

Committee:	Date:
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee	22 May 2014
Subject: Housing Estates – Allocated Members’ Report	Public
Report of: Director of Community & Children’s Services	For Information
Summary	
<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>	
Recommendation	
<p>Members are asked to note the report.</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 appointed five new apprentices last year on a two year apprenticeship scheme. Between them they are working in a variety of departments within the housing department and undertaking a wide range of housing issues, gaining knowledge and experience in the workforce and improving their own skills and talents.
- We carried out the 2013/14 Estate Satisfaction Survey at the beginning of the year and the survey was completed by a total of 932 households; this represents a 33.46% return rate, a significant improvement on previous years. Residents were also consulted on our current Pets Policy, which does not allow residents on any estates to keep cats or dogs. Analysis of the returns will be undertaken on the qualitative feedback on an estate by estate basis and we will be taking the appropriate action required. A report on the survey results will be brought to Members when the analysis and action plans are complete.
- The 2013 Residents' Celebration Day took place on the 5th October in a packed out Livery Hall. The event was hailed as an outstanding success by residents' and staff. Awards were presented to residents by Virginia Rounding, Deputy Chair of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee and Ade Adetosoye, Director of Community and Children' Services.
- This year marks the centenary of the outbreak of WW1. To recognise this anniversary we will be undertaking a variety of activities on each estate under the title 'Poppy Project'. We are working together with the Royal British Legion and their partners the Commonwealth War Graves Commission on one of their major campaigns called 'Every Man Remembered' which aims to attract donations in memory of every fallen man and woman to ensure they are remembered by those alive today. We will sponsor a fallen serviceman or woman for each estate, through research we hope to identify someone who was born and lived in the areas of each estate to develop a connection with that service person. We have supported residents to have Poppy Parties throughout the summer to commemorate their serviceman.
- We are in the process of up-dating the 'Tenants' Agreement and Handbook' as part of our management function. The review will take account of any changes in Housing Law and strengthen the Estate Management service. The style will be slightly different as each section will be a booklet in its own right to enable distribution separately or as a collection.
- We would like to welcome Kirsty Leitch, who joined the City of London as a Community Development Officer to work alongside each of the Estate Managers to develop ideas and involve residents in community activities on their estates. This role is to support a much wider range of resident involvement on our estates.

Avondale Square Estate - Allocated Member, Virginia Rounding

The Estate Manager, Wendy Giaccaglia has been in post for nearly a year and I have met with her to discuss effecting residents at Avondale Estate as well as attending Estate Walkabouts.

Progress continues on the new community hall, estate office and new homes with design meetings with the appointed architects and contractors. These meetings have been very helpful in both having a better understanding of materials and methods for the building work as well as reminding everyone of the need to keep residents and other stakeholders informed each step of the way.

The Affordable Housing Manager continues to give updates to residents on the proposed development of Eric Wilkins House and George Elliston House and I am pleased to announce that planning permission for the project has now been granted by the London Borough of Southwark. This work will allow windows and roofs on these blocks to be replaced, and will provide a number of new homes.

The first Avondale Square Estate Open Meeting for Residents was held in February. Over 30 residents came to hear updates on the planned developments on the estate and major works. A discussion also took place to identify resident priorities for the estate for the next financial year so that a new Estate Plan can be produced. One of the guest speakers was from New Leaf who wanted to encourage our residents to grow their own vegetables and to enhance the green area around the estate. This has proven to be very successful with four new raised beds created on the green at the entrance to the estate, built and planted by residents.

The Estate Walkabouts are held every quarter with residents and estate staff in attendance. The findings on the estate walkabouts are updated in the weekly bulletins, and the estate staff are also using, Twitter and Facebook to provide updates.

Residents in several blocks have benefitted from Government sponsored cavity wall insulation, thereby increasing energy efficiency and reducing the impact of fuel poverty.

In January, two tenants from Avondale Estate and the Estate Manager, Wendy Giaccaglia received Certificates of Recognition for the work they had undertaken to increase community spirit on the estate. The Deputy Mayor of Southwark Council presented the awards on behalf of the South Bermondsey Partnership.

Golden Lane – Allocated Members, Gareth Moore, Angela Starling

The Estate Manager, Laurence Jones, has now been in post for almost a year. We are pleased to say he has made a significant impact on the day to day running of the estate and we look forward to continuing to work with him

The first of the new estate Open Meetings was held on Thursday 27 February 2014 and was very well attended by over 50 residents. Chaired by Eddie Stevens, staff

were able to provide residents with an overview of the new asset management strategy, future plans for Golden Lane Estate, the department's rents policy and also respond to issues which will affect the City of London and Golden Lane Estate. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 13 May 2014.

Whilst work continues on the asset management strategy, Laurence is currently working with the technical team to identify areas on the estate and within the blocks which are in urgent need of redecoration and to put a plan in place to complete the necessary work.

We are pleased that the re-cladding of Great Arthur House continues to gather pace. Residents were involved in the tender and interview process and Officers are due to make a recommendation on the preferred contractor shortly. Following this, the statutory Section 20 consultation with residents will take place along with an open meetings to discuss all aspects of the work to be carried out. As yet no firm dates have been set for these.

The lease on the Golden Lane Community Centre was due for renewal at the end of April 2014. Officers are currently reviewing the lease document and working with the Association's committee to offer a lease extension. This will allow for extensive consultation to take place to find out what changes residents would like to see in the Community Hall and how it is used in the future.

Plans are in hand for the redevelopment of the children's sunken play area, to make this an attractive and safe location for under-fives to enjoy. We are currently trying to source funding for this work and, once established, we will be able to consult residents on the proposals and complete this project.

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

The Estate Manager, Michelle Warman, has now been in post and with the City of London for almost a year. We meet on a regular basis to discuss issues facing the residents at both estates and I have attended Estate Walkabouts.

Both estates held Open Meetings in March (York Way) and April (Holloway) which were well attended. The issues raised at the meetings were dealt with by the officers and feedback given to all residents via the weekly bulletins in the notice boards.

Welfare Reform has impacted greatly on many of our residents and to support those who may find themselves in financial difficulty three Money Matters Events have been held on the estates. I attended one of these events and was pleased with the advice and support that was on offer from a variety of organisations; the Credit Union, CityAdvice, Trading Standards as well as officers from Housing Benefits and the Rents Department.

Following on from this representatives of the Economic Development Office – will be going to York Way Estate to speak to young people on the estate about work experience opportunities which offered by the City.

Regular Housing Benefit Surgeries are now being held on the estates to further assist residents with paying their rent and any other financial issues they may have.

Officers are exploring the possibility of building new properties on a site close to Islington Arts Factory which is 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.

Officers are also looking at sites on York Way Estate in which Sec. 106 monies could be used to build a new community facility and additional homes.

Middlesex Street Estate – Allocated Member, Deputy Henry Jones

The Estate Manager, Paul Richardson, has now been in post for almost a year and I have worked with Paul in the past. He has greatly assisted with the day to day management of the estate and I look forward to continuing to work with him.

Following on from Phase II of the Affordable Housing Project the car park ramp removal project has been given the go-ahead. A workshop was held at Middlesex Street Estate in March which was very informative for the residents as it introduced the project team. The newly created space will be an asset to the estate and surrounding area as it will be a much needed community space with possible grass, plants, flowers and benches. The exact design will be influenced by our residents and we will be sure to listen to their suggestions. The work is anticipated to commence during the Summer 2014.

The estate staff have worked with Open Spaces and the Petticoat Square Gardeners Club to continue to improve the podium area on the estate. We are all working towards 'City in Bloom' when we are sure that the estate will look colourful and attractive.

In March 2014 work was undertaken to redecorate the entrance lobbies to the estate and new entrance doors were fitted which have greatly enhanced the building and the overall image of the estate. This has been an important improvement that the residents have long asked for.

We are now progressing with Phase Three of the Affordable Housing Project at Middlesex Street Estate. An effective consultation and information programme was outlined at the Open Evening in April 2014 and will continue.

Small Estates – Allocated Member, Elizabeth Rogula

The Estate Manager, Angela Smith, has now been in post for almost a year. I am pleased to say she has made a significant impact on the day to day running of the estate and I look forward to continuing to work with her.

I visited all three estates on 13th February 2014 along with Bob Jacks, Area Manager and Angela Smith to meet up with the estate staff. I was very pleased with the staff and their commitment to their estates and residents who live there. The visit was finished off with lunch at Isleden House.

Open Meetings on all three estates have been arranged, starting in July so I will feedback in my next report.

At Dron House planning permission has now been given by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to convert the existing community hall and estate office into a one three bedroom flat and a multi-functional estate office/community room. Contractors have now been appointed to undertake these works and should be on site by this summer.

At Isleden House we are still looking to converting some little used space into affordable housing. Following an initial refusal from Islington Council further development plans have been drawn up and consultation meeting have taken place. It is hoped that this new scheme will meet with the Council's approval.

Windsor House continues to progress well. The asset management team have indicated that works to replace the existing windows and external painting of the building is likely to begin within this financial year.

Southbank Estates – Allocated Member, Adam Richardson

I have met on several occasions with the Estate Manager, Sonia Marquis. The January Estate Walkabout was well attended by residents, Sonia, Kirsty Leitch and myself and was a good opportunity for me to meet with more residents.

Officers have met with residents from Sumner Building to explore the possibility of using Sec.106 monies to build some additional new homes within the grounds of Sumner Buildings. This is an exciting time and I look forward to telling Members more about these projects as they unfold.

There are several development projects being proposed around the Southbank area including works to the Tate Modern which all impact on our residents. I have been in discussion with the local Councillor, Adele Morris, to make sure that the interests of the City and the estate residents are represented.

The Door Entry Phone system at Sumner Building is almost complete which will add extra security for our residents.

Last year the Southbank Estates became the first City of London Estate to have a 'No cold calling Zone' implemented by the local council and supported by the local Police. This was due to the hard work undertaken by the Estate Officer, Laurie Smith in partnership with officers from the London Borough of Southwark.

Sydenham Hill Estate – Allocated Member Billy Dove

Both, Sonia Marquis, the Estate Manager and I are new to Sydenham Hill and have been working with the residents for almost a year. I am pleased to say Sonia has made a significant impact on the day to day running of the estate and I look forward to continuing to work with her.

A new Estate Office has been created at Lammas Green, enhancing the service that is provided at Sydenham Hill Estate. Sonia is spending two days every week working at the estate along with Jennifer Jenkins, Income Recovery Officer who is there one day per week assisting residents with their Housing Benefit claims, income issues or any other money matter.

Following consultation with residents and a drop-in session it has been agreed that the Community Hall at Lammas Green will be managed by the manager of a nursery which takes place in the hall 5 days a week Residents will still have preferential rates if they wish to hire the hall and all estate –wide events (such as residents meetings, consultation meetings, estate social events) will be free of charge.

Following a review of all our gardening services it has been decided that the gardening at Lammas Green and Mais House will be outsourced to a local gardening company. Davio Campi, the Estate Officer for Sydenham Hill will oversee the gardening contract along with his cleaning and management duties.

Sheltered Housing – Allocated Member, Billy Dove

The Sheltered Housing Manager, Jacqueline Whitmore, has now been in post for almost a year. I am pleased to say she has made a significant impact on the day to day running of the sheltered schemes and I look forward to continuing to work with her.

We created a new post of Sheltered Housing Officer, whose principal duty is to provide cover on the schemes when the manager is not on duty, for instance on annual leave. This has improved continuity of service as residents have a familiar face to provide their support when the regular manager is off. One of our first apprentices, Elise Cassar was successful in her application and has worked on each estate since her appointment. The residents are very happy with this arrangement.

Lesley Webster the previous manager at Mais House is now managing Isleden House and we are currently recruiting to the vacant position.

As Patron of the Connaught Operatic Group, a charity which performs at various venues throughout the City, giving high quality entertainment for older people, I asked that they perform for our residents at Isleden House during the Christmas festivities. They gave an early performance followed by an excellent buffet tea. To the delight of the residents they performed a variety of popular older songs and light opera, encouraging the residents to sing along.

I am pleased to say that work has started to renew the call alarm systems at our sheltered schemes and has been completed at Harman Close. 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. Fire alarm systems are also being renewed to ensure residents' safety is foremost in their homes.

There are a number of exciting projects starting at the City of London & Gresham Almshouses. The former staff flat has been converted into a community meeting space and office space. Residents are delighted to have a community space and have contributed to the planning, so that they can have exactly what they want and need.

Scheme Managers are holding regular meetings with residents to involve them in new activities of their choosing. Isleden House residents have decided to play cards on one afternoon instead of bingo and numbers of attendees have increased since the change. Mais House residents have been encouraged to start a movie club and Elise has been negotiating with 'Young at Heart' to reinstate their exercise class. At Harman Close the residents planted their first vegetables in the planters built last summer. They will be producing salad and vegetables throughout the coming summer months.

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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