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| Committee | Date: |
| Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee | 4 July 2016 |
| Subject: Mais House Decant Programme - Update | Public |
| Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services | For Information |
| Report author: Paul Jackson – Department of Community and Children's Services | |

Summary

On 15 January 2016 Members approved a proposal to redevelop the Corporation's sheltered housing scheme at Mais House in Lewisham. Subsequently on 25 April 2016 Members approved a decant policy for the implementation of the rehousing and financial compensation of residents. Officers have since begun to implement that policy and this report summarises progress. To date three units have been vacated and a further three residents who have accepted offers are waiting to move. The current number of occupied units at Mais House is forty-nine.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. On 15 January 2016 Members approved a proposal to redevelop the Corporation's sheltered housing scheme at Mais House in Lewisham. Subsequently on 25 April 2016 Members approved a decant policy to govern the implementation of the rehousing and financial compensation of residents.
2. It was agreed that regular update reports would be brought to the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub- Committee. This is the first such report.

Current Position

3. An initial housing needs survey of all Mais house residents has now been completed. Almost all residents have completed a housing application and have been registered for rehousing. As part of the survey, visits were arranged to other City sheltered schemes and estates and residents were interviewed to discuss their area preferences and support and other requirements for rehousing. These details have been confirmed in writing to all residents in a letter dated 11 May. This included an information sheet for residents detailing their entitlement to claim compensation for home loss, a disturbance payment to cover the cost of

removals, and information about the rehousing and support arrangements for all residents. This is attached for Members' information as Appendix 1.

4. A majority of residents have expressed a preference to be rehoused within the Corporation's own social rented stock, either in sheltered or general needs accommodation. Some of these have limited their preference to one area or estate only; others have expressed a willingness to consider several areas. Officers have created a display at Mais House providing visual and other information about the Corporation's City and Out-Of-City estates and other rehousing schemes. The aim of this is to help residents get a clearer understanding of the housing available and encourage them to provide as broad a choice of area preferences as they can to ensure suitable opportunities for housing are not missed.
5. A number of residents have expressed a wish to be rehoused in areas in which the Corporation does not have any social rented housing. This is likely to prove challenging and will require the cooperation of other housing providers in the social rented and charitable sector if we are to meet these requirements. Officers have established an in-principle agreement with LB Lewisham for a reciprocal rehousing agreement to try to meet some of the demand; similar arrangements will be explored with other providers where appropriate to try to develop similar agreements to meet the remaining demand.

Rehousing activity and current levels of occupation

6. At the date of approval for the redevelopment of Mais House 52 units were occupied. Subsequent movement and rehousing activity is shown at Table 1.

| Occupied units at period start | Rehousing Activity | | | Vacated units | Occupied units at period end |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------|-------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| | Offers | Refusals | Acceptances | | |
| 52 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 49 |

7. Of the four offers accepted one resident has been offered and rehoused into Corporation general needs accommodation and three have been offered Corporation sheltered accommodation;
8. Of the three units vacated in this period one is due to a completed move, one is due to a resident moving abroad, and one is due to a deceased resident.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

9. The redevelopment of Mais House is a key objective in the Community & Children's Services Business Plan and contributes to the delivery of Strategic Priority 4 - *Supporting homes and communities: Developing strong neighbourhoods and ensuring people have a decent place to live.*
10. The development will contribute to the corporate commitment that the City will build 700 new homes on Housing Revenue Account land within the next 10 years.

Appendices

- **Appendix 1: Mais House Rehousing - Resident Information Sheet**

Background Papers

None

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Mais House Rehousing Resident Information Sheet

This information sheet provides answers to questions you may have about the redevelopment of Mais House your rehousing. We will provide updates as necessary.

1. I have filled out an application form for rehousing. What happens next?

Since the Committee decision to redevelop Mais House we have been holding initial meetings with you all individually to discuss your options and requirements for rehousing. Most residents have now completed their application form and we are beginning the process of reviewing these to help us identify suitable new homes. We are also assessing what ongoing support residents might need in their new home. If you have completed an application form the details you gave us about where you would like to move to and any other special requirements are set out in the letter you received with this information sheet. Once we have reviewed what everyone has told us we may contact you again if we need more information or we need to discuss your options in more detail. If you have not yet completed an application form please contact your scheme manager so we can arrange this.

4. How will offers of rehousing be made to me?

If you have completed your application form you don't need to do anything else. We will contact you directly once we have identified a suitable property and agree a convenient time to take you for a viewing. We will accompany you on the viewing if requested so that we can help with any questions or queries you may have about the property. We will make every effort to provide you with a new home that meets your essential needs and preferences. We will try to get this right first time although there may be occasions where this doesn't happen. If you do not wish to accept the property offered for any reason we will discuss this with you to help us check whether the offer is reasonable and meets your essential housing needs or whether we need to make you another offer. In the event of repeated refusals of offers the Director of Community and Children's Services may be asked to decide on the reasonableness of any offers.

4. What size property am I entitled to?

We will aim to offer you a flat which meets your housing and support needs and is at least the same size (ie number of bedrooms) as you have now. Under the City's allocation policy single-person households over the age of forty-five are entitled to be considered for a one-bedroom property. So, if you currently have a one-bedroom flat we will aim to offer you a one bedroom flat; if you currently have a studio flat we aim to offer you either a one-bedroom flat or a studio flat, unless you tell us you wish be considered only for a one-bedroom flat.

There may be circumstances in which we offer you accommodation which meets a number of your needs but is smaller than what you have asked for. This may happen

if, for example, you require specialist accommodation (such as sheltered or mobility housing, some of which is only available as studio flats) or you are offered accommodation by another housing provider (eg because you have asked to be rehoused in a particular area) and their policy is to offer studio flats to single-person households. Where residents accept an offer of accommodation smaller than they are entitled to they may be eligible for compensation under the City of London's shift allowance scheme.

3. When can I expect to move?

We are beginning the process of rehousing residents now. Although all Mais House residents have top priority for rehousing, it won't be possible for all residents to move at the same time. How long you have to wait will depend on what you have told us about your requirements and preferences, and the availability of suitable housing to meet these. Some residents have asked to be rehoused on City of London estates; others have asked for areas where the City does not currently have any properties and we will need to approach housing providers in these areas to see what (if any) options there might be. Some residents may move in the next few months; others may need longer to find something suitable. We expect that the whole rehousing programme may take up to two years.

7. What other financial and practical support will I get to help me move?

Residents can claim financial compensation (known as a home loss payment) where they are required to move out because their landlord is demolishing or redeveloping their homes. To be eligible you need to have been living at Mais House for 12 months prior to the decision to proceed with the proposal to redevelop Mais House. Residents will need to make a claim for a home loss payment. This can only be done once you have moved. We will help you to do this when you move. The amount of home loss payable is set by law and reviewed periodically. At present the amount payable is £5,300. Any rent arrears or other debts owing to the City of London at the time of the claim will be deducted from home loss payments.

8. Will I also get help with moving and the cost of moving?

Yes, we will help you to make the necessary arrangements for your move and help with the expenses involved in moving. This is known as a disturbance payment and includes things such as:

- Removal costs including packing service
- Lifting and refitting of existing carpets/curtains or provision of new ones if existing goods cannot be re-used or cut down after the move
- Disconnection and reconnection of utilities
- Redirection of post
- Disconnection and reconnection of existing kitchen appliances.

To make things easier for you and for us you may wish to use our approved contractors to undertake removals and the reconnection of kitchen appliances, and provide any floor covering or carpet required as a result of your move. We will talk to you about your requirements and agree what we will pay for and deal with the

contractors on your behalf. They will visit you to discuss the move and any other requirements and we will pay them directly without the need for you to get estimates. We will also help you sort out things such as redirecting your mail and we will liaise with other agencies such as care providers you may use or housing officers at the property you are moving to. We will explain all this to you again fully when it is time for you to move.

9. What if I want to make arrangements to move myself? Will you still help with the expense?

Yes, though we will need to assess the cost beforehand. The amount of disturbance payment is not fixed by law – landlords are required only meet reasonable expenses. If you wish to use your own contractors to move you will need to submit written quotations for the work for us to approve before going ahead. Quotations will be assessed and we will take into account the cost of using our approved contractors before deciding how much we will pay. If you use your own contractors you will need to pay them yourselves, provide us with the receipts before we can reimburse you the agreed cost. Alternatively you may wish to accept a flat rate, one-off payment as full and final compensation against all the costs of arranging the jobs noted in paragraph 8 above. The rate for moving to a studio flat is currently £1145, and for a one bedroom flat, £1545. You won't need to submit quotes or receipts but you will need to organise contractors and all removal arrangements yourself and ensure your existing flat is completely cleared on the date you move. We would reserve the right to deduct from your home loss payment any clearance costs we incur if you were unable to do this. Again, we will explain all this to you again fully when it is time for you to move.

10. When will the works to Mais House start?

Not for quite a long time. At this stage we don't expect to have initial plans and proposals for works ready for our Committee to consider until autumn 2016 at the earliest. We also need to talk to other agencies such as the planning authority.

11. Will I be able to move back to the Mais House site once it's been redeveloped?

All residents will be offered the opportunity to return to Mais House following the redevelopment. It is not intended to be a sheltered housing scheme when it is redeveloped but a lifetime homes scheme of one-bedroom flats prioritised for older people. Any housing-related support provided would be through floating support, rather than an on-site manager.

12. Will I be consulted about the new development at Mais House?

Yes. We will talk to you about what features might be incorporated to make the development more suitable for older people. We will stay in touch with you once you have been rehoused to enable this.