

Committee:	Date:
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee	14 July 2015
Subject:	Public
Housing Estates - Allocated Members' Report	
Report of:	For Information
Director of Community & Children's Services	
<u>Summary</u>	
<p>This report 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.
- Housing & Neighbourhoods officers would like to thank all Allocated Members for their commitment and support to our estates in the last year. It is very much appreciated, by staff and residents.

General Estate Matters

- We are continuing to improve our communications and engagement with residents on each of our estates. Regular Residents' Meetings are being held on each estate, many of which are very well attended. Quarterly newsletters are sent to all residents, weekly bulletins with very local news placed on noticeboards. All estates now have their own Facebook pages and some a Twitter account.
- On the 12th March 2015 Members of the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee and Health & Wellbeing Board were invited on a tour of several estates outside of the City Of London. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman, along with several Alderman and Councillors visited Holloway Estate, York Way Estate, Isleden House and Southwark Estate. Members were introduced to estate staff and were

given the opportunity to see several housing projects currently taking place and to discuss others planned. The visit went really well with several members who, have not been to any of the estates, and were very pleased with the estates, the grounds and meeting the estate staff.

- Following on from the official opening of Horace Jones House on the 25th March 2015 by Deputy Billy Dove, now the Chief Commoner, all residents have now moved into their properties and are very happy in their new surroundings. The block forms part of the Southbank Estates and is managed by the estate staff at Pakeman House.
- Throughout this year social events and outings have continued to be arranged on many of our estates following on from last year's theme 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 many of our estate staff. More details can be found in the following estate updates.
- Allocated Members have, for the first time, this year been invited to take part in the annual Garden Competition. Members have visited their estate(s) to choose the garden or display that they think is the most impressive. The Chairman of Community & Children's Services, Dhruv Patel, will then award the Chairman's Cup to his choice from all estates.
- We are also running our Photography Competition for the second year running. It was a delight last year to receive some truly stunning pictures of our estates. This year, the theme is 'Summer in the City' and the competition will be judged by Virginia Rounding, the Chairman of this Sub-Committee.
- This year's Residents' Celebration Day will be held on the 17th October 2015 in the Livery Hall. A full programme of events has been arranged, along with several workshops, information stands, stalls and an awards ceremony. The theme for this year is Healthy Homes, Happy People. As in previous year's we hope the event will be very well supported by a wide range of residents and their children.

Avondale Square Estate - Allocated Member, Virginia Rounding

I have had regular contact with Wendy Giaccaglia, the Estate Manager to discuss issues facing the residents at Avondale Estate.

The Open Meetings at Avondale continue to be very successful, with a lot of new faces attending and contributing to meetings. I'm looking forward to chairing the July Residents' Meeting. External speakers since the last meeting have included; Southwark Mediation Centre, Illegal Money Lending UK and Southwark Council's Old Kent Road Community Forum. In addition, the January meeting allowed for consultation with residents on the refurbishment of the ball games court and an outdoor gym. A follow-up meeting was held in mid-May where residents agreed that we should allow for the full refurbishment, and for it to be used mainly for football and other games that do not require bouncing balls. Several residents asked to be part of a working party to take forward the outdoor gym, a very popular proposal.

Osborne, the contractors undertaking the construction of the new flats, Community Centre and Estate Office will continue to come to all of these meetings to update residents on the works. At the April meeting, residents expressed their satisfaction with how it has gone so far, saying that the demolition was hardly even noticed because it was done so efficiently.

Before



After



Decent Homes works are set to begin later in the summer to tenanted flats. In addition to bathrooms and kitchens, gas central heating will be installed in homes that do not have it. Residents are kept informed of the progress of these projects through newsletters, weekly bulletins, Open Meetings, Facebook and Twitter.

The Avondale Square Estate Twitter account (@AvondaleSq) now has over 190 followers. It has been a very useful way of sending out information and signposting residents to other sites for information. The Facebook page has been slower to take hold, but it is being promoted more and more.

The number of amazing events organised by residents has skyrocketed. The Christmas Party was attended by over 140 children and parents, and an Easter Egg Hunt and Easter Bonnet Parade saw over 100 children participate.

Avondale Community Events held a street party to commemorate VE Day on 10 May 2015, and a Wellbeing Fair aimed chiefly at older residents was held on 14 May 2015. They are planning another big Forces event in October to commemorate the second year of WWI as part of our Remembering Yesterday, Celebrating Today programme of activities.

In January, one Avondale resident was awarded Southwark Council's Housing Heroes Award for Best Community initiative for helping to co-ordinate the building of more raised beds for gardening and painting the skip behind the vicarage with poppy scenes to commemorate WWI. She also liaised with local schools to get children to paint herb boxes, the raised beds and the skip. She also received a grant to set up a Community Interest Enterprise called 'Edible Avondale' to train volunteers in gardening and carpentry.

In February, nine residents and the Estate Manager, Wendy Giaccaglia, received Certificates of Appreciation from the Mayor of Southwark on behalf of the South Bermondsey Partnership for 'making a positive difference to the lives of people in your community and to the area in which you live.' Well done to all of them.

Small Estates (Dron House, Isleden House and Windsor House)– Allocated Member, Elizabeth Rogula

I have met and have spoken to Angela Smith, the Estate Manager and have discussed issues relating to the three estates.

To improve our properties at Windsor House and to give residents better facilities, surveys will commence in the next few weeks to identify homes that need to be fitted with new kitchens and bathrooms.

Following a previous visit to Windsor House and my subsequent meeting with Mrs Pauline Surrey who after 65 years is the longest surviving resident living at Windsor House, Mrs Surrey attended a Freedom of the City award ceremony on 7th May 2015 followed by a celebration lunch at the Windsor House Community Centre.

It is anticipated that the refurbishment project at Dron House will commence before the end of July this year. This will provide a much needed new estate office, a community space and a residential property with Disabled Access.

The Estate staff along with the residents at Dron House continue to hold community events some of which include an annual barbeque and fund raising McMillian Coffee mornings. The estate staff will also be looking for resident volunteers to start a gardening project this summer

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 our application for planning permission has been resubmitted. It is hoped that the revised scheme, which will provide three new flats and a community space will be approved. A decision is due from the London Borough of Islington after 21 May.

Residents are kept informed of the progress of all these projects through newsletters, weekly bulletins, Open Meetings, and the Estate Managers' weekly surgeries on each Estate

I hope to attend further Open Meetings at Dron House, Isleden House and Windsor House arranged in November and December 2015.

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

With the retirement of one of the Estate Officers, the Estate Manager Laurence Jones took the opportunity to reorganise and to bring the management of the estate in line with that of other larger estates. In September 2014 the appointment of Bryony Andrews as the Customer Services Officer was made. This has allowed for a more customer-focused approach to the services being delivered at Golden Lane and frees the remaining Estate Officer to spend more time out and about on the estate.

The recladding project at Great Arthur House has now received full planning permission. Full testing of the new windows has been completed. The contractors are about to move on-site and regular update meetings will continue throughout the contract. We anticipate that the physical window replacement and recladding work will commence in August. Residents will continue to be kept informed through regular bulletins and newsletters. We will ensure that residents are supported throughout the works, which we expect to be very disruptive.

Our approach to resident communication and involvement continues to be at the forefront of our service delivery. In March, the Facebook page for the estate was launched. We are now able to send information out to residents more speedily and in a forum which is now used by many. The GLERA website is also used to disseminate information

Quarterly Residents' Meetings continue to be held and are still an effective channel for communicating to residents. At the meeting in May, a packed house had the opportunity to raise concerns about major repairs works and to listen to, and question, Dr John Broomfield, the City's expert advisor on concrete issues. The meetings are challenging for staff, but we know they regard them as very valuable.

We have also held two drop-in sessions for residents to discuss the redevelopment of the Richard Cloudesley and COLCEC site, the future of the community centre and the redevelopment of the sunken under-fives play area.

We will continue to work with residents and users to ensure all views are taken into consideration before any final decision is made.

Over the last few months we have had two major incidents on the estate.

In March, tiling on the south facia of Stanley Cohen House fell off. Estate staff, the Property Services Team and the City Of London Police were immediately on hand, making the area safe. Testing has been carried out and Property Services officers are currently working with the Planning Department to source the heritage tiles required and make good this area in accordance with Listed Building Guidelines.

At the end of April a fire occurred in the electrical meter room below Crescent House. This resulted in 36 residents being without electricity for between three and four days. The estate staff and contractors worked tirelessly to ensure that those affected residents were kept informed and that supply was restored as quickly as possible. Fusion Lifestyle offered free use of showers during this period whilst the Sir Ralph Perring Centre and the Golden Lane Community Centre were open for hot drinks and other refreshments. Although the City was not responsible or liable for the incident, a goodwill payment has been made to residents to help alleviate any hardship caused by the disruption.

Residents are, understandably, concerned about the major repairs needed to the fabric of the estate and the speed at which these are being addressed. Gareth Moore is working closely with the Director and Assistant Directors to assist them in achieving this by making sure there is commitment throughout the organisation and that progress is not hampered in any way.

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.

Residents' Meetings were held on both estates in March and were very well attended. These meetings were to update residents on the issues and concerns raised at previous meetings and give further updates on forthcoming improvements for the Estates.

There was also a consultation carried out on both Estates regarding outdoor gym equipment, but there proved to be insufficient interest to progress this at present. However, Holloway Estate has had an outdoor table tennis table placed in the ball court as a trial. This was a request from the young residents on the Estate at previous open meetings held last year.

To assist with some of the concerns raised on York Way Estate the Estate Manager continues to attend 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 Housing Estates in Islington. This has also helped to build a better relationship with the local Policing teams for both Estates. In addition to this, the Corporation have been asked to unite with other Registered Social Landlord's in Islington and contribute to the services of Park Guard, a community safety organisation which works with the police and local authority in a number of boroughs to patrol estates and manage low-level nuisance. They have some powers to assist Police and also have the flexibility to build a rapport with residents on the Estates as well as assist in combating anti-social behaviour.

The Estate Offices on both estates have their open hours on the webpage, and staff are committed to keeping to those times, where possible. The addition of an Apprentice has helped balance the level of service given to both Estates, and he has been a positive addition to the team. Customer Service has been a key focus this year following some negative feedback from previous open meetings and surveys. To improve relationships the estate team have organised various events & competitions for the residents, such as Halloween face painting, Christmas painting/drawing for children on the estates, and an Easter Egg hunt, each event was well attended.

There are regular Estate Walkabouts which have also been attended by the elected members, in particular Barbara Newman met with the Estate Manager on the 10th March prior to the walkabout, and was very impressed with the standards on both Estates.

Communication with the residents has improved, with the review of the quarterly newsletters, regular correspondence and weekly bulletins on the notice boards. Holloway Estate is still developing their Resident Group and had a successful community Christmas lunch as a first event organised by residents. There has also been the introduction of Facebook for each Estate which is a very new way of sending information to residents and has so far been well received although it is a limited audience at present.

The Estate Manager has a small community budget for each Estate. This year the estate team are promoting as many groups as possible to get involved and apply for funding. There have been time credits awarded on both estates and this is also being promoted to encourage more residents working together as a community.

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. A trial took place at York Way to coat the staircase floors on three blocks which 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. On York Way there is currently a review on upgrading the existing system as it is out dated and would not be cost effective to repair.

Middlesex Street Estate – Allocated Member, Deputy Henry Jones

Terry O'Donnell, our much-loved Estate Officer, has retired this spring after more than 30 years of dedicated service to the City of London Corporation. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Terry for all of his hard work and wish him well for the future.

The estate had a Residents' Meeting on 17th February 2015. Subjects covered were an Estate Managers Update, Police update, Rough Sleepers, Welfare Reform, Superfast Broadband, and the Ramp Removal Update.

There was another estate meeting on 13th May, this time subjects covered Rough sleepers, Recycling, Early Help Service, and Estate Project Updates. I am pleased that there is a varied range of subjects at each meeting, which helps the residents to be better informed.

Two drop-in workshops for the remaining work concerning the Ramp Removal Project were held on 12th May and 14th May. At these sessions, which were well attended, residents were able to give their views on how they would like the finished area to look. Colleagues from the Department of the Built Environment are leading on this project and we look forward to the landscaping work being carried out within the next few months.

A survey of residents was recently carried out to gather early views regarding a possible outdoor gym on the estate. Staff will continue with gathering views and opinions before a final decision is made.

The estate staff held a VE Day Celebration on Saturday 9th May on the podium area. Approximately 60 residents attended and played games, listened to music from the 2nd World War era, as well as eating pie, mash and liquor. I have received positive comments from those who attended and would like to thank staff for giving up their free time to ensure that such a good day was had by all.

I am pleased to say that I was able to source funding for new CCTV cameras on the estate and for improved cameras in the six lifts. These have now been fitted and the estate staff confirmed that the resolution is much better with improved functionality. There is enough funding remaining to paint areas of the carpark white, to improve the look and feel of the area.

Southbank Estates – Allocated Member, Adam Richardson

The Residents' Meetings that took place at the start of the year saw an increase in attendance figures. The meeting in January had speakers from Age Concern, London borough Southwark Noise Team and the Sports and Community Development Manager from Fusion, who sought residents' views on outdoor gyms on estates. The outcome of the Meetings are published in the newsletters and residents are asked for their input on the next meeting's agenda.

Residents have continued to show interest in the quarterly walkabouts with Officers and the Estate Manager and have given their input on Estate projects e.g measures to tackle rough sleepers at William Blake Estate. A new Estate Officer has been recruited at William Blake Estate following the retirement of the former officer. The new officer is proving to be very popular amongst residents and the Estate Manager has received very positive feedback.

In March when the Committee Members visited Sumner Buildings they all gave very positive comments about the community garden. The residents at Collinson Court were supported by Officers and Borough and Bankside Open Spaces Trust to create raised sleeper flower beds at the front of the block. Many residents of all ages were involved with preparing and creating the flower beds over 3 designated planting days.

Horace Jones House has now been added to the portfolio at the Southbank Estates. Tenants from the City of London and the London Borough of Southwark moved in at the beginning of June and all appear delighted with their new homes.

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

The Residents' Meeting in January had a good turnout. The Estate Manager invited guest speakers to address concerns previously raised by residents. Speakers included the Parking Enforcement Manager, London Borough of Lewisham Recycling and Waste Management Officer and the Coordinator of Southwark Mediation Service. The outcome of the meetings was published in the Newsletters and residents are asked for their input on the next meeting's agenda.

The Estate Walkabouts are attended by residents and those present have made very positive comments regarding the grounds of the Estate and the gardening services. The contract with Walworth Garden Farm has just been secured for another year.

Residents are now making use of Lammas Green Community Hall with social functions such as the fortnightly Community Tea afternoons as well as private parties and functions. There are plans in progress for a celebration for Lammas Day which will be part funded from the Estate Managers Community Grant.

Residents voted overwhelmingly to have the Estate designated a "Restricted Cold Calling Zone" in conjunction with London Borough of Lewisham Trading Standards Department. The signage and residents packs have been delivered and the scheme has been launched. This initiative is to deter casual doorstep callers and opportunist criminals who target vulnerable residents, particularly the elderly.

Lammas Green



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

I have met with Jacqueline Whitmore on several occasions recently to discuss matters relating to all the sheltered schemes and the Almshouses.

Each sheltered site enjoyed a range of Christmas events and parties in their communal facilities as well as luncheons out. On one estate residents joined together on Christmas Day for lunch, they agreed it was good to share company as some do not have family to spend the festive season with which can be isolating. A number of activities have continued to take place through the spring and early summer.

A new Scheme Manager, Carl Newbold, was appointed at Harman Close at the beginning of June. Carl comes with a wealth of experience having worked for London Borough of Ealing for several years as a peripatetic Scheme Manager.

City of London Officers are currently engaging with sheltered residents as part of the Sheltered Housing Review to explore their views on how the provision of Sheltered Housing could be improved across all the estates. Mais House has been identified as requiring the most and earliest improvement; therefore, there have been several meetings with residents over the past few months where they have shown great interest in sharing their views on the future of their homes. Virginia Rounding attended the meeting in May to listen to residents views. In the meantime, several residents have expressed a wish to move to alternative accommodation and staff have been assisting these residents to explore various options.

Almshouses residents welcomed the opening of their new communal hall facility in December 2014 and have arranged several regular, weekly events including a craft club and a games afternoon. The new facilities have allowed staff to arrange regular scheme meetings for residents including an evening meeting. This is to allow residents who are working during the day to attend and express their views in person.

Work to replace the damaged roadway and install low level lighting along the Almshouses roadway will commence during the summer, following on from approval from the Committee.

It is envisaged that the work will be finished in time to make the access round the Almshouses safer for residents as the evenings draw in. This project is fully supported by the residents and staff alike.

Isleden House has been chosen as a site for an outdoor gym to be installed as part of the City's strategy to encourage healthy living. Plans are underway and residents are looking forward to trying out the new equipment in the garden this summer.

Residents at Isleden House planned an early trip for the summer and headed off to Crews Hill Nursery to buy their plants in anticipation of a sunny few months. The other estates have yet to decide upon their venues this year.

Consultees

This report was compiled in consultation with the Allocated Members, managers and staff of the City of London's housing estates.

Contact:

Elizabeth Donnelly, Area Manager for the Out of City Estates
0207 332 3784
elizabeth.donnelly@cityoflondon.gov.uk