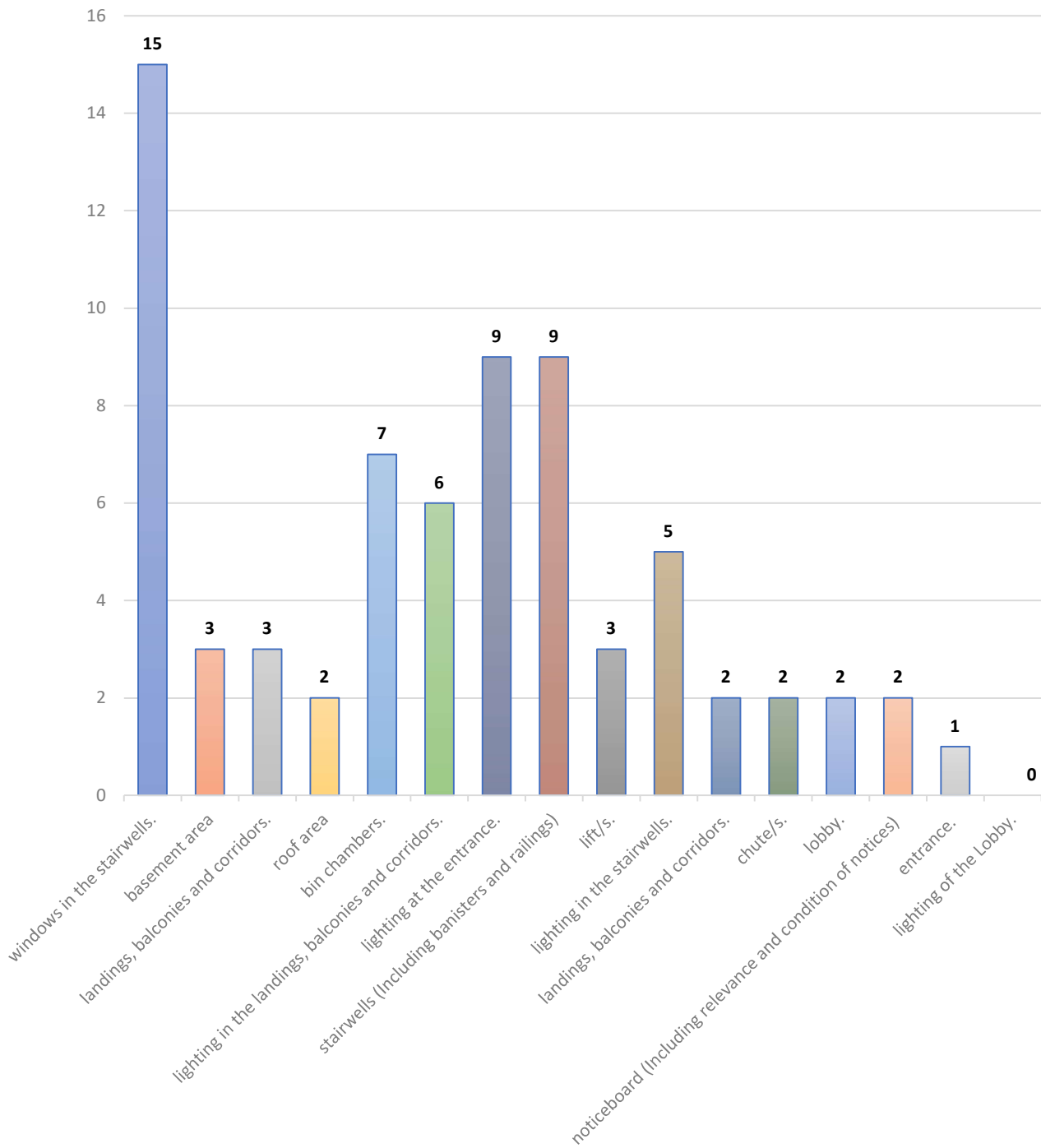


Left
 Image taken from a Stanley Cohen Inspection shows window at height with limited access for external cleaning.

Right
 Inspection photo taken from York House displaying poor window design, limiting access to the outside of the window for cleaning



Cleaning of Blocks - Most common low scoring areas



Hazards

Most common areas where hazards were present:

1-Landings, balconies and corridors

Commonly items stored outside residents' homes, causing an obstruction or potential fire hazard

2-Chute rooms

Issue with chute hopper identified as a hazard

3-Roof areas

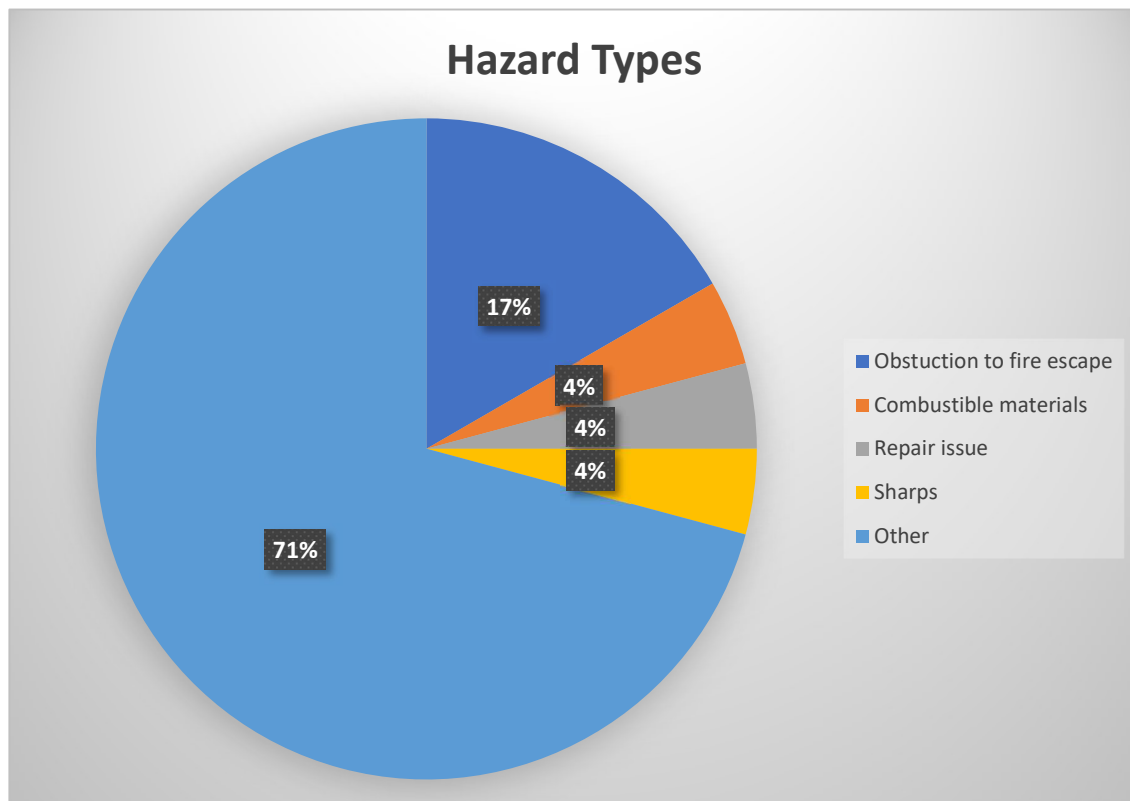
Fencing around a restricted area had been damaged

4-Stairwells

Items outside of a resident's home situated in a stairwell

Hazards by Estate (Internal)

	November	December	January	February	March
Golden Lane	3	1	1	1	0
Middlesex Street	3	0	0	1	0
Dron House	2	0	0	1	0
Windsor House	0	0	0	1	0
William Blake	0	0	0	0	0
Southwark Estates	0	0	0	0	0
York Way	1	1	0	0	2
Holloway	1	0	0	0	0
Isleden House	1	0	0	0	0
Avondale Sq.	1	0	0	0	0
Sydenham Hill	0	0	0	0	0
Harman Close	0	0	0	0	0
Almshouses	0	0	0	0	0



As can be seen from the chart above the term 'other' constitutes the largest percentage by some margin. Through analysis of the inspections, we found that this was mainly due to:

- the uncertainty of the inspectors in deciding where to place their experiences in the options presented by the system
- the limited number of options to select during an inspection

We intend to revise the inspections form and provide further guidance to inspectors in order to improve the data we gather in this area.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Including External areas

	November	December	January	February	March
Golden Lane	1	0	4	0	0
Middlesex Street	2	0	0	0	0
Dron House	0	0	0	5	0
Windsor House	1	0	0	1	0
William Blake	0	0	0	0	0
Southwark	0	0	0	0	0
York Way	3	3	2	1	1
Holloway	3	0	0	0	0
Isleden House	0	0	0	0	0
Avondale Sq.	0	0	0	0	0
Sydenham Hill	0	0	0	0	0
Harman Close	0	0	0	0	0
Almshouses	0	0	0	0	0

The ASB levels across our estates are low and mostly confined to relatively minor issues.

The types of ASB we might find during estate inspections include:

- graffiti
- fly-tipping and dumping of rubbish
- criminal damage (e.g. damage to entrance doors)
- evidence of people misusing communal areas (e.g. drugs paraphernalia)

Graffiti and other criminal damage were the most common findings.

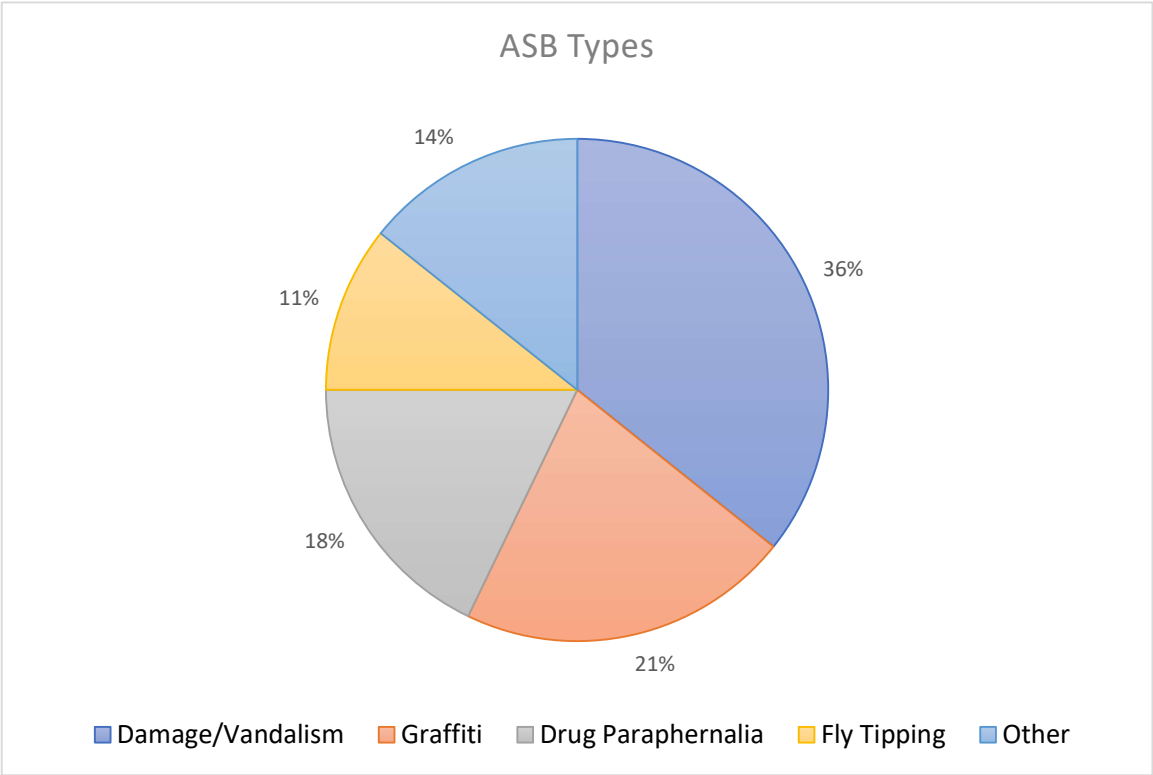


**Images taken during the
inspection of Dron House
in February 2020**



We have identified that the available categories of ASB on the inspection forms require expansion, as 'other' is selected quite frequently. This limits our reporting capability in relation to ASB found during estate inspections.

This could also be a training issue, as inspectors may not be sure which category to select. These improvements will be addressed along with those identified in relation to the categorisation of hazards (see above).



Repairs

Most common areas requiring repair

1-Entrances

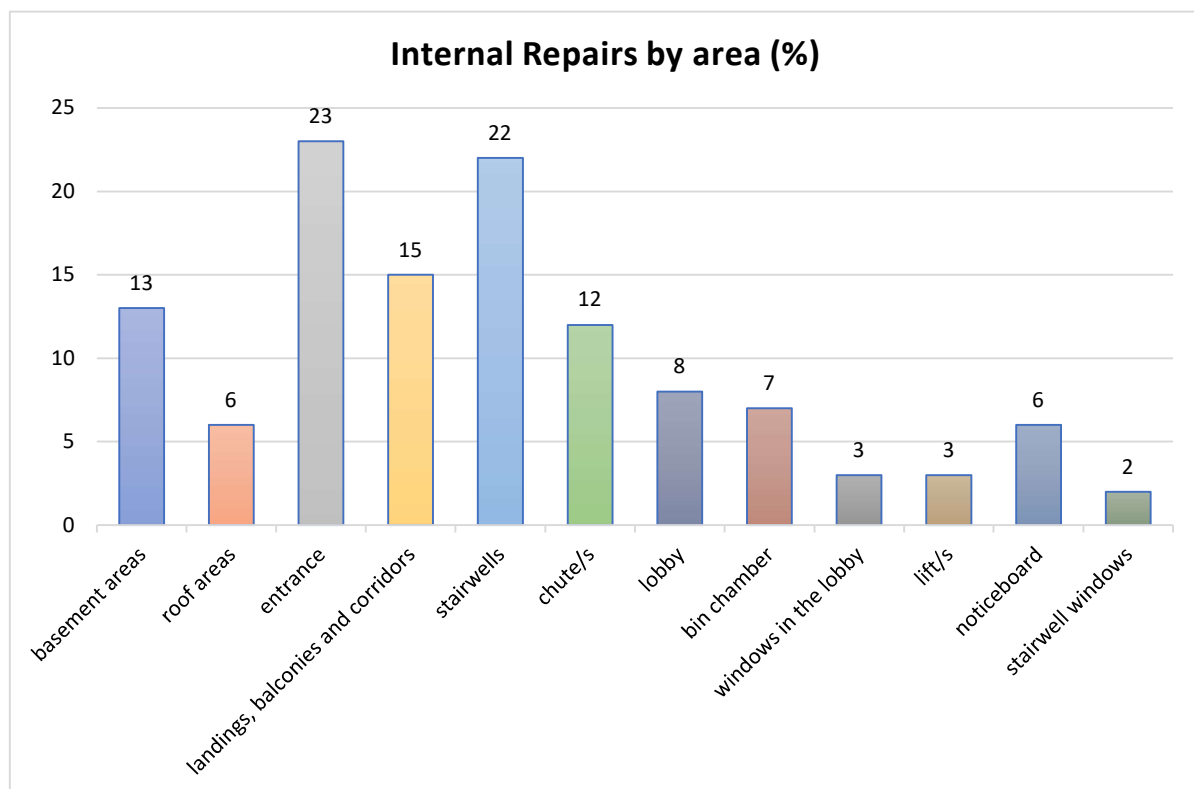
2-Stairwells

3-Landings, Balconies and Corridors

4-Basement areas

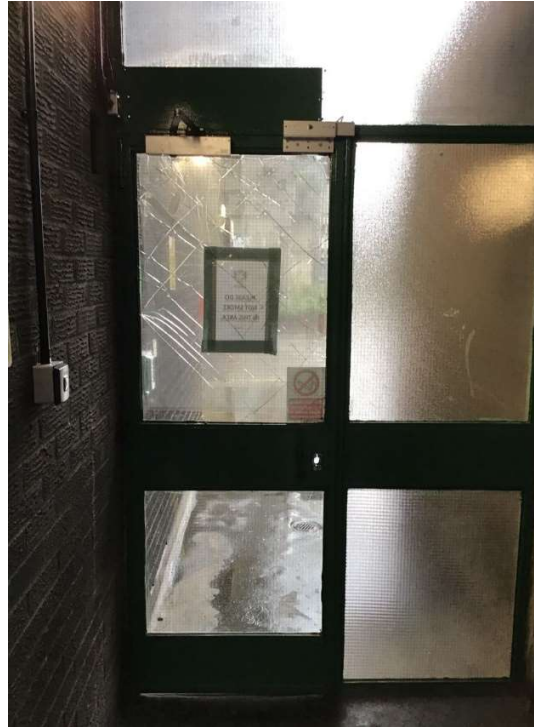
5-Chutes

Repairs to block entrances are the most frequently identified repairs item. From further analysis of the results, this appears to be due to several reasons. More commonly these are general wear and tear, such as faulty mechanisms/door entry systems, cracks in glass panes due to slamming of doors, and faulty door closers. However, there are incidents of intentional damage. Evidence such as this can help us in reporting such cases to Police and provide evidence for insurance purposes.



Right

Image shows evidence of cracked glass pane suspected to be due to an attempted forced entry



Left

Image shows an example of an awaited repair following a suspected forced entry

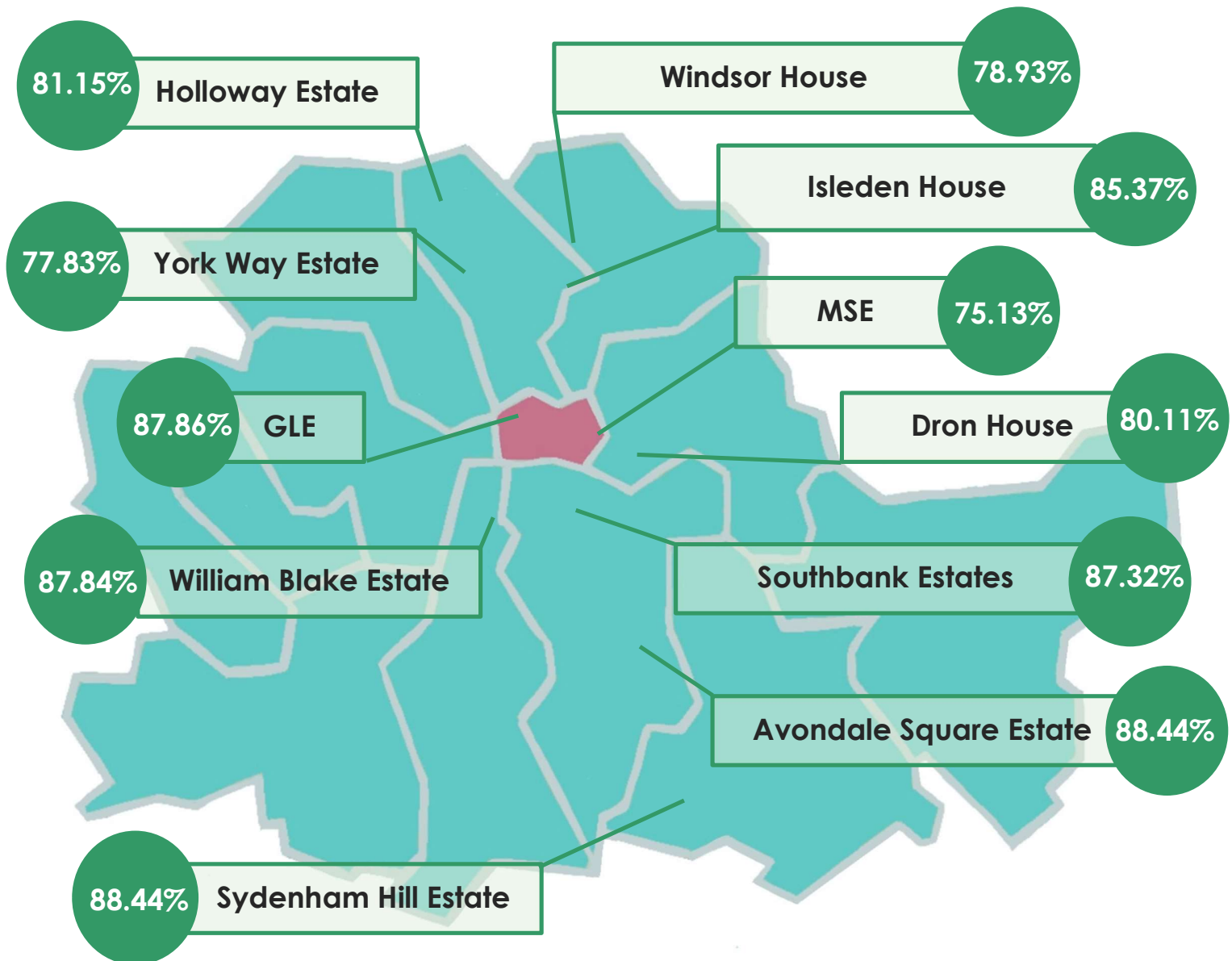
Repairs Captured by Estate

	November	December	January	February	March
Golden Lane	10	3	8	7	0
Middlesex Street	9	1	5	7	0
Dron House	3	0	2	7	5
Windsor House	1	0	0	1	0
William Blake	1	0	3	3	0
Southwark	2	0	3	4	2
York Way	9	6	6	6	8
Holloway	3	1	3	0	1
Isleden House	2	0	2	0	0
Avondale Sq.	6	0	2	0	0
Sydenham Hill	0	0	0	0	0
Harman Close	0	0	0	0	0
Almshouses	0	0	0	0	0

The larger estates clearly show the most repairs identified which is to be expected.

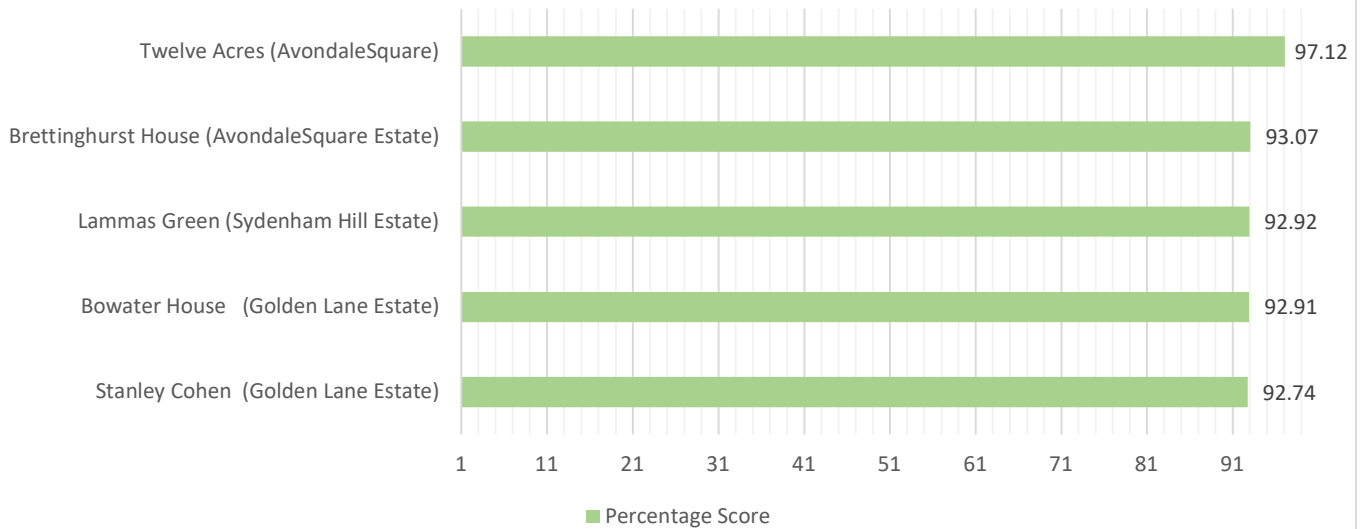
Performance

Estates Services inspection averages Nov-Mar

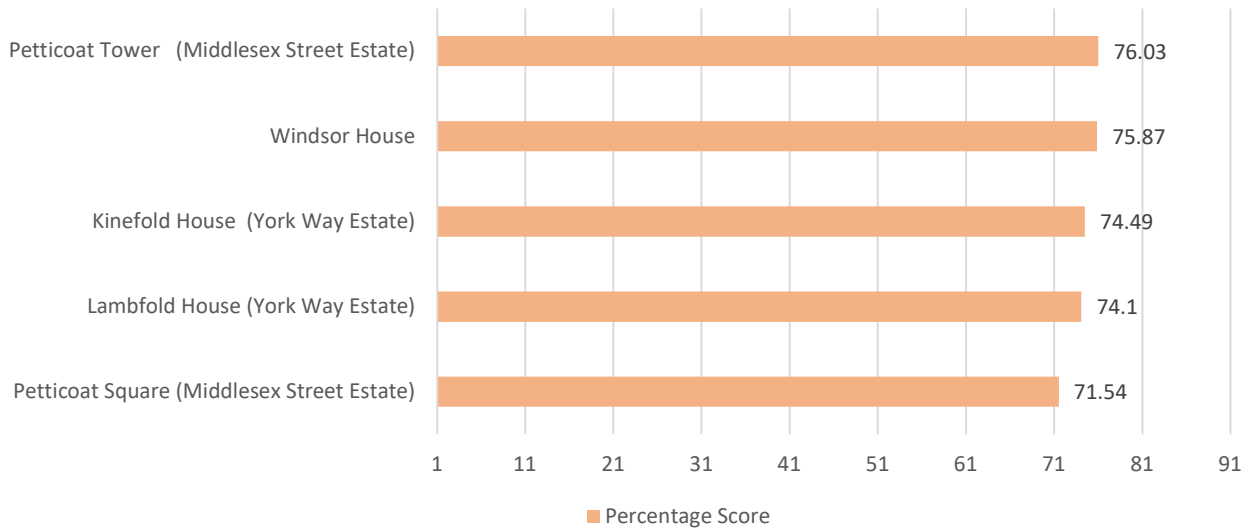


Middlesex Street Estate scored lowest in comparison to the other estates; 75% is considered the minimum acceptable overall score, below which an improvement plan is instituted. We know that there are several factors that relate to low scores in some areas, most notably the large amount of project works ongoing during the period of inspection and the additional disruption that accompanies this.

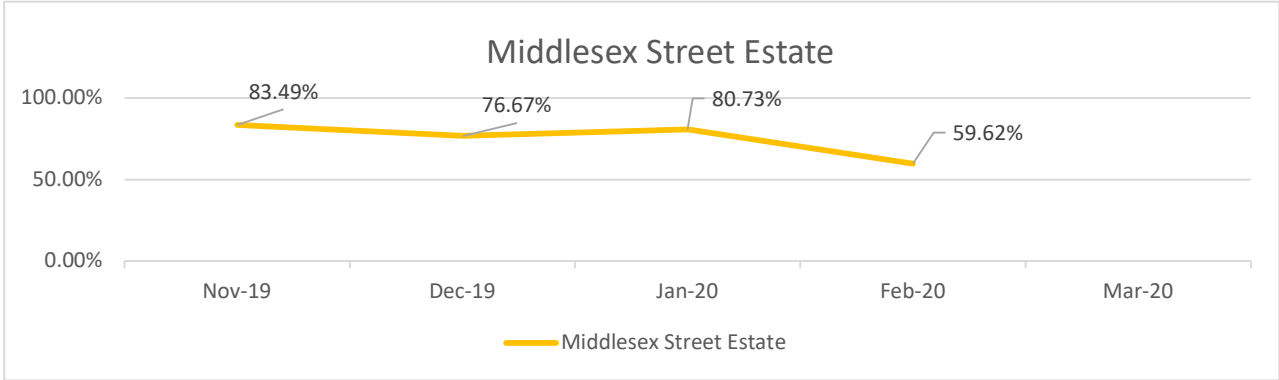
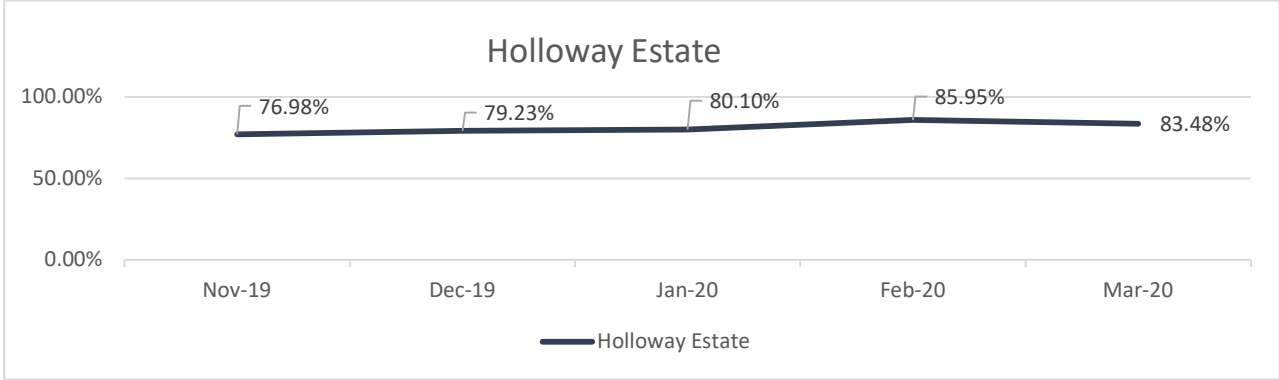
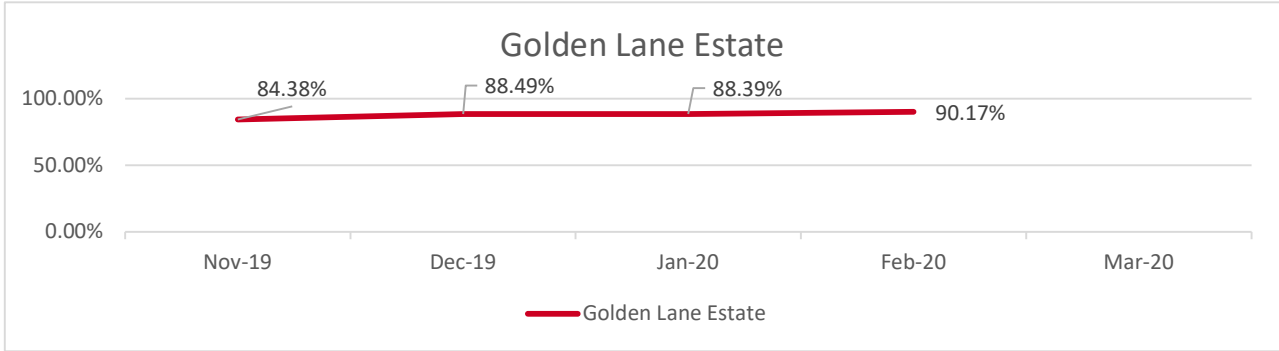
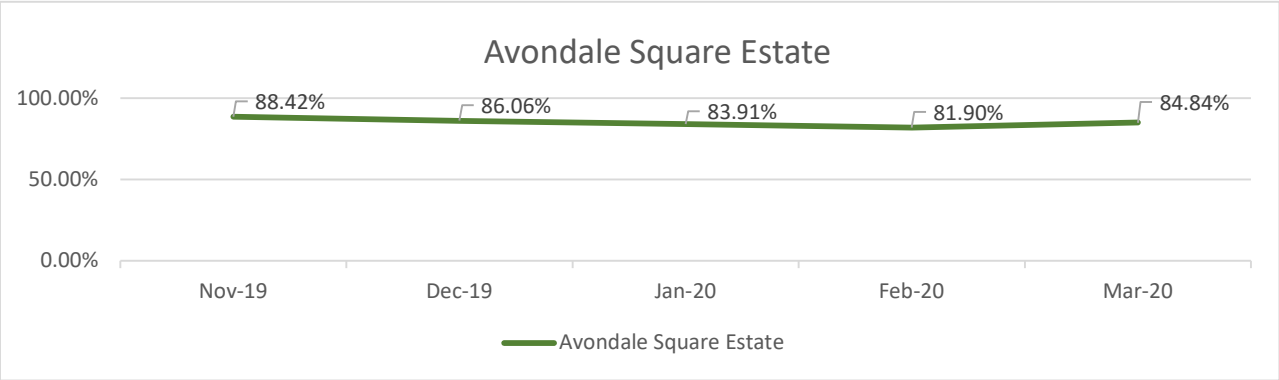
Highest performing Individual blocks Nov-Mar

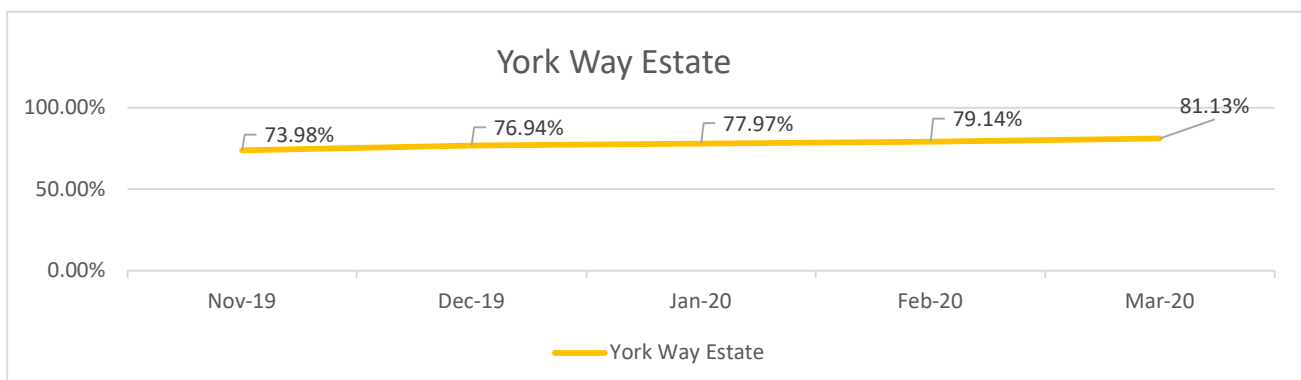
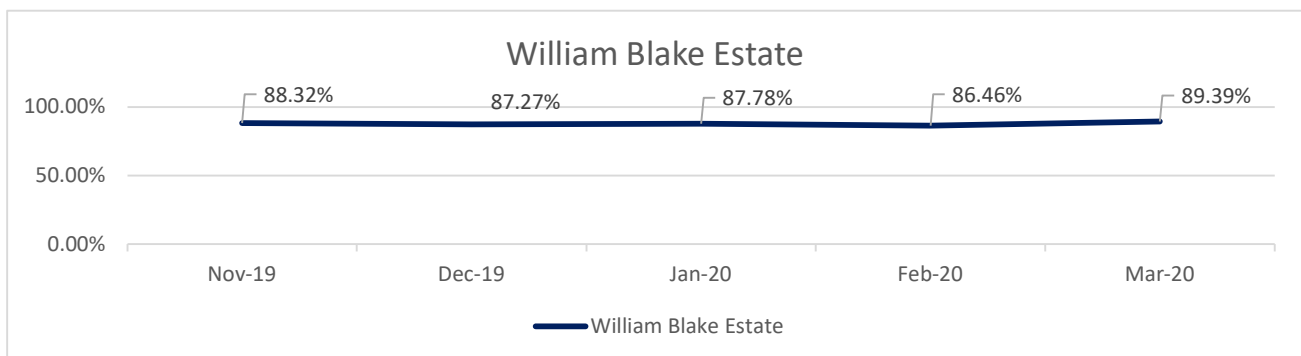
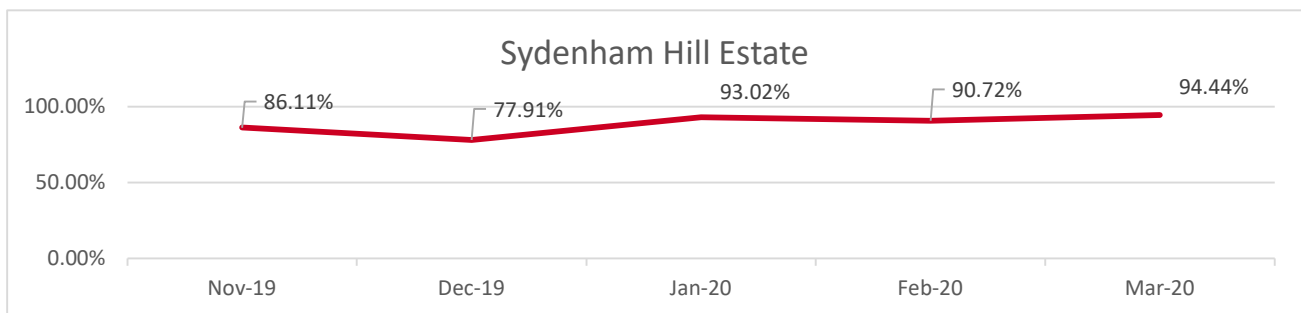
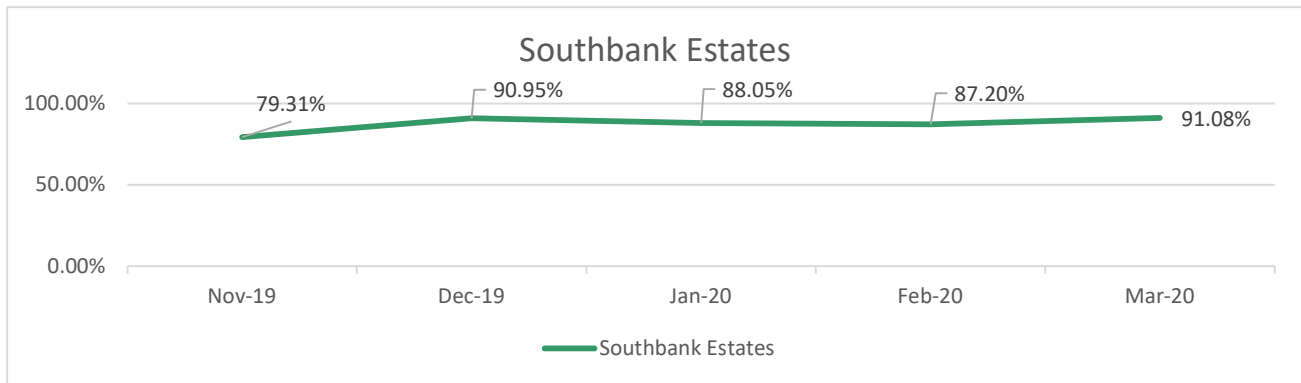


Lowest Performing Individual Blocks Nov-Mar



Estate Services Inspections performance by month





Where there are breaks in the timeline these estates were unable to complete inspections during this period.

Estate Grounds Inspections

71 grounds inspections carried out November 2019 – March 2020

Average Grounds Inspection Score: 82.06%

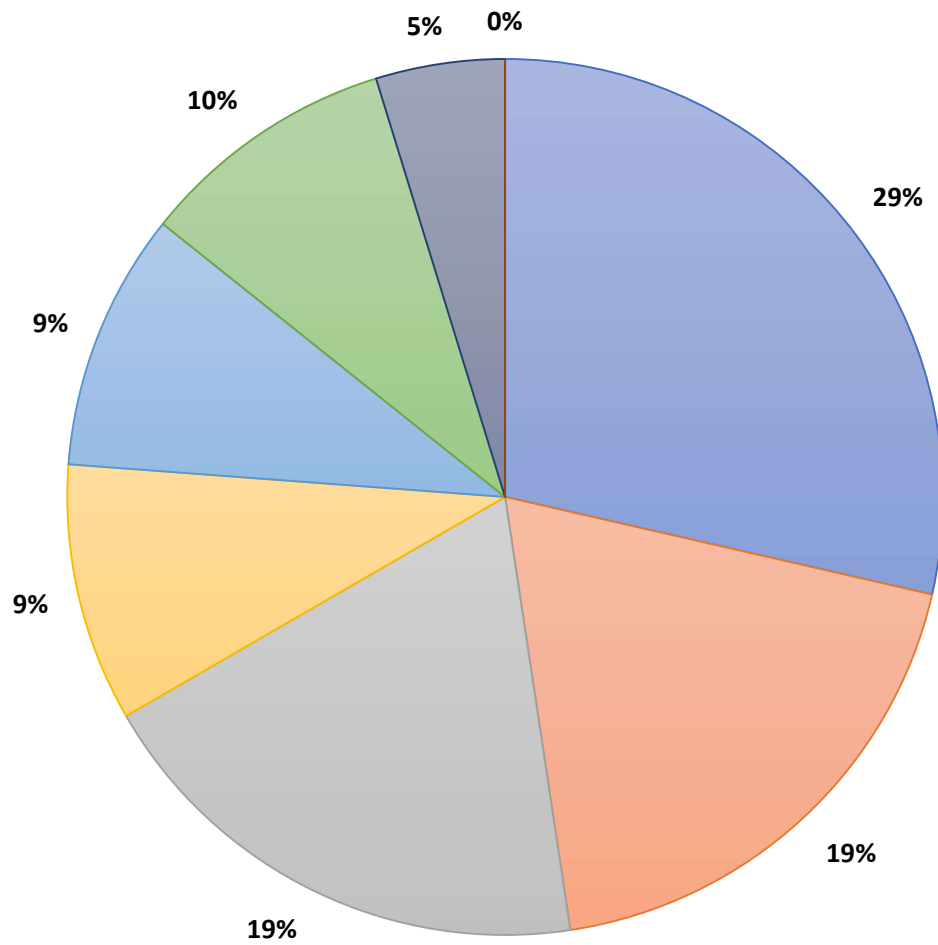
Cleaning/Condition

Most common areas scoring below average:

- 1-Play areas
- 2-Car parks and roads
- 3-Pathways, pavements and courtyards
- 4-General refuse and recycling areas
- 5-Shrubs and Shrub beds

The play areas are listed as the most common area scoring below average and this is due to the condition rather than cleaning in this instance. Several of our play areas are coming to the end of their expected lifespan and therefore require further maintenance or replacement. This is being addressed estate wide by the projects team. This is similar to our car parks and roads; some of our car parks require significant maintenance.

Cleaning/Condition of External Areas - Low Scores



- play areas.
- car parks and roads.
- pathways, pavements and courtyards.
- General refuse and recycling areas.
- shrubs and shrub beds.
- external lighting.
- grass area.
- noticeboard (Including relevance and condition of notices)

Hazards

Most common areas where hazards were identified.

Only two hazards were recorded in 71 inspections of the external areas; fencing open to a play area requiring repair and a sharp edge on a bike locker also needing repair.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

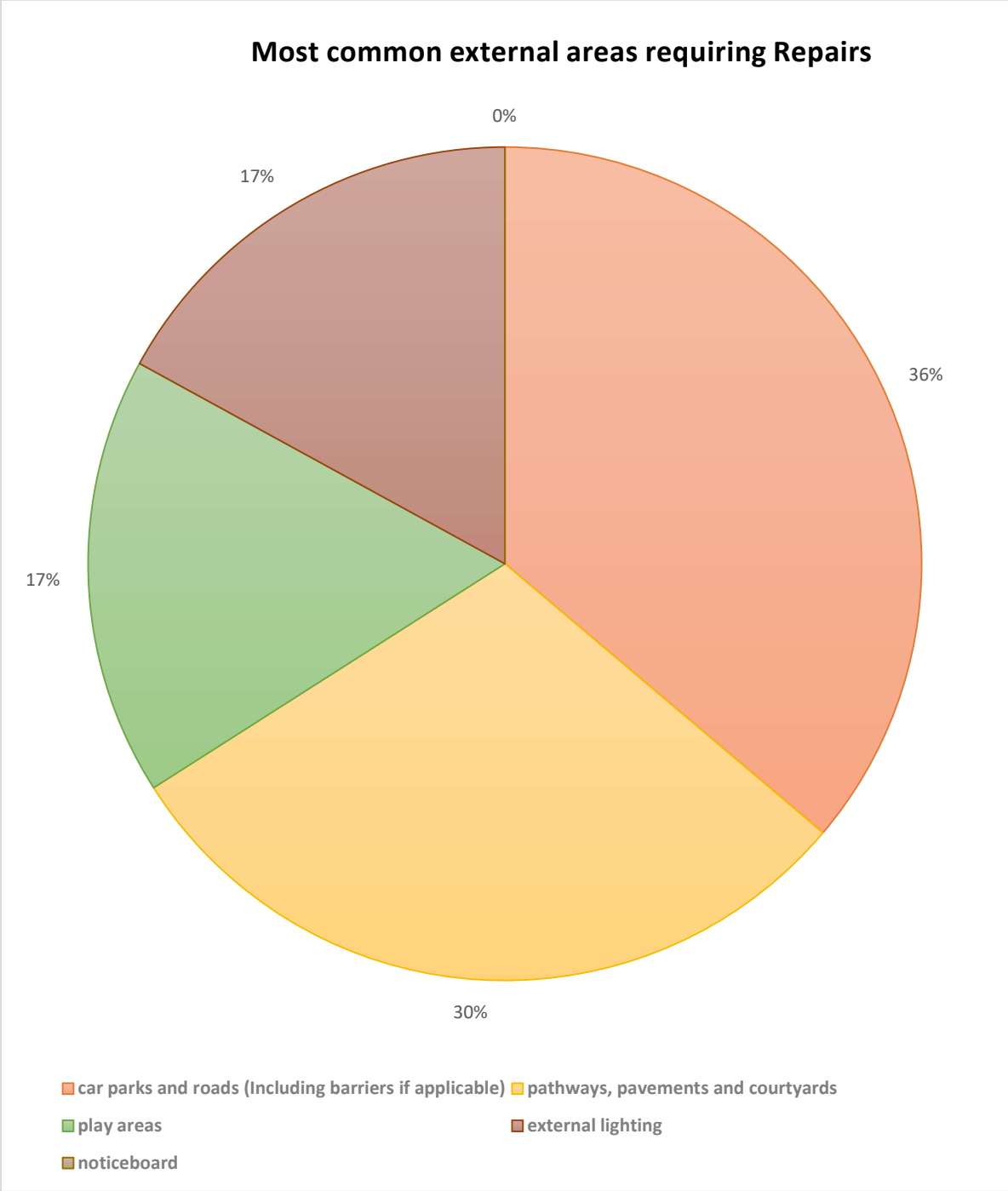
Most common ASB types recorded in external areas:

- 1-Fly tipping
- 2-Graffiti
- 3- Drugs paraphernalia

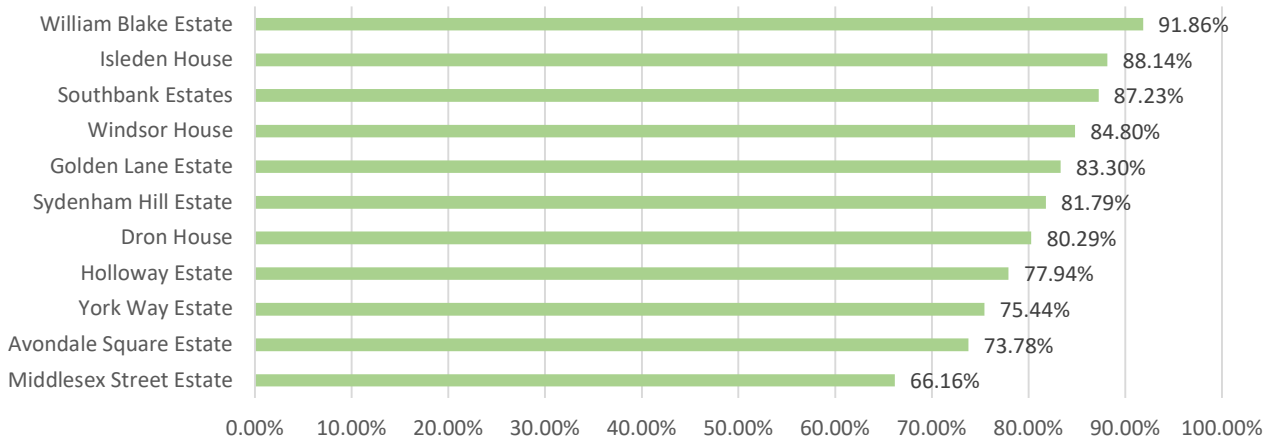
Repairs

Most common areas of the grounds identified as requiring repair:

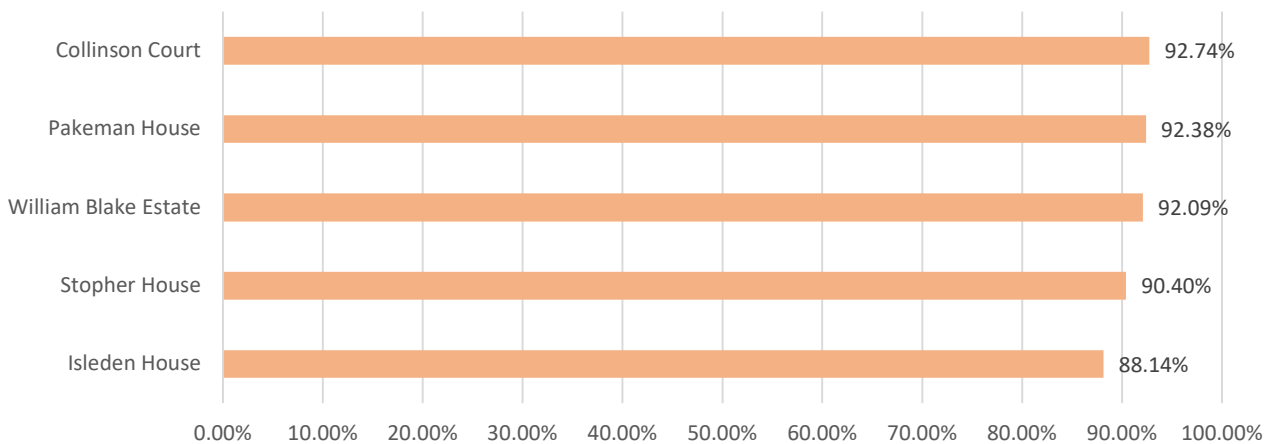
- 1-Car parks and Roads
- 2-Pathways, pavements and courtyards
- 3-Play Areas
- 4-External Lighting



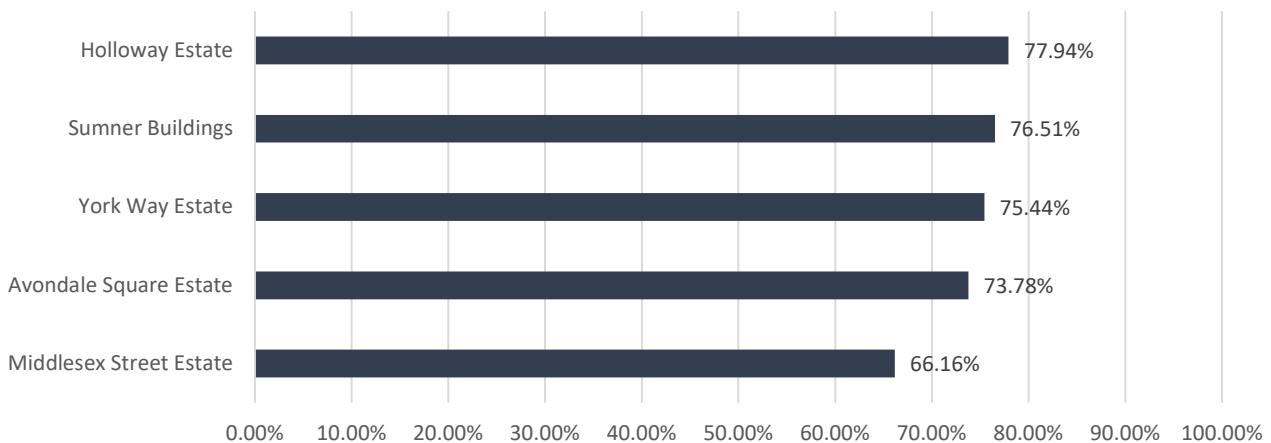
Estates Grounds inspection averages Nov-Mar



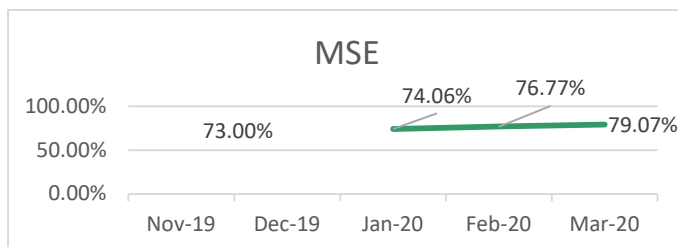
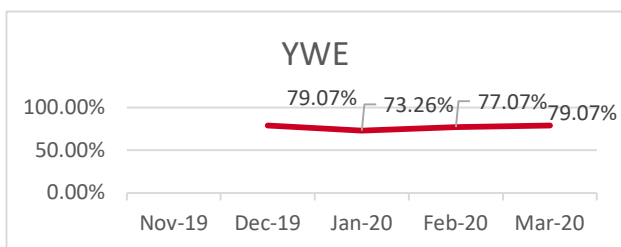
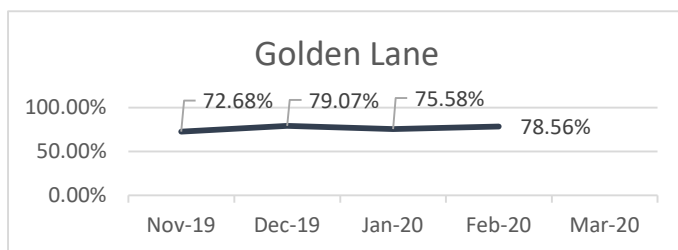
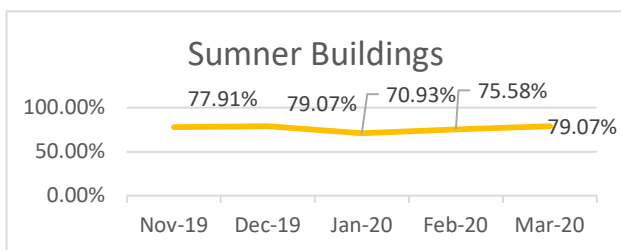
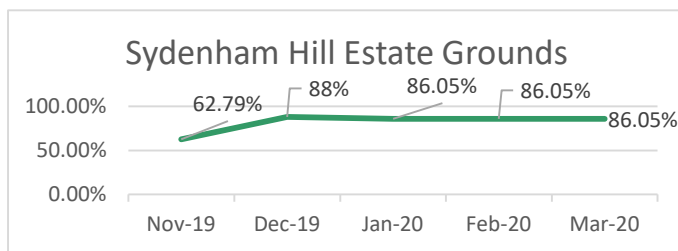
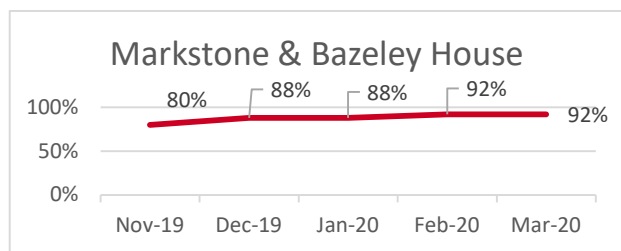
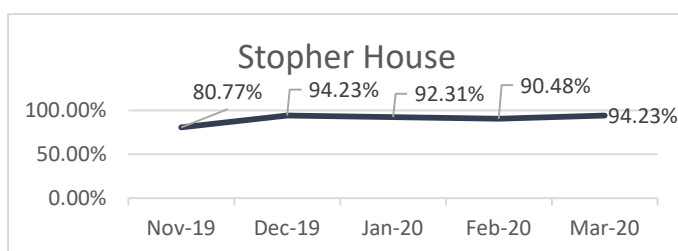
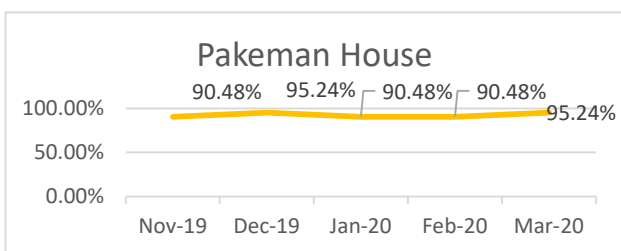
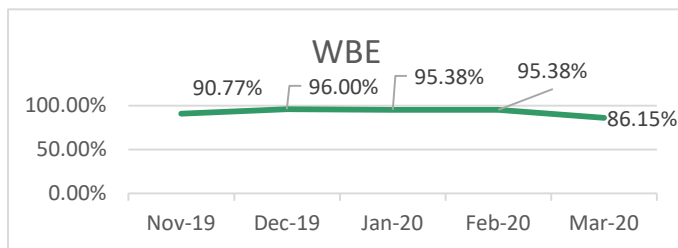
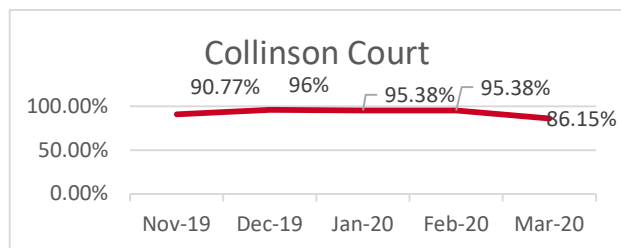
Highest Performing individual sites Nov-Mar



Lowest performing individual sites Nov-Mar



Estates Grounds performance by month



Where there are breaks in the timeline these estates were unable to complete inspections during this period.

Health and Safety

Several health and safety related inspections were created to bring consistency in the monitoring of some of the key parts of our estates.

Fire door inspections

Inspections are predominantly made up of a checklist whereby all communal doors are checked to be in working order and actions raised when they require repair or adjustment.

76 block inspections were carried out, covering all fire doors in each building. Since this inspection has been implemented, we have seen an improvement in the working order of our communal fire doors in internal corridors, as repairs are being picked up more consistently.

Fire box inspections

A checklist designed to ensure that the appropriate information is consistently held and up to date for the emergency services.

56 inspections of fire boxes were carried out during Nov to March. Once again, we have found this has helped ensure our fire boxes consistently hold the correct information and remain secure.

Summary

- 522 inspections completed
- 294 Estate Services inspections (Internal areas of blocks)
- High average performance score (well above 80%)
- Most common low scoring parts found to be issues around awkward window design
- Another low scoring part was found to be lack of attention to detail with light fittings in communal areas
- Hazards identified are most commonly recorded as an ongoing issue with items stored outside of resident properties
- Hazards have also been identified in issues around the misuse of refuse chutes and roof areas
- Low ASB recorded across all areas
- Door entries recorded as the most common repair for the blocks
- Lower performance in some areas due in part to external factors, such as major projects or fabric of building
- Highest scoring blocks are notably new builds, smaller blocks and more isolated areas
- Performance scores found to be generally maintained throughout the 5 months of the report, with few discrepancies and most areas displaying steady improvement
- 71 grounds inspections
- Good average performance scores with grounds
- Play areas scoring the lowest due to age of some facilities
- Very few hazards identified in external areas

- Repairs to roads and pavements are the parts of most concern
- Fly tipping is the most common ASB concern in external areas over graffiti and drug paraphernalia
- Middlesex Street car parks play a large role in the low scoring for the external parts of that estate
- 76 fire door inspections
- Improvements in working order of communal doors and capture of repairs
- 56 fire box inspections
- Improvements in consistency of information being held in fire boxes

The Future...

The success of the inspections has led us to examine other ways in which we could employ the iAuditor software.

Due to its ease of use, the system could certainly assist in processes such as empty property inspections, to help improve standards and ensure consistency against the Lettable Standard (currently in production). It can also potentially help in reducing administration and speeding up property turnaround times.

There is also interest from the Clerk of Works in our projects team, with whom we are working on an improved template to help with their own processes. This will assist the team in recording the necessary regulatory requirements which come with major works projects and will look to reduce the need for unnecessary paperwork, creating more time to be on site carrying out the checks.

Aside from exploring the potential for improvement in these other areas, we will maintain our focus on continued improvement and the delivery of a consistent standard of service delivery on the estates. Following the five months since the inspections commenced, we have already improved the system and will continue to make improvements as we progress.

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Committee: Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee	Date: 30/09/2020
Subject: Service Improvements Following the Tenancy Visits Project	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Liam Gillespie, Head of Housing Management	

Summary

The tenancy visits project was commissioned in 2018 and completed in 2019. It involved trained officers visiting all our tenanted properties, in order to satisfy several aims. These included obtaining up to date household composition data, ensuring our homes were let in accordance with our duties as a social landlord, identifying any repairs issues and raising awareness of fire safety in the home.

The data we gathered will be used to satisfy several objectives around providing more personalised and appropriate services to our residents, improving communications and safeguarding vulnerable households.

This report explains some of the improvements we have already made and how we might improve our housing management services in future, by using the information gathered.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The tenancy visits project was completed in April 2019. The aims of the project, approved by Members in July 2018, were to:

- improve resident safety and comfort by providing advice or referral to other agencies on:
 - home and fire safety, including evacuation advice and an assessment of any risks
 - repairs and maintenance
 - domestic energy advice and housing benefits

- issues such as hoarding and safeguarding
 - improve the quality of tenancy data on the housing management information system to a minimum baseline standard
 - improve future communication and engagement with residents by updating electronic contact details and preferred methods of communication
 - help ensure proper and efficient use of housing assets by identifying instances of:
 - tenancy fraud, misuse, disrepair or unauthorised alteration of properties
 - under-utilisation (including illegal sub-letting, non-occupation, under-occupation
 - overcrowding
2. Successful visits were made to over 95% of tenanted homes. Outstanding properties were referred to the estate management team, or other relevant teams, for investigation.
 3. Updated household information has been entered into the Orchard housing management system, which already marks a vast improvement on data we held previously.
 4. Members are aware that the Orchard housing management system is due for replacement by Civica CX. Additional data can be held by Civica which cannot be held in Orchard; Civica is also capable of doing much more with the information contained within it. Our ability to use some of the gathered data for insight purposes and service improvements is therefore limited until Civica comes online.

Understanding Household Needs

5. Accurate household data is vital to our understanding of our tenants' needs. Prior to the project, for instance, we had a relatively low number of tenants' birth dates and very few for household members. This information is sometimes requested by other teams within DCCS, for instance to inform targeted communications, or help the planning of commissioned services. Historically, we were unable to offer accurate information and had to rely on estimates based on officers' local knowledge, or census data from 2011, which was very broad in scope.
6. The data we now hold is more comprehensive and useful, and capable of giving us very specific information that we previously did not have. It may be used in the following ways:
 - **Planning services:** we now have a more accurate picture of our households by characteristics like age, sex, marital status, disability and so on. This can be used to inform the planning of local services, both by the Housing Service itself and other teams within DCCS (e.g. commissioning of youth services on a particular estate, or the planning of activities at a community centre)

- **Safeguarding:** the data we gathered on disability and support needs has already been used to ensure that those residents requiring assistance in an emergency is as accurate as possible. We have also been able to arrange support for tenants who were not previously known to us a needing tenancy support.
- **Prioritising responses:** we are also able to prioritise services more efficiently for vulnerable residents; for instance we can now more easily identify residents who may need a more urgent response when they report a repair (e.g. a vulnerable household reporting a repair out of hours, or identifying people who may need special assistance as part of the planning phase of major works projects)

Equalities Duties and Service Delivery

7. One of the aims of the project was to gather accurate demographic and equalities data on tenant households, to help us ensure that we are meeting our duties as a housing provider and public body, and to help us in planning services with due regard to equalities implications.
8. The Equality Act 2010 (s. 149) imposes a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on public bodies, which requires them to consider the impact on those with certain protected characteristics when making decisions affecting them, to avoid discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity. To fulfil this duty properly, and assess the potential impact of decisions, it is vitally important to have an accurate picture of household composition and the prevalence of protected characteristics among those likely to be affected.
9. Equalities Impact Assessments (EIAs) are completed for new policies and initiatives in order to ensure compliance with the PSED and fairness in the application of the policies.
10. When planning service changes, we would use an EIA to examine whether any people might be disadvantaged by the changes. For example, if we made a proposal to end a commissioned service, or close an estate office, the potential impact of the decision would be fully assessed, and the decision reviewed considering the impact assessment.
11. Decisions on commissioning require detailed equalities assessments to be completed, and this task is made easier in relation to our estates now that we have accurate information on household composition.

Improving Communication and Engagement

12. The data gathered during the project is proving valuable already and will support further improvement to the way in which we communicate with residents.

Improvements made to date

13. We have already significantly increased the proportion of tenants with whom we can communicate by e-mail. This has allowed us to improve the efficiency of our communications work:

- **Reducing printing and administration costs:** when communicating with residents, we now print fewer copies of items like the Tenant Annual Report or @Home magazine, instead sending out copies by e-mail and targeting those people we know may need a hard copy, instead of sending a hard copy to every household. This saves a significant amount of money and administration time.
- **More effective tenancy audits and visits:** the legacy of the project is that we have created a more comprehensive and standardised process for tenancy audits. We have used this experience to formalise the introductory tenancy visits process, where several visits are conducted within the first year of every new tenancy to ensure that tenants are settling in well.

Potential improvements

14. Several ideas are under discussion on improving communications and engagement, all of which rely on accurate tenant data and contact details:

- **Targeted communications:** for instance, we may need to publicise a service or initiative aimed at those of a certain age group, or households with children. We are now able to identify these households much more easily. More relevant communications will be more effective and will reduce 'blanket' letters to all households, which are often of limited use and very time-consuming to produce and deliver

We can also tailor messages to individual circumstances. For example, we could include relevant advice and information in our rent statements; households in arrears could receive a message signposting them to advice services. We could also include messaging about payment methods and encourage those without a Direct Debit to set one up

- **Multi-channel communication:** we still use letters and limited e-mail communications for most of our publicity or messaging. Holding up to date contact details for our households, as well as communication preferences, will enable us to contact people in their preferred medium and increase the reach of our communications.

This decreases administration and wasted resources. Using the same data, we can also innovate with new ways of working, for instance automated text messaging to confirm repairs and gas safety appointments, or to issue rent account balances by text without the need for the tenant to call us or visit the office.

- **Speedier communication:** increased use of email and text messaging allows us to get messages out to tenants much more quickly and will help us move away from relying on notice boards to deliver important messages. For

example, in an emergency affecting a whole block, we could quickly contact residents to inform them what we are doing to resolve it and include a link to our website, or Twitter account, where they can find updates

15. Engaging and consulting with residents is obviously a vital part of our work, as well as a legal duty in many circumstances. It is therefore important that we have an accurate picture of our household compositions and up to date contact details for carrying out engagement and consultation activity.
16. We have been reviewing our engagement work and plan to deliver various improvements to the work we do. This is closely tied in with the improvements we plan to make to communications, though accurate data on our households is particularly useful in:
 - Increasing the reach of consultations (less reliance on paper surveys sent to every home)
 - Tailoring engagement and involvement work to reflect local demographics (e.g. we may focus on youth provision where there are larger proportions of households with teenage children)
 - Targeting corporate initiatives more successfully (we are often asked to promote Departmental or Corporate activities or messages around community involvement or events – we will be able to ensure that information is publicised more accurately and easily)

Fire Safety

17. The visits included an inspection for obvious hazards, a check that there were working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, and a discussion with the tenant about fire safety and sources of help and advice. It was also used as a chance to ensure that tenants knew what to do in an emergency and were familiar with the policy in place for their building (stay put or full evacuation).
18. Common hazards such as overloading of plug sockets were identified, and appropriate advice given to the tenant. Potential hazards such as hoarding or inappropriate storage in communal areas were referred to Estate Managers and Tenancy Support colleagues for further intervention.
19. Households were also asked if they required special assistance in an emergency, and this data has been used to update information stored in Fire Boxes at each block, for use by the London Fire Brigade during an emergency.

Proper and efficient use of assets

20. We have a duty to ensure that only those people who are eligible to occupy a social rented home are offered one, and that they abide by their tenancy conditions in order to retain security of tenure, perhaps most importantly by occupying the property as their sole or principal home.

21. Given the scarcity of social housing, and the number of households awaiting new homes or transfers to more suitably sized accommodation, we also must look at incentivising downsizing for those who are under-occupying larger properties. To enable this to happen, it is vital that we have an accurate picture of household composition.
22. Having this data enables us to compare occupation data against property information, giving us a better picture of under/over occupancy, which in turn could inform targeted measures and initiatives to promote transfers and free up homes for those in need.

Tenancy Fraud and Unlawful Sub-Letting

23. Local authorities invest significant resources in ensuring that their homes are let only to those who are eligible to receive them and that they are occupied in accordance with the tenancy terms. The criminalisation of obtaining a property by making a false statement, and unlawfully sub-letting, is an indication of how seriously this issue is now regarded.
24. During the project, there were a total of 123 referrals made to the Corporate Fraud Team. The majority of these were cases where contact could not be established with the tenant by the visiting team for whatever reason, despite multiple attempts.
25. Intelligence checks were completed on these properties and the majority did not disclose any issues of concern.
26. Evidence of potential tenancy fraud was detected in four cases; three properties have since been recovered and a further case has resulted in a criminal prosecution, which is ongoing at the time of writing.
27. Members will recall that detecting fraud was not the main purpose of this project and the visits were announced by publicity on each estate. The recovery of three properties is, however, a positive result and the information we have gathered on our households will make it easier to investigate irregularities in future.

Housing needs and allocations

28. As well as obtaining household composition details, the project involved measuring each property's bedroom dimensions, which are useful when assessing applications for transfer due to overcrowding and making decisions on the suitability of properties upon allocation. This saves time and effort when assessing applications against the space standards contained in legislation and our *Allocations Scheme* and can ensure the quicker resolution of queries and complaints.
29. We are also in a better position to make decisions on issues like succession applications from household members, and to verify household composition against applications made for transfers.

30. This project helped us identify tenants who were overcrowded and had not applied to be rehoused in more suitable accommodation. The Housing Needs Team were notified in these cases, or Estate Managers requested transfer applications for these households.

Conclusion

31. The tenancy visits project was commissioned with several aims, though it was intended principally to ensure that we had accurate household information for our tenanted properties, which gives us the ability to better discharge our duties as a public body and landlord.

32. The opportunity was also taken to raise awareness of fire safety in the home, which is an ongoing priority for social landlords nationally.

33. The data we gathered has already been used to improve communications by better reflecting tenants' preferences. We will be able to implement further improvements once our new housing management system is implemented.

34. The limitations of the current housing management system mean that the full potential of the refreshed information have not yet been realised, though the new system will allow us to use innovative ways of communicating with residents and to use insight data to better plan and deliver services.

Appendices

- None

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Committee: Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee	Date: 30/09/2020
Subject: Compensation Policy Review	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Decision
Report author: Liam Gillespie, Head of Housing Management	

Summary

The Housing Service's Compensation Policy was last approved by Committee in September 2016 and has now been reviewed. No substantive changes have been made to the policy and it is now presented to Committee for re-approval.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Approve the Compensation Policy for use by the Housing Service

Main Report

Background

1. The Compensation Policy was first approved by Committee in September 2016 and was due for review in 2018. This review was incorporated into the wider programme of housing management policy reviews which has been ongoing since early 2018.
2. No important changes have been made to the Compensation Policy following the review and it is presented to Members with a recommended review period of three years.

Current Position

3. It may sometimes be appropriate to compensate residents following a service failure, or a complaint being upheld. The Compensation Policy outlines the circumstances in which this might be deemed an appropriate resolution.
4. In most circumstances, an apology or admission of fault is usually appropriate as a way of resolving a complaint of service failure. In some circumstances, however, financial compensation may be appropriate. Officers have discretion over the resolution of complaints and requests for compensation and this policy explains our general approach to such situations.

Conclusion

5. The Compensation Policy has been reviewed as part of the ongoing review of housing management policies. No material changes are proposed, and the policy is recommended to Members for approval with a three-year review date.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Compensation Policy (v.2 – 2020)
- Appendix 2 – Summary of consultation responses

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City of London Corporation
Department of Community & Children's Services
Housing Service

Compensation Policy

Approved by:	<i>Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee</i>
Original Approval Date:	<i>September 2016</i>
Review Date:	<i>April 2020</i>
Re-Approval Date	
Next Review Date	<i>**3 years from re-approval**</i>

1. Introduction

Compensation is often requested as a resolution to complaints, or in response to damage to goods caused by the alleged negligence of City of London employees or agents. This policy outlines our approach to dealing with requests for compensation from our residents.

2. Aims of this Policy

The aims of this policy are:

- To provide a framework for the compensation that may be due to a customer where we fail to meet our own service standards, or provide a poor service, and a customer suffers a material loss because of this failure.
- To assist staff in balancing the needs of the individual with a recognition that all compensation paid by the Department of Community and Children's Services will be funded from the Housing Revenue Account.

3. Scope

The policy applies to residents living on City of London Housing Service estates which are managed as part of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), namely:

- tenants (including sub-tenants of leaseholders)
- leaseholders
- freeholders
- occupiers of City of London and Gresham Almshouses properties

In exceptional circumstances, this policy may apply to non-residents, subject to the Assistant Directors' discretion.

4. Policy Statement

Paying financial compensation, or compensation in kind, is an exceptional course of action and will only be considered if other outcomes are not deemed appropriate. In most cases it is reasonable to resolve complaints by:

- Apologising for the failure
- Providing the service asked for
- Changing the service provision or procedures for future use where a complaint has highlighted that a change is required
- Reconsidering a decision which may have been unreasonable or unfair

In exceptional circumstances, where the situation cannot be rectified by apology or practical action, compensation may be appropriate. The types of service failures that may trigger compensation, whether caused by City of London staff, or contractors or agents acting on our behalf, are as follows:

- Failing to deliver /provide a specified benefit, service or other entitlement
- Loss of amenities
- Loss of, or damage to, personal property
- Where a customer has incurred an expense as a result of our failure to provide a service

Compensation will only be considered where a service failing, or a consequence of action or inaction on our part, has caused material loss or harm to the resident and compensation would offer an appropriate form of remedy.

5. Compensation for Loss of/Damage to Goods

This policy is not intended to cover situations where an insurance claim is a more appropriate solution. If a resident believes that they have suffered loss or damage to goods and this was due to the negligence of the City's staff, agents or contractors, an insurance claim will normally be the most appropriate course of action (whether on their own policy or a relevant policy held by the Housing Service).

Please see the Insurance Cover and Claims Policy for more information.

6. What is compensation?

Compensation is taken to mean something, typically money, which is given to someone in recognition of loss, suffering or injury.

Compensation may take three forms:

- Direct replacement of items or payment to the value of those items.
- A goodwill gesture such as flowers or vouchers
- Financial recompense for actual loss or in recognition of the significant distress and inconvenience caused

7. When may compensation be considered?

Compensation may be considered at any stage in our complaints process – our complaints policy promotes resolution of the situation as rapidly as possible.

The event giving rise to the consideration of compensation should have occurred within the last six months. Compensation in respect of an event that happened more than six months previously will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. An exception may be made if there has been continuous contact with the resident or delays in bringing the matter to a conclusion have been as a result of actions (or inaction) by those working for the City.

8. Factors that will be taken into consideration

Compensation is discretionary. Each case is different and will be considered on its own merits. Staff may discuss the situation with the resident, and their views as to what would be an acceptable remedy will be considered.

The following will be taken into consideration when considering making a compensation payment:

- **Money not paid**

Where money due to the resident has not been paid, the City will pay the money due

- **Quantifiable Costs**

Where the resident can evidence incurred costs which would not have been necessary but for the service failure, reimbursement of those costs may be appropriate. The exception to this is where the resident incurs costs unreasonably.

- **Loss of a non-monetary benefit**

The resident may have been deprived of a non-monetary benefit, such as a service or amenity which under normal circumstances they would have received. An attempt should be made to quantify the loss of such benefits, to determine the amount of compensation due. It may be possible to base this on what it would have cost the City of London Corporation to make the appropriate provision for the relevant period or what value may be put on the facility.

- **Loss of value**

Where something owned by the resident has lost value as a result of the department's actions, an objective assessment of the loss may be possible. The matter may be referred for assessment where appropriate by an independent valuer.

- **Maladministration**

Maladministration is usually considered to be a fault with the way something has been done or not done, rather than the decision or outcome. It may occur where an organisation has failed to act reasonably in accordance with the law, its own policies and generally accepted standards.

- **Distress and Inconvenience**

In exceptional circumstances, compensation may be considered for distress or inconvenience. All the relevant circumstances will be considered, including the severity of the inconvenience, the length of time involved, and the number of people affected.

It is important to note that severe inconvenience may be caused over long periods of time without fault – for example where the City is engaged in legitimate and timely repairs. In such instances, this does not warrant compensation if the City has managed the problem in a fair and proper way, for example, in accordance with our policies and procedures.

10. Offer of Compensation

Offers of compensation will be made in writing and expressed to be '*in full and final settlement*' of the matter.

11. Offsetting Compensation

Any offers of financial compensation will be offset against arrears of rent, service charges or any other debts owed to the City of London Corporation Housing Service.

13. Policy Variations

In exceptional circumstances, we may consider making a variation to this policy. Our reasoning can be provided to the affected parties on request.

14. Monitoring and Performance

We will monitor our use of this policy and the way in which it is implemented, ensuring that any relevant information is reported at appropriate intervals.

15. Training

We will provide all staff responsible for implementing this policy with comprehensive training as required.

16. Equality and Diversity

This Policy has been subject to a full Equalities Analysis and will be implemented in accordance with our responsibilities and duties under relevant legislation, including the Equalities Act 2010.

17. Accessibility

We will ensure that tenants' needs are considered when implementing this Policy to ensure that they are treated fairly. We will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that customers with distinct communication needs are not unreasonably and disproportionately affected. This could involve providing communications in alternative languages or formats, or providing interpretation or transcription as appropriate.

18. Data Protection and Information Exchange

We will comply with our obligations under relevant data protection legislation and regulations. We will process and store personal information securely.

There are some circumstances in which we are required by law to disclose information given to us.

19. Policy Review

We will review this policy at least every three years, or following relevant changes to legislation, regulation or policy.

20. Legislation

- Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulation 1994

21. Related documents

- Complaints Policy
- Insurance Cover and Claims Policy
- Disposal of Personal Property Policy
- Tenants' Agreement and Handbook

Department of Community & Children's Services Housing Service		
Policy Title: Compensation Policy		
Document Owner: Head of Housing Management		
Date Approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> September 2016 (original) [DATE] (this version) 		
Version: 2		Last amendment: September 2020
Effective date:		Next review date:
Changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formatting 		

Appendix 1: Examples of Compensation Amounts

All service failures and requests for compensation are different and will be considered on their own merits in accordance with our policies, including the Compensation Policy.

The information provided below is to help officers to assess how much compensation may be due in different types of circumstance, and to provide a benchmark to ensure compensation for similar types of service failure is considered fairly.

The City is under no obligation to pay the compensation amounts outlined in this policy.

1. Distress and Inconvenience

We are aware that for any person to have had cause to make a complaint, they will have suffered some inconvenience or distress. In exceptional circumstances, or cases where disproportionate levels of distress and inconvenience have been caused, it may be appropriate to provide a goodwill gesture such as flowers or gift vouchers up to the value of £50. It may be appropriate to talk to the resident about what they would appreciate.

2. Missed Appointment – failure of contractor to attend appointment

If one appointment is missed, no compensation is due.

If more than one appointment is missed, or a second appointment is required because the contractor attended the first appointment but was unprepared, the value of £25 per missed appointment may be appropriate. The officer considering the complaint may add a further amount of up to £50 if there are other relevant factors, for example if the customer has suffered a high level of distress and inconvenience. More compensation may be offered at the discretion of the Head of Service or Assistant Director.

3. Failure to set up direct debit details correctly leading to rent arrears

If the City of London Corporation fail to set up a direct debit arrangement correctly, a tenant's account will go into rent arrears. Whilst the responsibility to pay rent lies with the tenant, where they think the arrangement is in place they may not check. Should a

resident receive correspondence regarding rent arrears, the department will explain and resolve the situation.

Should there be a repeated failure, crediting some of the rent owed would be appropriate, linked to the amount of time that the failure had occurred. For example, if the direct debit had taken more than 6 months to resolve, the credit of an amount equivalent to 2 week's rent in recognition of the service failure, the distress and the inconvenience may be appropriate.

4. Failure to administrate steps in the Right to Buy process within published timescales

If the City of London Corporation fail to meet these timescales, and there is no negative impact on the sale, then no compensation would be due.

If we fail to meet these timescales and a negative impact is caused, then the City should look at the impact and determine what compensation may be due. For example, if a mortgage that had been arranged is no longer available to the resident, we should recompense any fees charged for that mortgage arrangement.

5. Failure to place a bid on Choice Based Lettings on behalf of a person

If the City of London Corporation had agreed to place bids on appropriate properties on behalf of an applicant, and on a particular property we failed to do so, if the data shows that the applicant would not have won the bid, there is no negative impact and no compensation is due.

However, if the applicant would have had sufficient priority to win the bid and be offered first choice on the property, the service failure is more serious. In addition to an apology and an explanation, compensation or a goodwill gesture of up to £50 may be appropriate. It may be appropriate to talk to the resident about what they would appreciate.

Further Information

There are examples of case studies, the findings made by the Ombudsman and the levels of compensation paid on the Housing Ombudsman website:

<http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/learning-faqs/case-studies/>

Appendix 2 – Right to Repair

This document provides a summary of The Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulation 1994.

The Right to Repair is a statutory compensation scheme. Therefore the process and amounts are not subject to discretion. The scheme only applies to 'qualifying repairs' including insecure windows and doors, unsafe power sockets or electrical fittings, leaking roofs and broken entry phone systems.

A repair only qualifies if the City of London Housing Service is responsible for it and it is estimated to cost less than £250.

If a resident claims a repair should be subject to the scheme, we may inspect it before we decide. We must write to the resident to confirm if the scheme does not apply.

When a resident reports a qualifying repair, and we have confirmed it qualifies, we must issue a repair notice to a contractor and send the resident a copy with information on how the right to repair scheme works. The time limit for the contractor to do the work will be set by our established timescales for completing that type of repair.

If the repair work is not done within that specified time limit, the resident must bring that to our attention and request another contractor to do the work. We must then issue a repair notice to a second contractor, subject to procurement restrictions, and send the resident a copy.

If the second contractor does not do the repair work within the policy timescales, the resident must be paid £10 in compensation. For every extra day the repair is not done, the resident must be paid another £2. The most compensation that must be paid for any one repair job is £50.

If the resident is not at home to let the contractor in as arranged, the scheme no longer applies.

The compensation may be used to reduce rent arrears if there are any.

APPENDIX 2

Results of consultation

Compensation Policy Review

September 2020

	Comments	Response
1.	Both documents seem clear, logical and understandable.	
2.	<p>I did not notice any mention of compensation for loss of earnings.</p> <p>Given that many people are on zero-hour contracts, we have had to say no to paid work while waiting for CoL workers or services.</p> <p>If CoL workers do not turn up, this causes loss of potential earnings for tenants.</p> <p>Similarly, if jobs are not repaired properly, or as has been the case, workers arrived without adequate equipment, subsequent call outs mean that folk have to stay in properties , again missing out on potential work.</p>	<p>Our priority is to put things right and deliver the service requested. We do our utmost not to miss appointments but sometimes this does happen due to circumstances beyond our control.</p> <p>Compensation for missed appointments is meant to address inconvenience; any consequential losses must be considered separately as part of a complaint. We will consider requests for compensation where we are wholly or partially at fault for a service failure and resulting loss, and paying compensation is deemed to be appropriate and proportionate.</p> <p>Compensation is not an automatic payment when we make a mistake, or a service is not delivered.</p>
3.	<p>Clearly laid out and informative. It is good that you accept that at times you should provide compensation for a failing to provide an adequate service to residents, although an offer of “a bunch of flowers” may not go down too well! The range of compensations on offer is extensive and some of which I was unaware myself.</p> <p>I feel only offering £2-00 per day for missed contractors appointments should be increased.</p>	<p>The reference to £2.00 is the daily amount of compensation that must be paid in some situations for repairs which remain unfinished under the ‘right to repair’ scheme. This is a statutory scheme with very specific application and the amounts are set by Regulations. They are therefore not subject to discretion.</p> <p>We do offer compensation for missed contractors’ appointments in some circumstances.</p>

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Committee: Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee	Date: 30/09/2020
Subject: Mutual Exchange Policy Review	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Decision
Report author: Liam Gillespie, Head of Housing Management	

Summary

The Mutual Exchange Policy was last approved by Committee in February 2018. It has now been reviewed as part of the policy review programme and is presented for re-approval.

Members may wish to note that there are no material changes to the policy. The policy is largely informed by legislation and the terms and conditions of our tenancy agreements. The review period for the policy has been increased to three years, in line with other new policies adopted by the Housing Service.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Approve the Mutual Exchange Policy for use by the Housing Service

Main Report

Background

1. Mutual exchange is the mechanism by which tenants may move home by swapping tenancies. For secure tenants, there is a right of exchange under the Housing Act, 1985, and landlords may only refuse consent to exchange on limited grounds specified in the Act.
2. Mutual exchange can be a useful way of finding a new home and it is particularly useful for tenants who wish to transfer but who would have low priority on our housing register. Tenants are free to choose where they want to live, and in what type of property. Provided the exchange partner holds a relevant tenancy, a tenant may move anywhere in the country.
3. The Mutual Exchange Policy was approved by Committee in February 2018 and fell due for review in early 2020. This review is complete, and the policy is presented for re-approval, this time with a three-year review period in common with other policies adopted by the Housing Service.

Current Position

4. As this area of housing policy is governed largely by legislation and our tenancy terms and conditions, it is not a very changeable area of housing management.
5. Changes made to the policy are listed in the version control box and are confined to formatting, and the clarification of which tenancies are eligible to exchange (which is governed by law in any case).

Conclusion

6. The Mutual Exchange Policy is presented for re-approval, having first been approved by Committee in February 2018. No substantive changes came out of the review and a three-year approval period is suggested, to bring the policy in line with other recent housing management policies approved by Committee.
 - Appendix 1 – Mutual Exchange Policy (v.2 – 2020)
 - Appendix 2 – Summary of consultation responses

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City of London Corporation
Department of Community & Children's Services
Housing Service
Mutual Exchanges Policy

Approved by:	<i>Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee</i>
Original Approval Date:	<i>12/02/2018</i>
Review Date:	<i>September 2020</i>
Re-Approval Date	
Next Review Date	<i>**3 years from re-approval**</i>

1. Introduction

[Mutual exchange](#) is a way for council or housing association tenants to swap their home for another anywhere in the UK. It is a form of tenancy assignment where two social housing tenancies are swapped, and each household moves into the other's property and takes on the existing tenancy agreement for that property.

For secure tenancies, mutual exchange is governed by s.92 and Schedule III to the Housing Act, 1985 ("the 1985 Act").

Mutual exchange can be useful for tenants who wish to move when they have no priority on relevant housing registers. It also allows tenants to move anywhere in the UK, with no need to demonstrate a local link to the area to which they want to move.

2. Aims of this Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- Provide clear information to potential mutual exchange applicants about eligibility
- Explain some important considerations for mutual exchange applicants
- Outline our service standards for mutual exchanges

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- City of London Corporation social housing tenants (i.e. those holding a Secure tenancy)
- Those applying for mutual exchange with a City tenant and who hold an eligible tenancy

It does not apply to:

- Introductory Tenants
- Licensees (e.g. occupants of tied accommodation, or residents of the City of London and Gresham Almshouses)

The law referred to in this policy applies only in England. Tenancies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are governed by separate rules. It is still possible to exchange an English tenancy with one in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland but those tenancies may differ significantly from one granted in England.

4. Finding an Exchange

The tenants are responsible for finding an exchange partner. Exchanges may be found in several ways; there are numerous websites that enable tenants to advertise their properties, or notices may be placed in local facilities such as newspapers or shops. The City pays an annual subscription for www.homeswapper.co.uk which means our tenants may use this website free of charge.

The tenants are responsible for making the initial contact with each other and mutually agreeing to exchange their homes. Once they have decided to exchange, the tenants must each contact their respective landlords for permission.

5. Conditions for Exchange

The following conditions must be met to allow the exchange to proceed:

Permission

Permission must be sought by both sets of tenants and secured from both landlords before the exchange may go ahead. If it is discovered that an unauthorised exchange has taken place, the tenants will be required to move back.

Mutual exchange may be refused on the following grounds (listed in Schedule III to the 1985 Act):

- The tenant or other person applying for the exchange is under a court order to give up possession.
- Possession proceedings have started, or a Notice of Seeking Possession has been served.
- Where a court order is in force against a tenant for antisocial behaviour.
- The accommodation would be too large or too small for the prospective tenant, or otherwise not reasonably suitable to their needs.
- The premises form part of, or are in the grounds of, a non-housing building or cemetery, and were let to the current tenant as a consequence of their employment.
- The landlord is a charity and the proposed tenant's occupation will conflict with its objectives.
- The property is designed for a physically disabled person, and if the proposed tenant moved in, there would be no such person in occupation.
- The incoming tenant requires a specially adapted property and the one into which they wish to transfer does not have these adaptations.

- The landlord is a special needs housing association or trust, and if the proposed tenant moved in, there would be no one with the relevant need in occupation.
- The accommodation is sheltered, and as above, if the proposed tenant moved in, there would be no one with the relevant need in occupation.
- Incentives were applied, for example money was paid to any party.
- Their tenancy does not qualify, for example the tenant is still within the introductory period of a tenancy.

Some of these grounds do not apply to the City; however, they could apply to the incoming tenant or their landlord.

Property Size

The City of London will allow incoming tenants to transfer into a property which is one bedroom larger than their need according to our bedroom standard, as set out in the Housing Allocation Scheme. The implications of such a move will be discussed with the incoming tenant to make them aware of the financial implications of such a move, particularly in relation to those in receipt of benefits.

Incoming tenants will not be allowed to transfer into a property smaller than their needs according to the City of London's bedroom standard.

Rent Arrears and other debts

When an exchange takes place, the tenants take on each other's tenancies. This means that they swap all aspects including rent accounts. There must be no rent arrears, legal orders such as possession orders, or other debts such as repairs recharges outstanding on the tenant's file, as the incoming tenant will become liable for these.

Safety Checks

Electrical and gas safety checks will be carried out and relevant certificates will be issued before the exchange takes place.

Property Condition

We will visit the City tenant's property prior to the exchange. If the visiting officer has any concerns, further safety checks or repair works may be required before the exchange may take place.

Any unauthorised property alterations or damage beyond reasonable wear and tear must be rectified by the tenant before the exchange may take place.

The incoming tenant must accept the current decorative condition of the property. No decoration allowance is provided when a mutual exchange takes place.

6. Tenancy Type

Tenancies Which May be Exchanged

Mutual exchanges can only occur between those with eligible tenancies:

- Secure tenancies (Housing Act, 1985)
- Assured tenancies (Housing Act, 1988), provided the landlord is a social landlord, registered provider or housing trust
- Secure Flexible (Fixed-Term) tenancies (Housing Act, 1985 as amended by Localism Act, 2011)
- Fixed-Term tenancies (private registered providers of social housing) where tenancy terms allow this

The City of London Corporation issues Secure Tenancies to its social housing tenants. However, incoming tenants may have a different type of tenancy, for instance an Assured Tenancy with a housing association. If we identify that the incoming tenant has a different type of tenancy, we will bring this matter to our tenant's attention as they must be aware that a tenancy may not offer the same rights and security of tenure as the tenancy they are relinquishing.

Tenancies or Licences Which Cannot be Exchanged

The following types of agreement cannot be exchanged:

- Introductory Secure tenancies (i.e. new City of London tenants in the first 12 months of their tenancy). Once the first year (plus any applicable extension period) is completed successfully, tenants achieve a full Secure Tenancy, which may then be exchanged.
- Licences (e.g. those held by residents of the City of London Almshouses or City Corporation employees occupying tied accommodation)
- Starter Tenancies (housing association tenants)
- Demoted Secure or Assured tenants
- Assured shorthold tenancies

7. Repairs, Cleanliness and Decorative State

The incoming tenant accepts the property as seen. The City of London does not offer any help with decorating or furnishing the property for the incoming tenant.

The incoming tenant is also responsible for the cleanliness of the property once they assume the tenancy. It is not our responsibility to clean the property if it is left in an unacceptable state of cleanliness, or remove any bulk items discarded by the outgoing tenant.

8. Timescales

The mutual exchange must be completed within 42 days of application. However, a mutual exchange may not be completed until all documentation, safety checks and repair works have been fully completed.

9. Right to Appeal

If current tenants or prospective incoming tenants disagree with a decision made by the City of London Corporation, they have the right to appeal the decision. The reasons for the appeal must be provided in writing within 30 days of the decision. A response will be provided within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal.

10. Preventing Fraud

Our staff will take all reasonable steps to confirm identities and prevent fraud. This will normally include:

- Requesting references from the landlord of the incoming tenant.

- Requiring up-to-date identity documents and recent proof of address (no more than 3 months old) – including, but not limited to, current passport, driving license, utility bills, council tax bills and any immigration or leave to remain documents for all relevant household members.
- Undertaking a credit check to both ascertain links to the property and verify the information provided. This may also identify where another property may be owned or occupied by the outgoing or incoming tenant that may mean the exchange may not take place.
- Taking a photograph of the incoming tenant(s).
- In any case where an immigration concern is identified or suspected, these will be referred to the City's Anti-Fraud Team who will undertake further checks with the Home Office.
- In any cases where fraud is identified or suspected, these will be referred to the City's Anti-Fraud Team for consideration of formal investigation.
- The City may undertake or participate in data-matching exercises designed to detect and prevent fraud, this includes the National Fraud Initiative (NFI).

11. Policy Exceptions

In exceptional circumstances, we may consider making a variation to this policy. Our reasoning can be provided to the affected parties on request.

12. Monitoring and Performance

We will monitor our use of this policy and the way in which it is implemented, ensuring that any relevant information is reported at appropriate intervals.

13. Training

We will provide all staff responsible for implementing this policy with comprehensive training as required.

14. Equality and Diversity

This Policy has been subject to a full Equalities Analysis and will be implemented in accordance with our responsibilities and duties under relevant legislation, including the Equalities Act 2010.

15. Accessibility

We will ensure that tenants' needs are considered when implementing this Policy to ensure that they are treated fairly. We will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that customers with distinct communication needs are not unreasonably and disproportionately affected. This could involve providing communications in alternative languages or formats or providing interpretation or transcription as appropriate.

16. Data Protection and Information Exchange

We will comply with our obligations under relevant data protection legislation and regulations. We will process and store personal information securely.

There are some circumstances in which we are required by law to disclose information given to us.

17. Policy Review

We will review this policy at least every three years, or following relevant changes to legislation, regulation or policy.

18. Legislation and Regulation


- The Housing Act 1985, s.92 and Sch. III
- Housing Act 1988
- The Localism Act 2011

19. Related documents

- City of London Corporation Housing Service Tenants' Agreement and Handbook
- City of London Corporation Housing Strategy
- Housing Allocation Scheme
- Shift Allowance Policy
- Tenancy Policy

20. Information and Advice

Further information on mutual exchange can be found on Shelter's [website](#).

Department of Community & Children's Services Housing Service		
Policy Title: Mutual Exchange Policy		
Document Owner: Head of Housing Management, DCCS		
Date Approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> February 2018 (original) [DATE] (this version) 		
Version: 2	Last amendment: September 2020	
Effective date:	Next review date:	
Changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarified classes of people to whom the policy does not apply (introductory tenants etc) Updated list of tenancies which are eligible for exchange Various formatting changes to the policy layout (now in standard template) 		

DRAFT

APPENDIX 2

Results of consultation

Draft Mutual Exchanges Policy (Review)

September 2020

	Comments	Response
1.	I was in fact myself registered for this service around four years ago but was able to move without having to use it. Good that you pay the admin fee for the "Homestart" option yourselves, instead of passing that onto the resident.	
2.	<p>Under section 10 Preventing fraud</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking a photograph of the incoming tenant(s). <p>I feel should be explained why, how this will be used, if and how it follows GDPR, and for how long, if ever, before this information is destroyed.</p>	<p>This is covered in general terms in section 16.</p> <p>We keep information on current tenants for the lifetime of the tenancy and for as long afterwards as is necessary to fulfil legitimate functions.</p> <p>Photographs are used for tenancy auditing purposes to ensure that we can identify the tenant and ensure the correct person is living at the address.</p> <p>Our full privacy statement can be found on our website.</p>

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Committee(s)	Dated:
Housing Management and Almshouses Sub (Community and Children's Services) Committee	30/09/2020
Subject:	Public
Social Housing Tenancy Fraud – 2019/20 Annual Report	
Report of:	For Information
The Head of Audit & Risk Management	

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on our Social Housing Tenancy Fraud activity during the 2019/20 reporting year. It also provides Members with an update against our key anti-fraud initiatives in this area.

A total of 16 successful tenancy fraud outcomes were secured during 2019/20 with an associated value of £476,600, this included 11 cases where sub-letting was identified, three housing application frauds and two fraudulent right to buy applications denied.

A shift in focus by the team has led to the recovery of a number of properties through tenancies being voluntarily surrendered following investigation, resulting in more efficient recovery and saving the financial costs and time commitment of civil recovery.

Two complex social housing tenancy fraud cases are with the Comptroller & City Solicitor for prosecution action; however, progress has been delayed in these cases owing to the closure of the courts during the coronavirus pandemic.

The team participated in an NFI pilot exercise where NFI datasets were matched against HMRC data to identify fraud. 79 referrals have been reviewed, resulting in the recovery of two social housing properties with four others still subject to a live investigation.

The City's Social Housing Tenancy Fraud Investigator ensures that a professional counter fraud and investigation resource is active on the City's housing estates by working to a rolling programme of activity which has assisted in raising fraud awareness and understanding of the fraud risks across the City's housing estates, whilst also encouraging the reporting of concerns for further investigation.

Recommendation(s)

- Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. This report provides Members with an update on our Social Housing Tenancy Fraud activity during the 2019/20 reporting year. It also provides Members with an update against our key anti-fraud initiatives in this area.

Social Housing Tenancy Fraud

2. Social housing tenancy fraud continues to be a key fraud risk area for the City. The team provides full investigative support across all aspects of housing, from initial applications, to the investigation of tenancy breaches and right to buy screening. During the reporting year 16 successful outcomes have been secured; in the 11 cases where property has been successfully recovered, the Corporate Anti-Fraud Team have shifted focus to securing voluntary recovery. This has resulted in a faster and more efficient recovery process, allowing the City to allocate this housing to those in greatest need, whilst also saving the cost of legal action.
3. Two complex social housing tenancy fraud investigations are currently with the Comptroller & City Solicitor for prosecution action; one subject to crown court trial and another where a summons is to be served. It should be noted that in both of these cases progress has been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the courts being closed to all but the most urgent cases.
4. The associated value of our work in this area amounts to £476,600, and a summary of our social housing tenancy fraud investigations during the 2019/20 reporting year, is detailed in Appendix 1 to this report.
5. Where illegal occupation of City housing stock is identified and recovered, the tenancies have now been re-let to those in greater need of affordable housing.
6. As a direct result of our social housing tenancy fraud investigations, the team has also identified five Council Tax discount frauds that are now subject to recovery of £1,027, along with the benefit of ongoing future additional revenue for The City through the full and complete receipt of Council Tax payments at these addresses.
7. Case studies detailing several successful social housing tenancy fraud cases have been provided at Appendix 2.

Best use of Resources

8. The team's Social Housing Tenancy Fraud Investigator now works to a rolling programme across the City's housing estates; this helps to ensure that a counter fraud and investigation presence is maintained across the City's estates and provides a professional resource to respond directly to concerns from staff and supports the upskilling of housing colleagues in identifying, reporting and knowing how to respond to social housing tenancy fraud.
9. During the year the team trialled the use of monthly reports, summarising our investigation activity to Estate Managers across all the City's Estates, along with Area Housing Managers and the Head of Housing, this new approach has supported an increase in awareness and understanding of the social

housing tenancy fraud risks faced by the City and has resulted in increased volumes of referrals from some estates.

National Fraud Initiative (NFI) Pilot Exercise

10. The City participated in an NFI pilot exercise during 2019/20, whereby City of London datasets including housing rents, housing benefit and council tax support were matched against HMRC data. The team's work in this area has focused on reviewing the social housing tenancy fraud matches, resulting in the successful recovery of two social housing properties with an associated value of £36,000.

11. A summary of our work on the NFI exercise can be found below.

NFI Pilot Exercise	Total	Break down
Total number of property ownership cases reviewed	14	
Property ownership cases closed with no further action		11
Property ownership cases properties successfully recovered		2
Property ownership cases prosecution action in progress		1
Total		14
Total number of household composition cases reviewed	64	
Household composition cases closed with no further action		62
Household composition cases under investigation		2
Total		64
Total number of right to buy fraud cases reviewed	1	
Right to buy fraud cases closed with no further action		0
Right to buy fraud cases under investigation		1
Total		1

Conclusion

12. The team continue to provide a professional and robust anti-fraud and investigation service across the organisation. Tenancy fraud continues to be high risk and 16 successful results were secured in this area during the reporting year, with an associated value of £476,600

13. The team participated in an NFI pilot and focused resources on social housing tenancy fraud, resulting in the recovery of two properties that may not have been identified through traditional investigations.

14. The City's Social Housing Tenancy Fraud Investigator ensures that a counter fraud and investigation presence is maintained across the City's estates and provides a professional resource to respond directly to concerns from staff by working to a rolling programme of estate activity.

15. A successful trial whereby housing management received monthly summaries of investigation activity across the City's housing estates has resulted in

increased volumes of referrals from housing colleagues. This practice is set to continue as part of our business as usual activity.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Housing tenancy fraud caseload 2019/20

Appendix 2: Social housing tenancy fraud case studies 2019/20

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Appendix 1 – Housing Tenancy Fraud Caseload Analysis 01/04/2019 to 31/03/2020

Housing Tenancy Fraud Case Referrals	01 April 2019 to 31 March 2020	01 April 2018 to 31 March 2019
Housing tenancy fraud referrals received in current year	63	55
Right to buy referrals received in current year	25	21
Housing application referrals received in current year	5	5
Cases carried forward from previous year (all disciplines)	11	14
Total	104	95
Cases/referrals currently under investigation	19	13
Cases/referrals closed with no further action	67	56
Cases with Comptroller & City Solicitor for prosecution	2	1
Cases with Comptroller & City Solicitor for civil recovery	0	0
Cases with City Police for Financial Investigation	0	0
Cases where possession order granted	0	1
Cases where successful possession gained ¹	11	16
Cases where successful prosecution action taken	0	3
Cases where fraudulent application identified	3	4
Right to buy fraud successfully identified	2	1
Total	104	95
Value where successful possession gained, housing application cancelled or right to buy fraud identified ²	£476,600	£540,000
Notes: ¹ Cases (inc. NFI Pilot for 2018/19) where successful possession has been gained will be considered for criminal action where suitable, and where offences committed are serious enough to warrant proceedings under the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013 and/or the Fraud Act 2006. ² Successful possession gained value of £18,000 per property sourced from Audit Commission value of national average temporary accommodation costs to Local Authorities for one family. RTB discount value £112,300 per property.		

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Appendix 2: Social housing tenancy fraud case studies 2019/20

Case Study 1

Following a referral to the Anti-Fraud & Investigation Team in October 2019, directly from a member of the public, an investigation commenced into the social housing tenancy of a tenant living on the Isleden House estate in Islington.

This tenant had been investigated some years before in relation to Airbnb' short term lettings and was interviewed under caution, and although fraud could not be proved then, the findings from that investigation directly fed into the overall approach for tackling such short term lets by The City.

This allegation suggested that the tenant and their friend were committing widespread credit card fraud involving the interception of other tenant's personal details. Whilst this concern was passed to the Police for further investigation and later found to be malicious, intelligence checks undertaken by the Anti-Fraud Team suggested that Isleden House was not the tenants principle home.

Financial checks identified links with various other persons at the property and minimal footprint for the tenant. Whilst it was not possible to establish a new address link for the tenant we were able to contact the tenant by phone establishing that they were residing outside of the UK, had failed to report this to the City, and that it was a long term commitment. When questioned about the names linked to the property, the tenant would only say that they had friends staying at the property in their absence.

The tenant was advised that it was likely that security of tenure had been lost and in order to provide clarity and answer further questions an interview under caution was necessary. The tenant was reluctant to return to the UK and therefore agreed to relinquish possession of the property which has now been let to those in far greater need to housing.

Case Study 2

Following a referral to the Anti-Fraud & Investigation Team in June 2019, from the Estates Manager at Southwark Estates, an investigation commenced into the social housing tenancy of a tenant living at Horace Jones House. Estates Officers had suspicions that the tenant was no longer residing at this address and a gentleman had been seen entering and leaving the property.

Initial intelligence checks revealed a number of tenancy fraud indicators, and whilst most of the tenant's credit was at the social housing property, there were links via a bank account to another property. Furthermore, one other person was linked to the address and on the electoral roll at the property since 2017.

Further investigations established that the tenant had applied for a transfer in March 2016 to larger accommodation, but this had failed to progress as the tenant had not provided requested documentation and supporting evidence. Searches of the Land Registry for a linked property in North London showed that the tenant had owned this property jointly since 2018, with the person that she had asked to be included in their transfer application in 2016. Enquiries with Haringey Council revealed that the partner

Appendix 2: Social housing tenancy fraud case studies 2019/20

was liable for council tax at the address in North London, but there was no single person discount applied to the account.

Visits to the Horace Jones House property were undertaken by the City's Tenancy Fraud Investigator, however, these proved unsuccessful, therefore, an invitation to Interview Under Caution appointment letter was hand delivered to the property, which prompted the registered tenant to contact the estates office. The tenant was referred to the City's Tenancy Fraud Investigator, and it was established that the tenant had left the social housing property around two years earlier and had moved to the address in North London. The tenant advised that they had allowed a friend to live at the social housing property, that the friend was paying the rent directly and that they had not profited from the arrangement. The tenant was not prepared to attend a formal interview but handed their set of keys back to the estate office immediately.

The person residing the property initially refused to leave, instead asking for the tenancy to be transferred into their name. The occupier was unwilling to provide a witness statement, only confirming that they had paid the rent and had not provided any additional monies to the tenant. The occupier eventually decided to leave the property prior to legal action being taken to recover possession and the property has now been let to those in far greater need to housing.

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

Document is Restricted

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