

Committee: Community and Children's Services Committee	Date: 06/03/2020
Subject: Golden Lane Estate - Consultation on Location of Estate Office	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Decision
Report author: Liam Gillespie, Head of Housing Management	

Summary

In September 2018, DCCS was granted planning permission to convert the space at the base of Great Arthur House into much needed additional flats. This meant that the Golden Lane Estate office would have to move from its current location.

It was intended that some of the estate office staff would move across to the office in the newly refurbished Golden Lane Community Centre. Some residents objected to this idea and Members asked officers to carry out additional consultation with residents on the additional flats and the location of the estate office.

This report summarises the consultation exercise carried out in 2019 by Southwark Mediation and officers, and makes a recommendation based on the outcome of that consultation.

Recommendation

Members are asked to endorse the recommendation made in paragraph 23, to proceed with the proposal to build two flats at Great Arthur House and retain a smaller estate office on the same site.

Main Report

Background

1. In 2018, it was proposed that the ground floor of Great Arthur House on the Golden Lane Estate be converted into three flats. To accommodate this, the estate office would move from its current location at the base of Great Arthur House. It was intended that some members of the estate team would be based at the newly refurbished Golden Lane Community Centre.
2. Planning permission for the flats, and the change of use for the community centre office, was granted in September 2018. Numerous objections were received to the planning applications, both in relation to the proposed new homes and the use of the community centre to accommodate housing management staff.

3. In response to this, Members requested that officers carry out further consultation on the proposals with Golden Lane residents and report back to committee with the results.
4. Officers commissioned Southwark Mediation Centre (SMC) to carry out the consultation exercise, which concluded in December 2019.

Consultation

5. In liaison with officers, SMC planned a consultation programme in order to facilitate discussion about options for the location of the estate office, the designs for the proposed flats, and other associated issues.
6. The following sessions were held, all facilitated by SMC:
 - **Workshop One, 17 June 2019:** this focused on the location of the estate office, including the functions carried out by housing management staff, the possible sites for an office, and the financial implications of the various ideas. This workshop included a walkabout to look at some of the possible locations for the office.
 - **Workshop Two, 11 July 2019:** this workshop concentrated on the proposals for the new flats at Great Arthur House, including the designs themselves. The proposal to use one flat as a 'reablement' facility was also discussed.
 - **Workshop Three, 25 November 2019:** this meeting was an opportunity for residents to talk about the proposals with City officers, and to contribute ideas and suggestions relating to the flats or the location of the estate office.
7. Additionally, all households on the Golden Lane Estate received a detailed leaflet containing contact details for SMC, inviting comments and suggestions. Residents wishing to discuss the proposals, or ask questions, could contact Dave Walker at SMC to participate in the consultation process without attending any of the workshops.
8. A final deadline for comments was set at 19th December 2019 and this was widely publicised across the estate.

Additional Flats at Great Arthur House

9. In response to comments made about the design, layout and construction of the proposed new flats at Great Arthur House, residents were invited to talk about the proposals at the first workshop on 11 July 2019. The Project Manager handling this scheme, and the architects, attended the workshop.
10. Additionally, it had been proposed that one of the new flats could be used as a 'reablement' facility, for use by City residents in need of an accessible home on a short-term basis following discharge from hospital.

11. Using one flat in this way would deprive the City of a property to let to a housing applicant from the housing register. Given the current lack of fully accessible and adaptable social housing units within the City, the high demand for such properties, and the complex considerations involved in managing such a property, it was decided that it would be more appropriate to let any new property to a housing applicant on a secure tenancy, as this need is most pressing. Residents were supportive of this conclusion.

Estate Office Location – Options

12. Following the first two workshops, the options for the location of the estate office were refined in response to residents' comments and further investigation carried out by officers.
13. When the idea of moving the estate team into the community centre was first suggested, the centre was still closed for refurbishment and the day to day operational realities of running the office were not clear.
14. During the consultation period, the community centre enjoyed a successful first year of operation. It became apparent that the office would not provide enough space to sustain the current level of activity in the centre and accommodate extra staff from the estate team. It is now conceded that moving an additional three staff members into the office is not feasible, and residents were informed of this at the third workshop.
15. The options discussed at the third workshop on 25 November 2019 were:
1. Use the 'Respite Room' (in basement of Great Arthur House) as an office;
 2. House the office in a commercial unit at the CoLPAI development;
 3. Provide two new flats instead of three, and keep a smaller office at Great Arthur House;
 4. House the office in a vacant shop on Goswell Road;
 5. Build three flats and move estate staff over to the Barbican Estate Office;
 6. Move estate staff over to the Barbican Estate Office, with one post staying at the community centre.

Responses

Workshop Three

16. The workshop was attended by 12 residents. A summary of the comments made at this workshop is contained in Appendix 1; this document was circulated on the estate before the deadline for written comments, to enable those who could not attend the workshops to participate.
17. Members will note the comments made by residents at this meeting, and that attendees were almost exclusively in favour of option 3 above.
18. Residents felt it important that the estate should have a visible and accessible office on the estate.

Written Responses

19. There were 63 written responses to the consultation, and these were collated by SMC. A selection of comments relating to the various options is shown in Appendix 2. Any responses that were sent to the estate office were forwarded to SMC to be logged to avoid any double counting.
20. Members will note that 54 out of the 63 written responses supported option 3 above.
21. A document expressing support for option 3, which was signed by 24 residents, was received at the estate office and included in the figures.

Outcome

22. It is apparent from the consultation responses collated by SMC that those residents who responded to the consultation were overwhelmingly in support of retaining an estate office at Great Arthur House, with two flats to be built instead of three. This compromise will provide two new accessible homes and, retain a dedicated estate office at Golden Lane.
23. Members will understandably be concerned about the loss of one unit of social housing in the City, though given the strength of feeling surrounding the plans for the future of the estate office, and a lack of feasible alternative locations, officers strongly believe that the proposed way forward is a suitable compromise that will still provide two much-needed accessible homes in the City.
24. This option will require an amendment to the current planning consent for the provision of three flats.

Recommendation

25. Considering the consultation outcome, officers recommend that two flats are provided at Great Arthur House, and a smaller estate office is retained on the same site.

Conclusion

26. Members asked officers to carry out further consultation with Golden Lane Estate residents on the proposals to build three new homes at the base of Great Arthur House and relocate housing staff to the community centre's office.
27. The consultation was concluded in December 2019 and the responses showed clear support for a compromise solution, namely providing two flats instead of three and retaining a separate estate office at the base of Great Arthur House.
28. Given the limited options for alternative locations for an estate office, and the strong support among residents for retaining a separate estate office on the estate, officers believe that the recommended option represents the best way forward and ask Members to endorse this approach.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Summary of outcome of Consultation Workshop Three, 25/11/19
- Appendix 2 – Summary of Written Responses to Consultation
- Appendix 3 – Publicity leaflet for consultation

Background Papers

- Golden Lane Estate – new flats at Great Arthur House and relocation of estate staff, 12/10/2018

Liam Gillespie

Head of Housing Management

T: 020 7332 3785

E: liam.gillespie@cityoflondon.gov.uk