

Committee	Dated:
Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee	26/03/2019
Subject:	Public
Residents Reassurance and Engagement Support Service Update (Parkguard Ltd)	
Report of:	For Information
Director of Community and Children's Services	
Report author:	
Sonia Marquis, Area Manager – City & Fringe Estates	

Summary

This report provides an update for the Committee on the Residents Reassurance and Engagement Support Service ("the patrol service") provided on City of London Housing Estates. The service has been operating since 2016, following a successful pilot project that ran from August 2015 to July 2016.

The patrol service, currently provided by Parkguard Ltd, is intended to address nuisance anti-social behaviour and provide reassurance to residents and visitors to the sites covered. The service is provided on the City's Golden Lane, Middlesex Street, Dron House and Windsor House estates. It also includes the Guinness Partnership's Mansell Street Estate and Bunhill Fields (managed by the City's Open Spaces team).

This report outlines how the Patrol Service has provided valuable assistance to estate staff and partner agencies in tackling anti-social behaviour and low-level crime, in addition to helping residents feel safer in and around their homes.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The current contract with Parkguard Ltd to provide the Resident Reassurance and Engagement Service commenced in September 2018 following a successful re-tendering exercise.
2. Although rates of crime and anti-social behaviour on our estates are low, residents have, in the past, raised concerns about a range of low level but persistent nuisance which affects their quality of life. For example, in the

vicinity of Middlesex Street Estate, near Liverpool Street Station, there are issues around rough sleepers and street begging, involving drug and alcohol related anti-social behaviour.

3. Residents also report issues around the misuse of communal areas, trespass and loitering. The aim of the Parkguard service is to complement and work in partnership with the City of London agencies who routinely deal with these issues. These include City Police, Environmental Health, Homeless Team and Housing Services.
4. The patrol service provides intelligence-led uniformed patrols designed to engender public reassurance, for a minimum of 50 hours per week. The service is flexible and responsive across seven days a week. While City officers can request targeted patrols at short notice, the service is not an emergency response service and there is no direct number for residents to call. Residents are advised to call the emergency services when a “blue light” response is required.
5. The same officers patrol the estates, often accompanied by a dog. They have become familiar with the estates and are understanding and sympathetic to the needs of our residents and have been able to give targeted reassurance to vulnerable individuals. For example, the patrol officers have regular interaction with rough sleepers, raise alerts and sign post individuals to statutory and voluntary support agencies. The Patrol Officers also engage with young people in a constructive way, which has been effective in deterring nuisance behaviour.
6. The Parkguard contract works on a partnership and information-sharing basis with City Police and other City of London Departments. Information is shared in accordance with current data protection legislation and guidelines. Detailed reports are sent after each patrol, which are circulated to relevant agencies. When required, Parkguard representatives attend the City’s multi agency meetings in relation to individuals or issues they are dealing with.
7. Parkguard is accredited under the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) and is currently in discussion with the City of London Police to begin using enforcement powers within its jurisdiction, as it does elsewhere. If approved, Parkguard will have a range of delegated Police powers under the Police Reform Act 2002. Currently, the Patrol Officers routinely assist in the gathering of evidence to support subsequent enforcement action by City of London Police.

Current Position

8. The Estates covered within the current contract include Golden Lane, Middlesex Street, Dron House, Windsor House and Mansell Street. The City’s Open Spaces team is also involved, with patrols taking place at Bunhill Fields.

9. All stakeholders are sent detailed reports after each patrol which is followed up with action as required. City Police use this information to identify issues and perpetrators. The housing service finds the reports useful in bringing to their attention security or health and safety risks, particularly after office hours. The Patrols help demonstrate that some issues are not as prevalent as residents may perceive. Having a uniformed presence is invaluable in making residents feel safer around the estates.
10. Recent examples of interventions and issues brought to the attention of stakeholders include:
- Youths attempting to gain unauthorised entry to Portsoken Community Centre, they ran away when they saw the Patrol Officers. The Officers later advised a singing group to lock the door during their session to avoid disturbance from uninvited visitors
 - Fireworks being set off in a residential block
 - Communal lighting defects at night, reported to the estate office for action
 - Drugs paraphernalia and litter in the basement of one of the blocks
 - Assisting City of London Police to gain entry to a block
 - Fly- tipping and defective entry doors at Guinness Court
 - Identified and engaged with a rough sleeper at Golden Lane
 - Prevented the unauthorised installation of a refrigeration unit at Golden Lane
11. The contract with Parkguard Ltd is monitored via quarterly review meetings with the Housing Service and the Department of Community and Children's services' commissioning team. Quarterly reports demonstrate the number and nature of Parkguard shifts undertaken, and the number of interventions made. Annual Contract Review meetings are also held. Housing Managers meet Guinness Trust Partnership managers on a quarterly basis and the patrol service is a standing item on the agenda at these meetings.
12. A separate contract between Parkguard Ltd and the City's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Service exists to deal specifically with the issue of street begging in the City. It is designed to engage with individuals who are begging and link them in with relevant services.

Financial Implications

13. Most of the cost of the current contract is met by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and City Fund money. A contribution is also made by the Guinness Partnership and Open Spaces. The cost of the service is not currently re-charged to leaseholders.
14. The current contract is due for review in early 2020 and, as part of this, officers intend to review the scope of the contract and how the service is financed. It is likely that, if the service is to continue after 2020, a proportion will have to be re-charged to leaseholders directly.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

15. Provision of the service is a key objective in the Community and Children's Services Business Plan for 2017-2022. The Service contributes to Strategic Priority 1- People of all ages live in safe communities, our homes are safe and well-maintained, and our estates are protected from harm.
16. The patrol service also contributes towards achieving the outcomes of the Corporate Plan 2018-2023, particularly by ensuring people are safe and feel safe.
17. The Service is endorsed by the Safer City Partnership as contributing to the delivery of their Strategic Plan.

Conclusion

18. This report has provided an update on the Residents Reassurance and Engagement Support Service, which is currently provided by Parkguard Ltd. The service has proved very useful in helping to gather intelligence on crime and anti-social behaviour in the areas of coverage.
19. The service is in place until mid-2020 and will be reviewed by officers in early 2020, who will look at the scope of the contract and the financial arrangements for any proposed extension of the service beyond 2020.

Appendices

- None

Background Papers

- Community Safety Project – City Estates. Report to Housing management and Almshouses Sub Committee 14 September 2015
- Neighbourhood Patrol Service – Report to Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee 4 July 2016

Sonia Marquis

Area Manager, City and Fringe Estates

T: 020 7332 1916

E: sonia.marquis@cityoflondon.gov.uk]