

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee	<b>3 July 2017</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Housing Update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Community & Children's Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Bayo Igoh – Head of Estates	

### **Summary**

This six monthly update on Housing Service performance and management information keeps Members up to date with progress against key areas of work. The report covers performance for the first half of the financial year (1 October 2016 to 31 March 2017)

Members may wish to note that:

- Performance on responsive repairs and maintenance has generally met or exceeded targets, other than for CP12 gas safety certificates;
- Performance on rent collection remains high, despite the impact Universal Credit is having on rent collection;
- Performance on benefit claims has exceeded targets in all three performance indicators.
- We have added 18 new flats, a new estate office and community centre at the Avondale Square Estate as part of our development plan. The new community centre is being extremely well-used.

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to note the report.

### **Main Report**

#### **Background**

1. This report is presented to the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee every six months. It provides Members with an overview of Housing Service performance and progress on key issues, plus some additional information of interest.

2. This report covers the period 1 October 2016 to 31 March 2017 and gives Members information on each of eight areas of work:

- Repairs & Maintenance
- Estate Management
- Resident Engagement
- Revenues
- Allocations
- Affordable Housing
- Benefits
- Complaints

### Repairs & Maintenance

3. Performance information on our responsive repairs service is collected and reported quarterly. Indicators are reviewed annually to ensure they produce meaningful data that can be monitored effectively. The service is delivered by our contractor, Wates Living Space.

Performance indicator	Target	Mid-year performance	End of year performance
Overall	96%	98.05%	99.15
Priority One repairs (complete within 24 hours)	95%	96.90%	99.57%
Priority Two repairs (complete within 3 working days)	95%	98.81%	99.25%
Priority Three repairs (complete within 5 working days)	96%	97.80%	98.52%
Priority Four repairs (complete within 20 working days)	96%	99.40%	99.25%
% of jobs for which post-work inspections were carried out	15%	26%	32%

4. Gas servicing is carried by our contractor, Carillion, who work closely with City staff to gain access to properties and carry out the necessary safety checks. At the end of this reporting period, 98.34% of our properties were up to date with CP12 gas safety certificates (below target, but an improvement on 2015/16). 32 properties were without CP12 gas safety certificates at 31 March 2017, however, these have now been resolved – all have CP12s. Our target remains 100%.

## **Estate Management**

5. 50 Right to Buy applications were made between 1 October 2016 and 31 March 2017. None of these completed during the reporting period. However, five applications received prior to 31 October 2016 completed during this time. Five completions represent approximately 0.55% of the remaining social housing stock.
6. Between 1 October 2016 and 31 March 2017 there were 910 leasehold properties and 1,948 general needs housing properties.
7. There were 115 new incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) on our estates during the past six months. This compares with 29 new incidents of reported ASB in the previous six months. Most of these were minor issues which would not be classed as anti-social behaviour by the police, but are, nevertheless, a nuisance to residents. There has been a marked increase in the reporting of environmental crime, such as graffiti, littering and in some cases fly-tipping. These can be broken down as follows:

Avondale Square	13
Golden Lane	32
Southbank	17
Sydenham Hill	39
Middlesex Street	14

Because we have staff on site at each estate, we are able to deal with these issues very rapidly, and ensure that they do not escalate. However, the Estate Managers for these estates are working with their teams and with the residents to try and identify why the increase has occurred and what can be done about it.

8. In 2016, we consulted residents about the Neighbourhood Patrol Service provided by Parkguard on some estates. A majority of residents were in favour of continuing the service, saying it was a benefit to their estate and provided valuable reassurance. Feedback from the City Police, Homelessness Team, Community Safety Team and our own Housing staff was also very good.
9. The City has contracted Parkguard to provide the service for a further two years, commencing 1 September 2016, so residents will continue to see patrol officers on their estate regularly. Parkguard will be making presentation and update at Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee on 3 July 2017.

## **Resident Engagement**

10. Members may be aware that the City has a strong relationship with Southwark Mediation Service, working in partnership with them to address neighbour disputes and complaints effectively. In October, we hosted a very successful event to showcase the work of Southwark Mediation Centre with us, to celebrate their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and to launch Mediation Awareness Week.

11. The 'Remembering Yesterday, Celebrating Today' programme of events has continues across City of London Estates. One of the key highlights was staff and residents working together to sell poppies at Barbican Station for the British Royal Legion. Volunteers collected at the station on a daily basis and managed to raise a very impressive £5,084.74, which is testimony to everyone's hard work and lovely smiles.
12. The Lord Mayor's Show showcased the Golden Lane Community with a float on the theme of 'Cloud-Capped Towers' . After months of stitching, sewing and gluing in fun community workshops - the preparations were complete and the incredible float was ready for the parade. The Lord Mayor's Show, the float and the after party were a huge success and demonstrated the strong intergenerational community spirit on the Golden Lane Estate.
13. In February, we were thrilled to be finalists in the following categories of the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Awards:
  - Team of the Year
  - Tenant of the Year (two of our tenants reached the final)
  - Excellence in Engagement in Supported Housing
  - Excellence in Community Action

Avondale Community Events (ACE) won the 'Excellence in Community Action' award which was a wonderful achievement.

14. Our annual 'Resident Celebration Day' took place in March in the Livery Hall. After months of planning by our Steering Group made up of both residents and staff, the 'Spring into 2017' themed celebration day was ready. The day was a brilliant opportunity for residents and City staff to celebrate achievements from the previous year and participate in the interactive workshops. The event included live entertainment; a variety of speakers including residents, a panel of staff and residents; a spring themed photo booth, over 14 stall holders and a buffet lunch. The day was a huge success and a credit to the fantastic projects that are taking place across our City estates.

## **Revenues**

15. We are pleased to be able to report to Members that we have exceeded our rent collection target this year. We managed to collect 98.8% of the rent, which is a huge achievement considering many of our residents who claim benefits now do so through Universal Credit.
16. The Welfare Reform Group, made up of officers from Income Recovery, Housing Management, Tenancy Support, Homelessness, and Benefits, along with Toynbee Hall have met several times in the past six months, and have brought in a manager from the London Bridge Job Centre Plus to discuss the impacts of Universal Credit with residents. The partnership has worked successfully and has come up with different ways to engage with residents at the earliest opportunity.

## **Allocations**

17. There are currently 820 people on the Housing Waiting List. Following the annual census of everyone on the Housing Register, a number of applications have been cancelled for households which no longer maintain a local connection to the City.
18. The Housing Needs Team is in receipt of approximately 40 applications per month not all of which are eligible for the Housing Register. The decant of residents from Mais House continues with all residents on the Housing Register with highest priority for rehousing. There are currently 22 Mais House residents awaiting rehousing.
19. At 3 April 2017 there were 11 vacant properties. Over the final six months of 2016-17 there have been 44 voids with the average time to re-let a property being 20.05 days. The target is 24 days. For sheltered housing there have been 2 voids with an average turnaround of 59.5 days.
20. The annual totals for 2016-17 show a total of 86 voids with an average re-let time of 21.24 days; this figure includes 8 non-routine voids. For sheltered housing there were 5 voids with an average re-let time of 71.4 days.
21. The new flats at Twelve Acres House on the Avondale Square Estate were handed over in November 2016. Twelve of the flats were allocated to applicants from the City of London Housing Register and six to applicants from the London Borough of Southwark.

## **Affordable Housing**

22. The City has completed the construction of 18 new homes (4 one bed, 5 two bed, 5 three bed and 4 four bed) on the site of the former Avondale Community Centre/estate office in November 2016. This also includes new community facilities for residents and a new estate office. This new development has been named Twelve Acres House in recognition of the historic name of the area now covered by the Avondale Square Estate.
23. There are currently six projects which have obtained planning permission or will have a planning application submitted shortly which will deliver 119 units over the next two to three years. These include the site of the former Richard Cloudesley School, where we are working closely with London Borough of Islington to provide a new, two form entry, primary school and nursery and 66 homes. This has a target completion date of September 2019.
24. A planning decision for the redevelopment of the Islington Arts Factory, Holloway Estate, to provide 25 additional units (18 for social rent, 7 for private sale) is anticipated in June 2017.

25. Other projects currently being planned are the provision of 13 new flats at George Ellison/Eric Wilkinson Avondale Square Estate, 3 three bed flats at Isleden House, 3 flats at the base of Great Arthur House on Golden Lane Estate and 9 one bedroom flats on Middlesex Street Estate.

## Benefits

26. There are currently 858 households in the City and on our other housing estates claiming benefits. Performance on our indicators is as follows:

Performance indicator	Target	Mid-year performance	End of year performance
Average time taken to process new benefit claims	<26 days	17 days	18 days
% New claims decided within 14 days	>90%	99%	96%
Average number of days taken to process notification of changes of circumstance	<10 days	6 days	6 days

## Complaints

27. We received a total of thirty four formal complaints during the reporting period. The broad subject areas of the complaints received can be broken down as follows:

	Number received in reporting period
Responsive repairs	21
Parking	0
Service charge/rent	2
Customer Service	3
Estate management	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>

NB: Eight of the Responsive Repairs complaints were from different residents making a formal complaint about the same issue, maintenance work to the pond at Golden Lane Estate.

28. Of the thirty four complaints received, twenty eight were addressed at Stage 1 within the agreed ten working day deadline. A total of five complaints were escalated to Stage 2.
29. One complaint was escalated to Stage 3. This related to a situation where a leaseholder was disputing a charge for a repairs callout which related to their property.
30. No complaints were escalated to the Local Government Ombudsman or Housing Ombudsman.

31. Of those complaints either fully or partially upheld, a number of actions were taken and processes implemented. These included:

- reviewing an existing contract with a service provider of grounds maintenance work to ensure that contact can be established promptly in the event of a customer complaint;
- ensuring better communication channels are in place to communicate with residents on repairs/issues to common parts areas of estates, including using social media;
- ensuring that staff are aware of our customer service protocol and providing further training.

## **Appendices**

- None

**Bayo Igoh**  
**Head of Estates**

T: 020 7332 1916

E: [bayo.igoh@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:bayo.igoh@cityoflondon.gov.uk)