

Committee	Dated:
Housing Management and Almshouses Sub- Committee	3 July 2017
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

The decision to redevelop the sheltered housing scheme at Mais House was made by Members at a meeting of the Community and Children's Committee on 16 January 2016. The decanting of the scheme (ie the rehousing of all residents) began in May 2016. This report notes rehousing activity between April 2017 and June 2017. There were 52 occupied units at Mais House at the start of the decant programme. During the latest period 4 units were vacated. The current number of occupied units is now 22. Progress in rehousing residents has been better than expected over the first year of the decant programme. The rate at which remaining residents are rehoused is likely to slow slightly over the remainder of the programme.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Background

1. The decanting of Mais House began in May 2016. It was agreed to bring regular progress reports on the decant programme to the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub- Committee. This is the sixth report and reflects activity between April 2017 and June 2017.
2. A majority of residents have expressed a preference to be rehoused within the City's own social rented stock. Others wish to be rehoused in areas in which we do not have any social rented housing. This will require the cooperation of other housing providers in the social-rented and charitable sector, if we are to meet these requirements.
3. Officers have established reciprocal rehousing agreements with the London Borough of Lewisham and the London Borough of Greenwich, and have already rehoused some residents with a housing association. Officers have also held exploratory discussions with a large charitable provider of a newly-developed scheme at St Clement Heights in Sydenham. Although the City has no nomination or reciprocal agreements with this provider, officers have written to all residents offering assistance should they wish to register an interest in it.

Current Position – rehousing activity in this period and cumulative totals

4. There are 62 units at Mais house. Twenty-six were occupied at the end of the last reporting period (April 2017). Since then 4 more properties have been vacated. A summary of the total number of vacated units and occupancy levels at end of June 2017 is shown in the table below.

Occupied units at start of programme - May 2016	Total number of vacated units at the end of June 2017	Occupied units at the end of Jun 2017
52	30	22

5. Rehousing activity has been slightly better than expected over the first year of the decant programme. This is due to a higher than average number of vacancies at the City's other sheltered schemes, the availability of newly developed properties at the Avondale estate, and the rehousing of some tenants through other social housing providers. This level of supply is not expected to be sustained. Also, the demand amongst remaining residents for City of London property is shortly expected to be fully met. These residents have expressed a preference for rehousing in areas where the City has little or no housing stock. The rate at which properties become vacant at Mais House is therefore expected to slow through the remainder of 2017.
6. Many of the remaining residents wish to remain in or close to the area in which they are currently living. Over the coming months officers will be working particularly closely with rehousing teams in LB Lewisham, to try to meet as far as possible the rehousing needs and preferences of these residents. We will also continue to make residents aware of suitable City of London properties where these become available.

Mais House – support for remaining residents

7. The ground floor of Mais House is now almost empty, and, inevitably, the environment for the remaining 22 residents is not as pleasant as it used to be, as there are less people to socialise with. Nevertheless, staff at the scheme continue to organise social events and to encourage residents to attend.
8. A new, temporary Scheme Manager has been appointed to support the residents. and to manage the empty units, ensuring security remains strong. This is an internal secondment, and the officer was chosen partly because of her estate management experience, as it is important that the empty flats are managed and remain secure. Because of the lower number of residents, she is able to offer better one to one support for each individual. Whilst residents will, naturally, be anxious about their future accommodation, she will be working with them to offer reassurance as far as possible.
9. Alongside the day today support, officers are being extremely proactive in looking for new homes for the residents and in encouraging them to consider a number of

options. A wall of one communal room has been turned into a display of information about possible new homes, a regular newsletter keeps residents updated, and officers are about to commence a second series of one to one interviews with each person, to look again at their preferences and consider all options. Residents are, in addition, encouraged to talk to staff at any time about their concerns and wishes. The Programme Manager has recently met with officers from LB Lewisham to get more details of all the local accommodation which could be available for our residents.

10. Residents have been assured that they will be allocated a flat in the new development, should they wish to move back when it is complete. All current and previous residents of Mais House will be consulted on the plans for the site.
11. We are pleased to say that the residents who have already moved have given very positive feedback about both the support they have received and their new homes.

Recommendation

12. Members are asked to note the report.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

13. 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.*
14. 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

None.

Background Papers

None.

Paul Jackson

Programme Manager

T: 0207 332 1574

E: paul.jackson@cityoflondon.gov