

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee	26 September 2013	6
Subject: Housing Estates - Allocated Members' Report	Public	
Report of: Director of Community & Children's Services	For Information	
<u>Summary</u>		
<p>This report, which is for information, provides an update for the Committee on events and activities on the City of London Corporation's social housing estates.</p> <p>The report is compiled in collaboration with Allocated Members, whose role is to take an active interest in their estate, to champion residents and local staff and to engage with housing issues in order to play an informed part in housing-related debates within the Committee.</p>		

Main Report

Background

- The Allocated Members Scheme was introduced in 2000, when 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.
- This report is presented to the Housing Management Sub-Committee twice a year.

General Estate Matters

- We have completed our restructure of estate management, and all posts are now filled. Estates are now divided into two areas, rather than three.

The City & Fringes Area Manager is Bob Jacks. Bob is responsible for Golden Lane, Middlesex Street and the three small estates on the edge of the City, Dron House, Isleden House and Windsor House.

The Out-of-City Area Manager is Elizabeth Donnelly. Elizabeth is responsible for Avondale Square, Holloway, South Bank, Sydenham Hill and York Way estates.

- We have also appointed a new Sheltered Housing Manager, Jacqueline Whitmore. Jacqueline, who was previously the Scheme Manager at Isleden House, reports to Elizabeth Donnelly and manages Mais House, Harman Close and the City of London and Gresham Almshouses.
- Our apprentices have been extremely successful in moving into employment. Of the 15 apprentices appointed in the last 2 years, 6 have now left the organisation – one to be a barrister's clerk, one a youth worker, one a recruitment consultant, one to work for a national newspaper and one to do National Service in Israel. Only one left us because he was unsuited to the role.

Of the remaining apprentices, four so far have successfully applied for permanent jobs in the Housing Service. Three are applying for jobs with our support, and the remaining three are still apprentices, but in a more advanced position with increased responsibility.

We are now appointing five new apprentices, who will be with us for two years. We are very proud of our apprentices and the programme of support and opportunities we are able to give them.

- We carried out our annual estates satisfaction survey in January and the results were excellent. This year, we measured dissatisfaction, rather than satisfaction, on the grounds that people were more likely to respond to tell us if they were not satisfied. Dissatisfaction turned out to be extremely low – only 1.1% of residents expressed dissatisfaction with the overall service provided. Next year, we will conduct the survey electronically.
- We are in the process of putting final touches to the Residents' Celebration Day, to be held in the Guildhall on 5 October. This is the

third year of the event, which has proved to be very popular. All Allocated Members and Members of the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee are very welcome to join us on the day, and should contact Jean Evans at jean.evans@cityoflondon.gov.uk if they wish to attend.

Avondale Square Estate - Allocated Member, Virginia Rounding

Having enjoyed been the Allocated Member for Windsor House, I am delighted to have come to Avondale Square at what is an extremely exciting time.

In June, Wendy Giaccaglia started as the new Estate Manager. Previously the City's Resident Involvement Manager, Wendy is well known to many of the residents, and I joined her and a group of residents on a very informative and useful Estate Walkabout in July.

Planning permission has been gained to demolish the old Community Centre and to build a new community facility, an estate office and 17 new flats. The estate office has been relocated into a former shop for the duration of the works. Residents have been heavily involved in drawing up plans for the development and it is clear that the new facilities and flats will be of a high standard.

Structural engineers have been appointed to work on another exciting project, which proposes the building of new homes on top of two existing blocks, Eric Wilkins House and George Elliston House. If approved, the project will also involve carrying out roof works and replacing windows throughout the blocks. Residents have been kept informed of progress through newsletters.

The 'Our Place' project, run in partnership with Waste Watch, ended at the beginning of June. The project was designed to bring people together and to encourage a sense of community and ownership of the estate. Achievements included the setting up of weekly bingo sessions, the development of a community garden and the production of a CD of resident voices saying what they love about Avondale Square as a community.

Golden Lane – Allocated Members, Gareth Moore, Angela Starling

Firstly, we would like to welcome the new Estate Manager, Laurence Jones. Laurence was previously the Estate Manager at Avondale Square and is already having an impact in his new role.

We are pleased to advise the Committee that the planned five year review of the Listed Buildings Management Guidelines has been carried out. The Planning and Transportation Committee approved the draft Golden Lane Estate Listed Building Management Guidelines and agreed to a formal public consultation

exercise being carried out in July 2013, prior to its adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Since January the design team working on the re-cladding of Great Arthur House have met some key milestones. The Detailed Design Report has been given approval ensuring the project proceeds to the next stage. Planning and listed building consent applications have both been made. We are now in the procurement phase of the project and we look forward to informing Members in due course that a contractor has been appointed and that the long-awaited work can commence.

A proposed redevelopment of the children's sunken play area has progressed significantly over the last 6 months. Draft plans to redesign the area to make the play pit a safer and more attractive environment for the under-fives to enjoy have been agreed. It is hoped that the scheme will be funded from monies received from developments in the area.

Following on from the success of the "Our Place" project at Middlesex Street Estate, we are looking to implement a Good Neighbour Scheme at Golden Lane. This is where someone living on the estate volunteers to spend at least one hour each week supporting a neighbour in a various ways, from befriending to running errands. The scheme has been very successful at Middlesex Street, and Golden Lane residents are enthusiastic and keen to run it for themselves.

Holloway & York Way Estates – Allocated Member, Deputy Catherine McGuinness

As part of the estate management restructure, there has been a change of management at Holloway & York Way Estates. A new Estate Manager, Michelle Warman, started in post on 15 July. Michelle comes to us from Thurrock Council and brings a wealth of housing experience. We also had one of our former apprentices, Sarah Parker, start a permanent post with us as Customer Services Officer. I would like to welcome both Michelle and Sarah to York Way and look forward to working with them.

Holloway was one of the pilots for the Estate Plans. After a successful first year, staff worked with the residents' Focus Group on ideas for the second year's Plan. A survey of all residents was conducted to obtain a wide viewpoint, and the points raised were added to ideas from the Focus Group. Our new Plan makes it clear for everyone exactly what is going to happen on the estate this year, and I am pleased to inform you that the estate continues to provide an excellent service.

The Estate Plan for York Way has also been received very well by residents. One small, yet very effective, improvement resulting from the plan was the introduction of a weekly Estate Update. This has proved very successful and has reduced the number of residents calling to the estate office considerably. Due to its success, the idea is now being introduced on all of the estates.

Officers are exploring the possibility of building new properties on a site very close to Holloway Estate. The new properties would be managed from Holloway, and the estate staff have met with colleagues from the City Surveyor's department to discuss various options. I shall update Members as these plans develop.

The condition of the windows at both Holloway and York way estates is of growing concern of residents. As on other estates, officers are looking at options to accelerate the window replacement programme, thus improving the appearance and energy efficiency of the homes and making residents more comfortable as well as reducing their heating bills.

Middlesex Street Estate – Allocated Member, Deputy Henry Jones

The Good Neighbour Scheme launched at Middlesex Street Estate in January has proved a great success and is going from strength to strength. An offshoot of this scheme has been the formation of the Petticoat Square Gardeners. A number of volunteers along with the assistance of the COL's Open Spaces now maintain the estate's soft landscaping. The estate staff are working with the club to increase participation and to make sure that the residents know that they are welcome to be included and to emphasise the benefits this brings to the estate.

The current building works on the estate are almost at an end. Phase Two was completed in July 2013 when the 10 studios, built in the converted former Community Centre, were handed to the Housing Service. This has been a difficult time for residents, who have coped with noisy and dusty works over a considerable length of time. However, the outcome is that new socially rented homes have been built within the City for the first time in many years, and the new residents are delighted.

It is anticipated that options for Phase Three of the building programme will be presented to our residents in 2014 and an effective consultation and information programme will be created to ensure that all residents are fully informed of the options and progress.

I am delighted to welcome Paul Richardson, the new Estate Manager, to Middlesex Street Estate. Paul was previously the Estate Manager at York Way and Holloway Estates. Paul is keen to introduce new ways of communicating with residents on the estate, and plans to launch a Facebook page for Middlesex Street shortly.

Small Estates – Allocated Member, Elizabeth Rogula

Having been the Allocated member for Isleden House, I am pleased to have extended my role to encompass Dron House and Windsor House. Angela Smith, the Estate Manager for these three Small Estates, has moved from her previous role at Golden Lane and Southwark, and is helping me to get to know my new estates. Angela will be spending one day a week at each estate to support the Estate Officer and to meet with residents.

At Dron House, a draft design has been agreed to convert the existing community hall and estate office into a one three bedroom flat and a multi-functional estate office/community room. Discussions are now taking place with Tower Hamlets on planning issues and I look forward to updating Members in due course. The Estate Officer post has been filled on a secondment basis for over a year now, but we are now able to appoint Matthew Ring to the post permanently. Matt has worked extremely hard for the estate during his secondment, and residents are delighted with his appointment.

At Isleden House, we are looking again at converting some little used space into 5 one bed flats. Planning permission for a smaller scheme on the site was refused previously because it removed a communal workshop facility. The new scheme is more ambitious and also provides a small workshop facility, so we are optimistic that it will be more successful this time. Consultation with residents is taking place before pre-planning advice is sought from the London Borough of Islington.

Windsor House continues to progress well. The possibility of updating the children's play area and the redevelopment of the community hall continues to be investigated and funds identified. Although still at an early stage, officers are working with colleagues in other departments and external agencies to explore this and I look forward to updating Members in due course.

Members will recall from the last report that the biggest concern for residents at Windsor House is the condition of windows on the estate. Officers are developing a plan that will accelerate the window replacement programme and provide residents with more energy efficient homes as soon as possible.

South Bank Estates – Allocated Member, Adam Richardson

I am delighted to be taking up the role of Allocated Member at the South Bank Estates and am looking forward to getting to know the different blocks, the staff and some of the residents in the coming months.

Officers advise me that, despite their best efforts, the much-anticipated door entry system replacement project at Sumner Buildings, Pakeman House and Stopher House has suffered further planning delays. However, whilst these issues were being addressed the contract was advertised and tenders have now been received.

Since the last report, residents of Sumner Buildings have experienced some anti-social behaviour from late night revellers frequenting a restaurant/club in the building adjacent to the estate. However, I am very pleased to report that the estate staff have been working very hard and closely with local Planning officers and locally elected councillors to rectify the problem. There has been no recurrence of trouble recently and residents are appreciating this.

Work is taking place to explore the possibility of building some additional new homes at Sumner Buildings, on the site of an old bunker. At Pakeman House, it is likely that funding from an adjacent development will allow us to build more new homes, an estate office and a community facility, which is lacking at present. This is an exciting time and I look forward to telling Members more about these projects as they unfold.

Sydenham Hill Estate – Allocated Member role vacant

The former Allocated Member, Deputy William Fraser, has now stepped down from the role after some years. He has been a committed and engaged Allocated Member during that time, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his efforts on behalf of the estate and its residents.

It has been disappointing that despite strenuous efforts to fill the vacant Estate Officer's post, this proved impossible. The residential nature of the position proved to be a major stumbling block and, as a result, the staffing structure on the estate has been changed. Residents were kept fully informed of the problems in recruiting and during this time the Avondale Square Estate Office continued to give support to residents and staff.

However, the situation is now resolved. Residents have been pleased to welcome their new Estate Manager, Sonia Marquis, who previously managed Golden Lane and Southwark Estates. To ensure the estate is well-run and to fulfil the wish of residents to have a greater staff presence on site, Sonia is spending two days every week working at the estate. Sonia is currently looking

at options to improve the estate office and provide a small meeting facility for residents.

The current gardener has been promoted to a new role of Estate Supervisor. This role maintains some of the gardening and cleaning functions but will also assist the Estate Manager and give greater support to the residents. This arrangement is being trialled and will be reviewed after an initial period.

The Lammas Day celebrations were revived this year by a group of residents who came forward to organise it. The celebrations were a great success and we hope that the residents may arrange some more social events in the future.

Sheltered Housing – Allocated Member, Billy Dove

Our sheltered housing residents enjoyed a number of trips and treats during the summer. These included an excursion to the gardens at Sissinghurst, a visit to the Historic Dockyard at Portsmouth and a trip up the Shard. The trips were very popular and successful, with everyone who attended having a thoroughly good time.

Residents at different schemes have been coming together to have bingo and quiz afternoons at Harman Close. Parties from both Isleden House and Mais House have visited, and this encourages new friendships, as well as being fun.

I am pleased to say that work is starting to renew the call alarm systems at our sheltered schemes. It is vital that our residents feel that help is at hand in an emergency, and efficient, modern alarm systems will help to ensure that they are supported at all times.

There are a number of exciting projects starting at the City of London & Gresham Almshouses. The gardens are being landscaped and a former staff flat, now unused, is being turned into an office and community meeting place for the residents. Residents are delighted, and are taking time to contribute to the planning of both projects so that they get exactly what they want. Work has also started to address a serious damp problem in one block, and staff are working closely with residents to minimise disruption for them.

Consultees

This report was compiled in consultation with the Allocated Members, managers and staff of the CoLC's housing estates. The Town Clerk, Chamberlain and Comptroller & City Solicitor have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

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