

Committees:	Dates:
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee	16 May 2019
Subject: Housing Delivery Programme – Housing Design Guide	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children’s Services	For Information
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Summary

This report provides Members with information relating to the City of London Corporation’s (the Corporation) commitment to ensure that all new social housing delivered by the Corporation, is undertaken in compliance with a consistent Housing Design Standard. The guidance will inform new housing developments of local expectations such as a preference for particular mechanical and electrical services or lift installations ensuring synergy and efficiency of long-term maintenance strategies. The purpose is also to set out the employer’s requirements for a range of issues such as, space standards, fire strategy, energy and carbon management, accessibility; environment and biodiversity, sustainability; security, Building Information Modelling (BIM), Key Performance Indicators and warranties.

The Housing Design Guide (HDG) will be used to procure both design services and contractors, forming the basis of a generic employer’s requirement for Housing Design Standards and will be adaptable to the full range of projects which may consist of small clusters of new build, through to large scale estate regeneration.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

1. Note the approach being taken regarding the ‘Housing Design Guide’ and authorise the specific requirements in connection with Fire Strategy, LABC Warranty, Secured by Design and Accessibility.

Main Report

Background

2. The Corporation aspires to deliver good quality housing which meets recognised standards of design and construction, which can be benchmarked against current good practice. The HDG will establish consistent standards and reinforce the design methodology and recognised practice needed to achieve this standard. It is envisaged that the HDG will include typical plans, illustrations and good practice templates for site analysis. It is also critical that the best protocol in achieving effective and meaningful resident and stakeholder engagement is common practice in supporting the delivery of these new homes. The rationale to achieve high standards of design and good practice will be clearly articulated in the HDG.
3. A good deal of political attention is currently focused on the need to increase the rate of house building and particularly affordable housing. However, alongside this aspiration there are growing concerns about the quality of the new homes. There have been many reported cases where new home owners are struggling to achieve a satisfactory resolution when multiple defects are reported to builders.

Fire Strategy

4. Fire integrity and fire detection is a high priority for social housing provision. Drivers for this are not only the recent events, but also changes to existing legislation and guidance to maintain safer housing for the community. Although changes are under consideration, there is a need to exceed current guidelines beyond the scope of the Fire Safety Reform and the LACORS Fire Safety Guide for blocks of flats. Consultation with local fire services is important to ensure a buy in from all participants should a serious event occur. Compartmentation, early warning and where necessary, suppression need to be considered in every design proposal.
5. Some key design principles which will be incorporated into the HDG include the following:
 - All new apartment blocks will be provided with automatic fire suppression installations (sprinklers) irrespective of the height of the development.
 - LD1 Fire Alarm System will be required - a system installed throughout the dwelling, incorporating detectors in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape routes from the dwelling, and in all rooms and areas in which fire might start, other than toilets, bathrooms and shower rooms.
 - Fire suppression and fire compartmentation will be 3rd party accredited

- The external fabric of the development will be non-combustible.
- Provision of fire escape stairs and lifts will be compliant with current Building Regulations.

LABC Warranty

6. The HDG will require all our new housing developments to be provided with suitable LABC warranty. This is consistent with best practice and advice obtained from the COL District Surveyor and the COL Insurance and Risk Manager.
7. The LABC warranty is an appropriate product for the property owner, and LABC Building Control, such as the Corporation's District Surveyor, can carry out the building control function rather than an external Approved Inspector. LABC warranty relies on Local Authority Building Control inspections to ensure the work is of a high standard.
8. Using the LABC has advantages to the Corporation including:
 - The District Surveyors are LABC members, so the building control work comes to the Department of Built Environment and the Corporation benefits from the fee income.
 - Plan checking, and site inspection works tend to be more rigorous by the District Surveyors than an Approved Inspector, therefore the project should be built to approved plans, reducing construction costs and wasted time having to rectify non-compliant works.
 - The District Surveyor is committed to ensuring projects are fully compliant and will resource the project accordingly.
9. It is noted that a feature of the warranty is a rigorous inspection and compliance regime which will be applied. LABC requires a system of thorough checks and standards that go beyond basic compliance with building regulations and mitigate the risk of future losses and claims e.g. a higher specification of tanking and waterproofing will mitigate future water ingress and subsequent property claims occurring.
10. The strategy adopted requires all our new housing developments to be provided with suitable LABC Warranty, which is consistent with best practice and advice obtained from the COL District Surveyor and the COL Insurance and Risk Manager.

Secured by Design

11. The HDG will state that all new housing developments must be designed to satisfy 'Secured by Design' standards. The external environment must offer security to its end users both in reality and perception. For the safety and long-term security of residents and visitors to any development, all requirements for emergency service access and maintenance access must be compliant with current policy, legal obligations and best practice.

12. Secured by Design principles for the design of the external environment in public, communal and private areas will be demonstrated. Housing developments will be required to comply with Secured by Design principles, but certification will not be mandatory.

Access & Equality

13. The guidance provided within the HDG will support the provision of flexible and accessible developments which are adaptable over the life of a building. New housing should support family life in the flexibility of homes built with easily accessible, built in, long-term adaptability to suit growing and aging families or new owners and tenants. New dwellings must be accessible to the widest possible range of people at all stages of life, including disabled and older people. The HDG should support the development of well-connected, walkable neighbourhoods which provide a choice of homes and accessible infrastructure, services and supporting uses and facilities in order to enhance health and wellbeing, social inclusion and community cohesion.

14. Reference will be made to revised Part M (4) to the Building Regulations, Categories 1 to 3, encompassing 'accessible adaptable' and 'wheelchair accessible' homes, along with technical support from the replaced Lifetime Homes Guide. Reference should also be given to the Equalities Act 2010, which imposes a range of duties relevant to the planning and building control processes, also the public-sector equality duty (PSED), which requires public bodies and those performing public functions to have due regard to the need to advance equality for, among others, disabled people.

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