

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee	20 November 2014
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Public</b>
Housing Estates - Allocated Members' Report	
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>For Information</b>
Director of Community & Children's Services	
<b><u>Summary</u></b>	
<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**

- Throughout this year, social events and outings have been arranged on many of our estates to mark the centenary of the outbreak of WW1. These events have been supported by our Community development Manager, Kirsty Leitch, our Estate Managers and our estate staff. More details can be found below, in the estate updates.
- Responding to feedback received from the Residents Satisfaction Survey, we have continued to improve our communications and engagement with residents. Regular estate meetings with residents are now held on each estate. Quarterly newsletters are sent to all residents, and weekly bulletins with very local news placed on noticeboards.

- The Chairman of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee, Virginia Rounding, opened this year's Residents' Celebration Day on the 18th October at the Livery Hall. A full programme of events was arranged, along with several workshops, information stands, stalls and an awards ceremony. The theme of 'Remembering Yesterday, Celebrating Today' aims to focus this year's event on positive achievements made over the past year, and to look ahead to activities and projects coming up in the near future. The event was very well attended by a wide range of residents and their children.
- On the 6th June 2014 the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, along with several Councillors attended a Members Walkabout at Isleden House, Avondale Square and Sumner Buildings. Members were introduced to estate staff and were given the opportunity to see several housing projects taking place and planned for the estates.
- The very exciting prospect of new homes available to our residents and those of the London Borough of Southwark is now within reach. The Affordable Housing Project on Potters Field is almost complete and 40 new homes will soon be available to rent. We have received considerable interest in the new flats from existing residents and we are in the process of allocating properties within Horace Jones House. New tenants will be moving into their new homes in the new year.
- This year we have appointed three new apprentices on a two year apprenticeship scheme. Two apprentices will be working on the estates undertaking a wide range of housing issues, gaining knowledge and experience in the workforce and improving their own skills and talents. The third apprentice will be working with our Communications Team. They join two existing apprentices who have been successful in obtaining a more advanced, second year apprenticeship in Housing.

### **Avondale Square Estate - Allocated Member, Virginia Rounding**

I have met with Wendy Giaccaglia, the Estate Manager on several occasions over the past few months to discuss issues facing the residents at Avondale Estate.

The Open Meetings at Avondale have proven to be very successful with many more residents now attending than we have achieved in the past. Three Avondale Square Estate Open Meetings have been held so far, and I had the opportunity to Chair the September meeting. Again, this meeting was very well attended. There have been a wide range of guest speakers, including: external organisations working with residents on gardening and football projects; City of London officers explaining the complexities of housing finance and regular updates on the project to build a new community centre and homes on the estate.

To improve our properties and to give residents better facilities, surveys have been completed to identify homes that need to be fitted with new kitchens and bathrooms. In addition, homes with electric storage heaters have been identified so that gas central heating can be installed. Residents are kept informed of the progress of these projects through newsletters, weekly bulletins, Open Meetings, Facebook and Twitter.

The September Estate Walkabout was well attended. Residents were generally pleased with the appearance and upkeep of the estate. The findings on the estate walkabouts are updated in the weekly bulletins and newsletter.

The Estate Manager has also started conducting quarterly block by block inspections of the cleaning standards with residents and cleaning staff so that residents can feed into the

review of cleaning standards. These have been very productive because they allow the Estate Manager to feed back to residents of the block with action plans that can be updated in the weekly bulletins.

The Avondale Square Estate Twitter account (@AvondaleSq) now has 113 followers. It has been a very useful way of sending out information and signposting residents to other sites for information. The Facebook page has just been launched (Avondale Square Estate) and will be heavily promoted in the coming months by the Public Relations Office and the Estate Office.

Residents have been planning events to mark the Centenary of WWI with support from the Estate Office. Earlier in the summer, residents planted poppies in a hard-to-maintain spot on the estate which looked lovely this summer. A group of residents attended a WWI Tea Dance in October and a Poppy Picnic at the Imperial War Museum at the end of September.

### **Small Estates – Allocated Member, Elizabeth Rogula**

I have met with Angela Smith, the Estate Manager to discuss issues relating to the three estates.

I attended the evening Open Meeting at Windsor House on 3 July 2014 where I was able to meet residents and staff. Many residents wanted to know when the external painting programme and window replacement would be happening and voiced their concerns regarding the poor condition of the external railings and windows. Officers were able to reassure them that these works are now programmed to take place as part of the Asset Management Plan.

The visit gave me the opportunity to meet a resident, Mrs Pauline Surrey. Mrs Surrey is the longest surviving resident living at Windsor House, having been there for over 65 years. I am currently making arrangements for Mrs Surrey to receive the Freedom of the City of London.

It is hoped that the refurbishment project at Dron House will commence before the end of this year. This will provide a new estate office, a meeting room and two residential properties.

At Isleden House we are still hoping to convert an under used space into affordable housing. Following an initial refusal from the London Borough of Islington further development plans have been drawn up and a consultation meeting have taken place at Isleden House. It is hoped that the revised scheme, which will provide three new flats and a community space, will meet with Islington Council's approval.

I hope to attend further Open Meetings at Dron House, Isleden House and Windsor House arranged in November and December.

### **Golden Lane – Allocated Members, Gareth Moore, Deputy John Barker and Vivienne Littlechild**

The end of August saw the retirement of one of our longest serving members of staff. Barrie Ellis, one of our Estate Officers, retired after 37 years' service with the City of London. We would like to take this opportunity to record our gratitude and thanks to Barrie for all his hard work and commitment over the years. He will be missed.

The Estate Manager, Laurence Jones, has been very proactive in using this opportunity to implement changes in the staffing structure in the estate office. By replacing the vacant residential Estate Officer's post with a non-residential Customer Services Officer, he has

adopted an approach which has been successful on other estates in providing a more customer focused service to be provided from the Estate Office.

We previously reported that the housing management team were working on a new lease for the Community Centre. Whilst a two year lease was agreed, in principal, with the Community Association Committee, issues around delays in receiving audited end of year accounts for 2013/14, changes in Trustees and in their management committee meant that a new lease could not be entered into until such time as these matters were fully resolved. Management and control of the Community Centre is now carried out under a "Tenancy at Will" pending conclusion of these matters. When the lease is signed it will still be for two years, ending 30 April 2016.

Consultation to find out what changes residents would like to see in the Community Centre and how it is used in the future has now started.

Work on the recladding project at Great Arthur House continues at a steady pace. All the necessary statutory consultations have now been undertaken and meetings have been held with residents. The contract was awarded to Keepmoat Construction who fulfilled all the criteria which should ensure the smooth running and satisfactory delivery of this high profile project.

The contractors are currently working on the final design and we anticipate that subject to agreement being reached between all parties in the next month, work will commence on site in January 2015. Residents will continue to be kept informed through regular bulletins and newsletters and a very active group of residents are planning to make sure all neighbours are supported throughout the works, which will be very disruptive.

Estate meetings continue to be an effective method for getting residents involved and a channel for communicating and getting information out to residents. Two further meetings have taken place since the initial meeting in February and whilst there has been a dip in attendance it is clear that residents are finding the meetings extremely useful.

### **Holloway & York Way Estates – Allocated Members, Deputy Catherine McGuinness, Deputy Michael Welbeck and Barbara Newman**

We have met with Michelle Warman, the Estate Manager on a number of occasions over the past few months to discuss issues relating to Holloway and York Way Estate and have had walkabouts on each of the estates.

An Open Meeting was held in September at Holloway Estate, chaired by Deputy Catherine McGuinness, and a further meeting held at York Way Estate in October. These meetings were to update residents on the issues and concerns raised at the beginning of the year. The new Estate Plan has been shared with residents on both estates and their feedback welcomed.

Following on from feedback from residents, improvements have been made to the weekly cleaning schedules to make them more transparent and easier for residents to understand. A site meeting with Islington Council Waste and Recycle Team has taken place and the Estate Manager has successfully negotiated the return of the skip bins as requested by residents on York Way Estate. Islington Council also promised regular cleaning of the food waste bins, and advised residents of the issues they have with cross contamination due to misuse of the bins.

To assist with some of the concerns raised on York Way Estate the Estate Manager attends MAGPI (Multi-Agency Geographical Panels in Islington). This is a forum led by Islington Council's Safer Neighbourhoods Team. Partner organisations come together to discuss anti-social behaviour problems which are affecting Estates in Islington. This has also helped to build a better relationship with the local Policing teams for both Estates.

The Estate Offices on both estates have their open hours on the webpage, and staff are committed to keeping to those times. There have been comments from residents about the consistency of staffing, and this has been addressed. It is hoped that the newly appointed Apprentice will strengthen the estate team.

There are regular Estate Walkabouts which have also been attended by Islington Local Councillors, and there has been a lot of work and commitment in building the relationship with Councillor Kat Fletcher, Councillor Satnam Gill and Councillor Nick Ward for St Georges Ward, and Councillor Rakhia Ismail and Councillor Paul Smith for Holloway Ward.

Communication with the residents has improved, with the review of the quarterly newsletters, regular correspondence and weekly bulletins in the notice boards. Holloway Estate is currently in the early stages of starting a new residents' group.

The Estate Managers have a small community budget for each Estate. There has been promotion of this on both estates to encourage new groups to apply for funding and make better use of the Community Hall facilities.

As part of the Asset Management Programme there are planned improvements for both estates, such as new windows for Holloway, new security intercoms on both estates and external/internal decoration. On York Way we have trialled a floor coating for the stairs on three blocks, this has improved the look and feel of the stairs. We are hoping to be able to fund further staircases as this scheme has been welcomed by the residents. There is also a review of the CCTV needed at Holloway Estate, as currently there is no coverage on the estate. It was highlighted at an earlier Open Meeting that some of the residents felt unsafe and CCTV would assist the Police with any reported incidents on the Estate.

As part of the Sec. 106 Funding a design meeting was held to discuss the future of Islington Arts Factory and the surrounding area. A drop-in session was held on the 4<sup>th</sup> November which enabled residents to see the plans and meet with the consultants. If new homes were to be built on this site the properties would be managed by Holloway Estate Team. We shall update Members as these plans develop.

### **Middlesex Street Estate – Allocated Member, Deputy Henry Jones**

I continue to meet with Paul Richardson and Terry O'Donnell on a regular basis and I am in weekly contact with them both.

I attended the estate Open Meeting on the 16th July 2014. Subjects included a proposed private members club in the vicinity of the estate, loan sharks, Aldgate Highway changes, the estate Car Parks Ramp Removal Project, broadband and WI-FI on the estate, as well as a Manager's update.

Due to a funding issue the start date of the ramp removal project had to be delayed, however, I am pleased to announce that work on the ramp removal commenced on Monday 6th October 2014. We have been keeping residents informed with regular letters and flyers, as well as a standing agenda item during the estate Open Meetings. We will continue to gather resident's views for the layout of the newly created space after the ramps removal is completed.

The Petticoat Square Gardeners Club continues to do sterling work on the podium level. The shrubs, plants and flowers are being well kept and the club continues to be an asset to the estate. My thanks to all involved, especially Ted and Barbara Hall, who are the Chair and Secretary respectively and John Mead, Secretary.

The redecoration of the entrance lobbies to the estate and new entrance doors that were fitted have been warmly received by residents. The Estate Manager, Paul Richardson, has recently carried out an access review of the estate entrance doors. Paul asked all resident for their views and if they would prefer for additional power assisted doors to be installed. The responses are now in and I will be liaising with Paul and his managers to ensure that residents' views are actioned where appropriate.

I attended the special Estate Walkabout on 18th June 2014. This was a thorough inspection of the estate and Karen Tarbox, Assistant Director – Barbican and Property Services, attended along with Paul Richardson. It was a very effective view of the estate and I was pleased that the Department are continuing to take a professional and proactive approach to identifying areas of improvement on the estate.

A survey of the estate has taken place to gather resident's views on how the remainder of the Estate Improvement Budget could be spent.

### **Southbank Estates – Allocated Member, Adam Richardson**

To date there have been three Open Residents Meetings in April, July and October. Guest speakers at these meetings included representatives from Southwark Trading Standards who spoke about extending the "No Cold Calling Zone" to other blocks. The original block was at Collinson Court which has been very well received by the residents and we are keen to work with Southwark Council by extending it to other parts of our estate. Dave Walker, the Manager of Southwark Mediation Centre, was also a guest speaker. At each of the meetings the Residents were updated on the major improvements coming to their estates and encouraged to take up community involvement activities.

As part of the Poppy Project two World War 1 Commemorative Fun days took place at Sumner Buildings and Collinson Court on 6th September. There were bouncy castles, face painting, candy floss and a BBQ. Both these events were a great success and well attended and were supported by officers and residents.

Estate Walkabouts have continued and include evening walkabouts to give working residents the opportunity to attend.

The installation of the door entry system has been completed at Sumner Buildings, Pakeman House and Stopher House. Although this had been the source of some controversy, residents have been very pleased with the end result and the improved security to their homes.

### **Sydenham Hill Estate – Allocated Members Deputy Billy Dove and Mark Wheatley**

We are pleased to report that the first Open Meeting in July was very well attended by a cross-section of residents from Sydenham Hill. At this meeting the residents were updated on future projects for the Estate. The Chief Executive of the company recently contracted to carry out gardening on the estate spoke to residents about the history of Walworth Garden Farm and the types of projects that they undertake. The Community Involvement Officer also

spoke to residents about starting up activities on the Estate. A follow up meeting is scheduled to take place in January 2015.

Walworth Garden Farm is a charity and Social Enterprise which started 1987. They provide gardening services and maintenance for many clients in South East London. In addition to this Walworth Garden Farm provide environmental education, and training in horticulture. They will attend Sydenham Hill Estate on a weekly basis during the spring and summer months and fortnightly in the autumn and winter months.

Following consultation with the residents the management of the community hall has been subcontracted to the Nursery Manager. Outside of nursery hours the residents are now able to book the hall for community events free of charge or at discounted rate for their private functions. Residents are currently organising the revival of their Community Tea afternoons once a fortnight as a result of this.

The programme of Estate walkabouts including evening walkabouts has continued and is well supported by residents.

The new Estate Office created at Lammas Green is now staffed two days per week by Sonia Marquis to enhance the housing service provided at Sydenham Hill Estate. Jennifer Jenkins, Income Recovery Officer is there one day per week assisting residents with their Housing Benefit claims, income issues or any other money matter.

### **Sheltered Housing – Allocated Members, Deputy Billy Dove and Mark Wheatley**

I have met with Jacqueline Whitmore on numerous occasions throughout the past few months to discuss issues and matters relating to all the sheltered schemes and the Almshouses as well as visiting some of the sites.

Residents from Mais House enjoyed a coach trip to Margate in June; and the Almshouses residents enjoyed a day at Hastings. The weather was good for both trips and a relaxing seaside visit was enjoyed by all who attended.

Isleden House residents had a very informative visit to the Poppy Factory in Richmond as part of their “Remembering Yesterday, Celebrating Today” activities in August. They had lunch on the premises prior to their tour of the factory. Isleden residents have on several occasions requested a trip down the Regent’s Canal; this is the first year we have been able to arrange this via Age Concern. They travelled from Angel Basin to Little Venice through the Islington Tunnel which was a new experience for many residents even though they have lived locally all their lives.

Harman Close residents have joined the seaside trips with other estates; they decided a trip to London Zoo would be a different event for them as many had not been since their own families were young. They had a thoroughly enjoyable day.

Mais House residents said farewell to their Scheme Manager Lesley Webster who has moved to Isleden House to manage both sheltered and general needs properties. The residents prepared a fabulous barbeque and drinks event which was well attended; although Lesley is sad to leave as she had supported many residents over the years, she was looking forward to the challenge of her new role. Faithwin Achugbu was appointed as the new Scheme Manager and she is settling well into her new post. Faithwin has over 10 years’ experience working for Southwark as a Scheme Manager and has some fresh ideas to bring to the Sheltered Housing team.

Harman Close residents had great fun at a quiz afternoon and they are discussing making this a more frequent occasion.

Isleden House residents have enjoyed their new garden and table and chairs during the good summer weather. Residents had a pie, mash and liquor supper one Saturday evening which was enjoyed by all who attended.

As part of the WW1 commemorations residents at Isleden House, with the community development officer Kirsty Leitch and Spice representative Ben Stein had afternoon tea and wrote a letter to the Unknown Soldier. This was part of a project where members of the public were asked what they would tell the Unknown Soldier whose statue stands in Waterloo station

Due to increased usage in the laundry room of the washing machines and tumble dryers at both Harman Close and Mais House, new contracts for machines and tumble dryers have been agreed which will improve the facilities for all. The new machines are more energy efficient which helps towards achieving energy savings targets.

The new community hall and estate office at the Almshouses will shortly be completed. This will greatly enhance the facilities on the estate and give a focus to the elderly community within the scheme. The community hall will be available for functions and events whilst being supported by the Scheme Manager. It is hoped that a grand opening will be arranged before Christmas.

### **Consultees**

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

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