

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee	11 July 2013	
Subject: Allocated Members Scheme	Public	
Report of: Director of Community & Children's Services	For Decision	
<u>Summary</u>		
<p>This report is an update on the Allocated Members Scheme, which was introduced in 2000 to encourage Members to take an active interest in the management of the City's 11 social housing estates.</p> <p>The Community & Children's Services Committee agreed the guidelines for the scheme, which are attached at Appendix 2, in November 2011. At its meeting on 10 May 2013, the Grand Committee delegated the appointment of Allocated Members to the Housing Management Sub-Committee.</p> <p>The management of the estates has been restructured, and smaller estates have been brought together, so that we now have 7 Estate Manager posts running the 11 estates, and a Sheltered Housing Manager. As it has not always been easy to fill all the Allocated Member positions in the past, Members are asked to consider whether the Allocated Member Scheme should now echo the management structure.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note the guidelines attached at Appendix 1 - Agree their preferred option for the number of Allocated Member posts, as set out in 3.2 		

Main Report

1. Background

1.1 The Allocated Members Scheme was introduced in 2000. Members of the Community & Children's Services Committee were allocated to different

City of London Corporation housing estates. The purpose of the scheme was:

- To give residents and staff a named Member to ‘champion’ their estate
- To allow Members to take an interest in the estate, its residents and staff
- To develop a group of members with housing knowledge & experience to contribute to the CC&S Committee.

2. Current Position

2.1 Although there are 11 estates, some of these have been combined, and there are currently 10 Allocated Member positions. Two of these cover more than one estate.

On the two estates within the City, it is customary for any Ward Members on the Community & Children’s Services Committee to share the role of Allocated Member.

2.2 Guidelines for Allocated Members were revised and agreed by the Community & Children’s Services Committee in November 2011. These are attached at Appendix 2.

2.3 Allocated Members are expected to make an initial visit to their estate, and then to visit from time to time, for example, to attend the AGM of the Residents’ Association, social events or an occasional estate walkabout. A six-monthly Allocated Members Report is submitted to the Housing Management Sub-Committee and then the Community & Children’s Services Committee so that Members can inform the Committees of matters of interest relating to their estates. This report is compiled by officers in consultation with the Allocated Members.

2.4 Briefing sessions are held from time to time to keep Allocated Members informed about Housing policy matters.

2.5 There have been significant benefits to residents and staff of having enthusiastic and engaged Allocated Members. Examples of this are :

- Explaining matters of City Housing policy to residents who may not understand the reason for a decision;

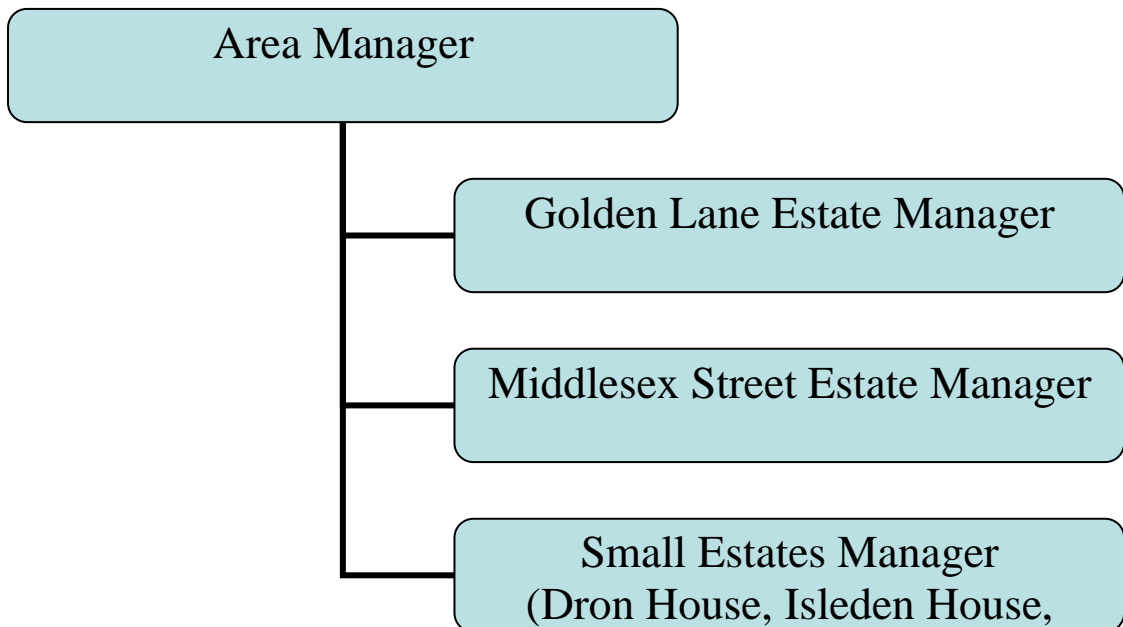
- Facilitating good relationships between the City and outside boroughs where we have housing estates, by speaking informally to other Members on issues;
- Using contacts within the City to make arrangements which benefit the estate;
- Lobbying to attract funding or support to their estate.

2.6 The Community & Children’s Services Committee, at its meeting on 10 May 2013, gave in-principle approval to a new Estates Management Structure. This has now been implemented. We now divide the estates into two areas – City & Fringes and Out-of-City.

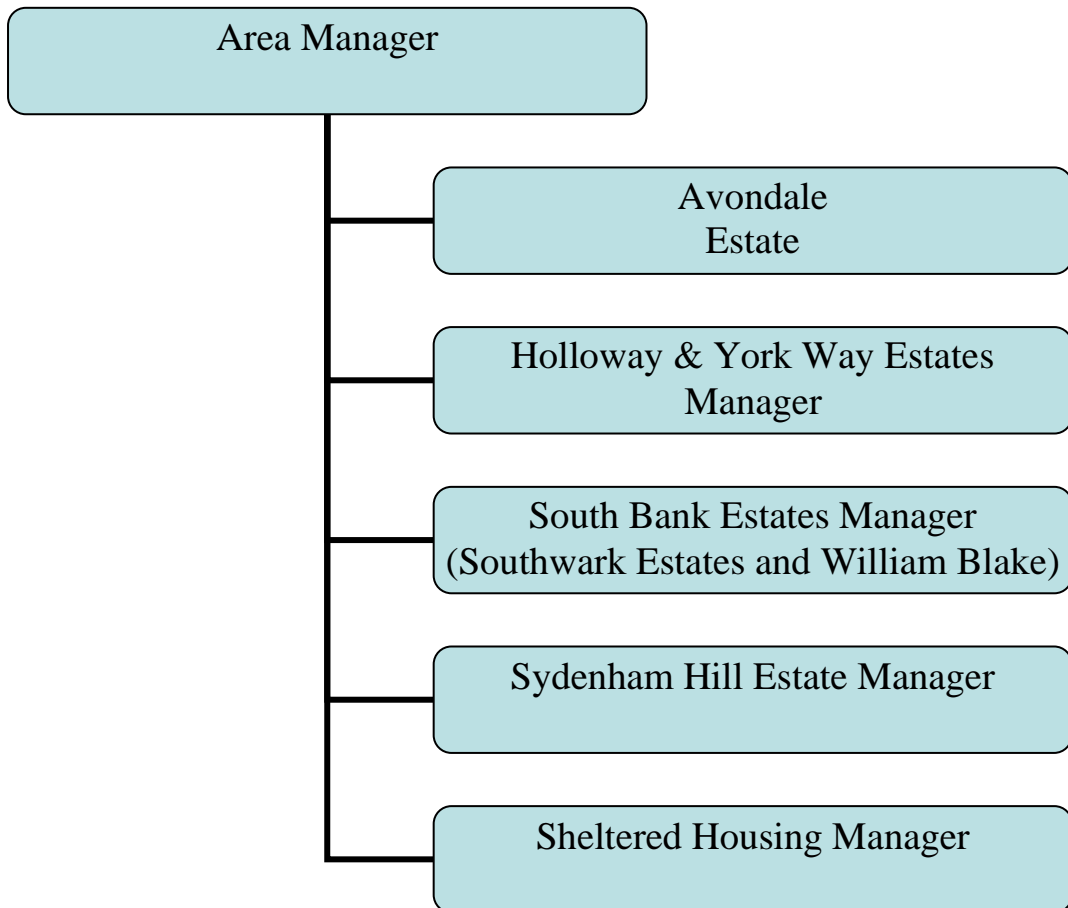
Each large estate has a dedicated manager, with smaller estates grouped together. A Sheltered Housing Manager is responsible for the sheltered schemes and the City of London & Gresham Almshouses.

The structure of the two areas is shown in the following charts:

City & Fringes



Out-of-City



3. Options

3.1 The responsibility for appointing Allocated Members is now delegated to the Housing Management Sub-Committee. In the past, there have been some difficulties in filling all Allocated Member posts, and so this is an opportunity for Members to consider whether they wish to make changes to the number of Allocated Members posts.

3.2 There are three options open to Members:

a) To retain the existing position of having 10 Allocated Member posts.

b) To change the number of Allocated Members to reflect the new structure. Each Allocated Member would work with a specific

Estate Manager. The sheltered schemes and almshouses would have their own Allocated Member. This option would have the advantage of building a relationship between the Estate Manager and the Allocated Member to work together for the benefit of the estate(s). It would also give us a Champion for our older tenants, which we do not currently have and which would be much welcomed by the residents of the sheltered schemes and almshouses.

Under this option, the 8 Allocated Member positions would cover:

- Golden Lane
- Middlesex Street
- Avondale
- York Way & Holloway
- South Bank
- Sydenham Hill
- Small Estates (Dron House, Isleden House, Windsor House)
- Sheltered Schemes (Mais House, Harman Close, Almshouses)

Where an Allocated Member covered more than one estate, they would have extra support from local staff to make sure their time commitment was not excessive.

c) To have a panel of 2-3 Allocated Members for each of the 2 areas. This would have the advantage of reducing the number of Members needed to a maximum of 6. If this were the case, Members may wish to consider appointing from the Housing Management Sub-Committee, rather than from the wider membership of the Community & Children's Services Committee.

4. Financial and Risk Implications

There are no known financial or risk implications in this report.

5. HR Implications

There are no known HR implications.

6. Consultees

The Town Clerk, Chamberlain and Comptroller & City Solicitor have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

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Appendix 1

Guidelines for Allocated Members

1. Background

- 1.1 The Allocated Members Scheme matches a Member from the Community & Children's Services Committee to each of the City's social housing estates. There are ten Allocated Member positions, with some covering a small estate in close proximity to a larger one. It is possible for two Members to share the Allocated Member role on a large estate if they wish to do so.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Scheme is to:
 - Give residents and staff a named Member to 'champion' their estate;
 - Allow Members to take an interest in the estate, its residents and staff;
 - Develop a group of members with housing knowledge & experience to contribute to the CC&S Committee.
- 1.3 Allocated Members are appointed each year by the Chairman of the Housing Management Sub-Committee.

2. Role of the Allocated Member

- 2.1 The Allocated Member exists to champion the estate and its whole community, covering staff and all residents. This involves:
 - Making occasional visits to the estate and attending some events, to ensure familiarity with the estate, its residents and staff.
 - Promoting the interests of the estate within the City – raising its profile by drawing attention to new developments, initiatives and good practice.
 - Liaising with other departments, outside agencies, and home local authorities over matters which are of concern to the whole estate community. For example, a general rise in anti-social behaviour, affecting many residents on an estate might be helped by the involvement of the Allocated Member, working with managers, to encourage intervention from the police or home borough.
- 2.2 Allocated Members exist to champion the whole estate community, not the interests or issues of individual residents. If an individual attempts to raise an issue with an Allocated Member, they should be referred to local staff or managers. If the matter is a complaint, the resident must be referred to the formal complaints process.

Managers and staff cannot discuss individual residents with Allocated Members, for confidentiality reasons. Allocated Members should not normally

meet privately with residents, or visit them in their homes, unless part of a formal visit with managers. The Allocated Member Scheme is not a forum through which residents can seek to challenge management decisions, and it is not appropriate for residents to request this of the Allocated Member, thus putting them in a difficult position.

- 2.3 There is a clear difference between the role of a Ward Member and that of an Allocated Member. A Ward Member has a democratic responsibility for protecting the interests of residents in his/her ward, and can, therefore, take up a matter with officers on behalf of an individual. Residents outside the City will have their own ward councillors whom they have elected to represent them, and who, therefore, can take up an issue on their behalf.

Allocated Members, however, have not been elected as democratic representatives, and, therefore, officers cannot discuss individual issues or complaints with them. The Allocated Member is selected to represent the estate as a whole, not individuals.

- 2.4 If an individual raises a personal issue with an Allocated Member, the Member will either:
- a) give the resident details of the appropriate local manager so that they can contact them, or
 - b) bring the matter to the attention of the local manager and ask them to contact the resident direct in order to resolve the issue through proper processes.

3. Responsibilities of Allocated Members

- 3.1 An Allocated Member makes an initial commitment to a familiarisation visit to the estate, to be shown around and to meet staff.
- 3.2 Following the familiarisation visit, the Allocated Member is expected to visit the estate on two occasions during the year. One of these occasions will be a formal estate walkabout, organised by the Area Manager and open to residents to take part. The other visit may be an informal one, or might be to attend the Annual General Meeting of a recognised Residents' Association, or a social event for all residents.
- 3.3 Further visits to the estate are at the discretion of the Allocated Member. The Area Housing Manager should always be informed, as a matter of courtesy, when the Allocated Member proposes to visit the estate.
- 3.4 Officers will prepare a six-monthly report on activities on the estate and will circulate this to Allocated Members for comment in advance of it being presented to the Housing Sub-Committee, and referred to the Grand Committee. Allocated Members should be prepared to answer questions on any matter included in the estate at the appropriate Committee meeting.

3.5 The contact details for Allocated Members will be displayed on notices on the estate and in relevant publications. From time to time, Allocated Members may be asked to contribute a piece for the estate newsletter or other publication.

4. Support for Allocated Members

4.1 The Area Housing Manager responsible for an estate will contact the Allocated Member at least on a quarterly basis to discuss issues and activities on the estate.

4.2 The Area Housing Manager will also e-mail the Allocated Member at the end of each month with a short update on estate matters.

4.3 The Area Housing Manager will also contact the Allocated Member if there are any significant issues on the estate, over and above those which are purely management matters. Examples might be an emergency situation on the estate such as a fire, flood or major crime.

4.4 Allocated Members will be informed about forthcoming estate events as so as these are arranged, and will be given the dates of estate walkabouts at least six months in advance.

4.5 Briefing events will be held for Allocated Members at appropriate times. These might be to discuss matters of national housing policy and how they affect estates, or to talk about a general issue.