



## Housing Management and Almshouses Sub (Community and Children's Services) Committee

**Date:** MONDAY, 30 JANUARY 2023  
**Time:** 11.00 am  
**Venue:** VIRTUAL MEETING – ACCESSIBLE REMOTELY

**Members:** Deputy Marianne Fletcher (Chair)  
Timothy James McNally (Deputy Chair)  
Deputy John Fletcher  
Jamel Banda  
Mary Durcan  
Helen Fentimen  
Florence Keelson-Anfu  
Ruby Sayed  
Henrika Priest  
Ceri Wilkins

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<https://www.youtube.com/@CityofLondonCorporation/streams>

A recording of the public meeting will be available via the above link following the end of the public meeting for up to one civic year. Please note: Online meeting recordings do not constitute the formal minutes of the meeting; minutes are written and are available on the City of London Corporation's website. Recordings may be edited, at the discretion of the proper officer, to remove any inappropriate material.

Whilst we endeavour to livestream all of our public meetings, this is not always possible due to technical difficulties. In these instances, if possible, a recording will be uploaded following the end of the meeting.

**Michael Cogher**  
Acting Town Clerk and Chief Executive

# AGENDA

## Part 1 - Public Reports

1. **APOLOGIES**

2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

3. **MINUTES**

To approve the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

**For Decision**  
(Pages 5 - 10)

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Members are asked to note the actions list.

**For Information**  
(Pages 11 - 12)

5. **HOUSING MAJOR WORKS PROGRAMME - PROGRESS REPORT**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

**For Information**  
(Pages 13 - 32)

6. **DAMP AND MOULD IN OUR SOCIAL HOUSING STOCK - UPDATE REPORT**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

**For Information**  
(Pages 33 - 48)

7. **REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE AND VOIDS UPDATE**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

**For Information**  
(Pages 49 - 60)

8. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB COMMITTEE**

9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

10. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

MOTION - That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

**Part 2 - Non-Public Reports**

11. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

To approve the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

**For Decision**  
(Pages 61 - 64)

12. **RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE: THE CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES  
(REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1005857)**

Report of the Interim Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

**For Decision**  
(Pages 65 - 72)

13. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB  
COMMITTEE**

14. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND  
WHICH THE SUB COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE  
PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

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**HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB (COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE**  
**Friday, 14 October 2022**

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub (Community and Children's Services) Committee held at Committee Room 3 - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Friday, 14 October 2022 at 11.30 am and available to view at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=UplfEvT97Zc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UplfEvT97Zc)

**Present**

**Members:**

Mary Durcan  
Timothy James McNally (Deputy Chairman)  
Helen Fentimen  
Deputy Marianne Fredericks (Chairman)  
Jamel Banda  
Alderman Susan Pearson  
Henrika Priest

**In attendance (observing online)**

Gregory Jones KC  
Ruby Sayed

**Officers:**

Paul Murtagh	- Community and Children's Services Department
Jason Hayes	- Community and Children's Services Department
Christopher Rumbles, Clerk	- Town Clerk's Department
Liam Gillespie	- Community and Children's Services Department
Marie Rene	- Community and Children's Services Department
Paul Dudley	- City Bridge Trust
Julia Pridham	- City Bridge Trust

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Ceri Wilkins, Florence Keelson-Anfu and John Fletcher.

**2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

Susan Pearson declared an interest as a resident and leaseholder on the Golden Lane Estate.

**3. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – That the public minutes and non-public summary of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2022 be approved as an correct record.

The Chair referred to the issue of railings at ColPAI and a suicide risk presented from the balcony. It was confirmed the matter had been referred back to the City Surveyor and that a response would be chased seeking an update.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Sub-Committee received a report of Town Clerk detailing outstanding actions.

**Security / Access Report** - A security and access report was due to be produced with an overarching report to be presented at Community and Children's Services Committee in November. This would present key findings from both audits and bring to Members' attention those areas that had been identified as requiring more work. A report would then follow to this Sub-Committee allowing an opportunity for Members to review the findings in more detail.

**Vehicle Charging Points at Middlesex Street and Golden Lane** – A meeting had taken place with the consultants relating to specification and funding application. A report would be brought back to this Sub-Committee at the first opportunity. A Member referred to charging points already being available on Golden Lane Estate, which it was noted were operational and available for people to use through an app. It was agreed that information would be provided to Members detailing how to access these charging points.

RECEIVED

5. **CCTV POLICY REVIEW**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services presenting changes to the CCTV Policy used by the Housing Division.

The report was welcomed as offering a pragmatic solution and a level of flexibility that was needed.

The Deputy Chairman remarked on what he considered to be a pragmatic and sensible response to the issues presented. There were instances where CCTV would be needed with certain residents not always wanting to go to their door e.g., disabled residents or those experiencing domestic violence.

It was questioned if any further detail could be provided on what might qualify a resident for installing CCTV or what might be turned down, with it being explained that doing so could potentially lead to requests being more difficult to administer and so this had been avoided. It was further clarified that the presumption would be that permission would be granted, with the option of reviewing usage to ensure it was not being abused and was being used for the purpose intended.

A Member referred to retrospective approval where CCTV was already in place. It was confirmed that a Resident Service Officer would make contact with a household and offer advice on where relevant guidance can be found. It was further clarified that contact would be made to explain the existing policy, with residents not being asked to remove CCTV unless there was a reason to do so.

A Member referred to estate wide CCTV at Golden Lane, but with this not currently being recorded to assist with security issues around burglary, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping. Members noted that Community and Children's Services Committee would be receiving an access and security report at its next meeting that would look to address relevant issues and tie these together.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Approve the revised CCTV Policy for use by the Housing Division.

6. **HOUSING MAJOR WORKS PROGRAMME - PROGRESS REPORT**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services providing an update on progress that had been made with the Housing Major Works Programme and advising Members on issues affecting individual schemes.

The Sub-Committee were talked through the various projects and works that were ongoing on an estate by estate basis. It was explained how material costs were having a huge impact on project costs across the City Corporation, with Members' attention being drawn to the Capital Review process currently underway that would have an impact on all projects across the City Corporation.

Members noted a project that had been significantly impacted by the Capital Review was the William Gateway Estate project that was at Gateway 5. A Member questioned what this Sub-Committee could do to ensure these works go ahead and that the planning timeframe was met.

It was explained that work was underway in producing a list of priority projects to include within a report due to be presented to Resource Allocation Sub-Committee setting out those projects that needed to proceed and putting forward a business case for each of these. It would be hoped that Resource Allocation Sub-Committee would agree to those projects that needed to proceed, with there being the potential for challenge and with a need to respond to this setting out why certain projects were urgent and would need to proceed.

The Chair added how it would have been helpful for Members of this Sub-Committee to meet and discuss issues in advance of the report going to Resource Allocation Sub-Committee to allow an opportunity to review those projects under risk; officers were encouraged to enter into a good level of early dialogue in future, with the Sub-Committee's remit being to present an evidence-based argument. An assurance was given that a strong business case had been prepared, with it hoped all would go well at Resource Allocation Sub-Committee and it would be possible to take forward the projects that needed progressing.

It was agreed that the report going to Resource Allocation Sub-Committee would be circulated to Members of this Sub-Committee. It was agreed a meeting would be held with Ruby Sayed, Mary Durkin, Marianne Fredericks

and Tim McNally to allow a discussion and agree a position and approach in advance of Resource Allocation Sub-Committee.

In response, the Director of Community and Children's Services confirmed that should proposals not go as planned at Resource Allocation Sub-Committee, that feedback would be provided making it clear to Members of this Sub-Committee in which areas their support would be needed.

The Deputy Chairman remarked on how he had found it helpful visiting the estates, talking to residents to understand their concerns and to witness issues first hand. It was good to go out to sites and be able to respond to residents' concerns. The Deputy Chairman welcomed hearing that works had started again at Sydenham Hill.

The Deputy Chairman remarked on how he welcomed the visit to Golden Lane Estate that had been arranged for himself and the Chair and stated a commitment given during the visit to attend a Golden Lane Residents Association meeting. The Chair had also taken the opportunity during visits to make it clear that they would be happy to attend resident association meetings where this would be welcomed.

A Member added how they would find it useful to receive a summary spreadsheet showing where costs had reduced and what would cost more so the bottom line could be seen and understood.

RESOLVED: That Members receive the report and not its content.

7. **WATER CHARGE REBATES UPDATE**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in relation to a project repaying an element of weekly water charges paid by secure tenants of the City Corporation from 2005-2019.

A Member referred to an issue that had been raised with them by a tenant whose rent was being paid through housing benefit and their concern that they would not be aware of the water charge rebate. It was confirmed that each tenant would receive a statement detailing the level of water rebate coming to them, with officers happy to look at individual cases outside of the meeting if further information can be provided.

It was also noted that the water charge rebate would continue to be advertised in Home Magazine and that there was no time limit on when people can make a claim for this.

RESOLVED: That Members receive the report and note its content.

8. **FIRE SAFETY UPDATE**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services providing Members with information on how the City Corporation, through its Housing Property Services Team, was ensuring that its homes on its twelve social housing estates were managed in a way that was compliant with current health and safety legislation, best practice and regulatory standards relating to fire safety.

A Member sought clarity on reference included within the report to splitting the Great Arthur House Sprinkler project from the compartmentation and it was suggested these projects would be better delivered through only impacting residents once. It was clarified that any reference to splitting out projects at Great Arthur House related to the main sprinkler project only. Re-assurance was offered that it would be one package of measures for Great Arthur House.

A Member raised a concern in holding a virtual residents' meeting later in the month and suggested an in person meeting would be preferred with very few attending when these were online. In response, it was confirmed that feedback from Barbican residents had shown they welcomed this way of engaging with them, following which it had been agreed to hold a virtual meeting with residents of Great Arthur House.

Clarity was sought regarding publication of Fire Risk Assessments and it was confirmed that final sign off was due to be completed by Community and Children's Services in December, following which Fire Risk Assessments would be published on the City Corporation's website.

A Member noted there were 80 residents across all City Corporation high rise housing requiring personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEP's) and suggested this appeared to be a low number. In response, it was suggested an additional notice could be placed in Home Magazine asking people to come forward. There was currently a shorter list of vulnerable residents, with those needing to go on the list being included and relevant information having been passed on as appropriate e.g., Fire Brigade.

RESOLVED: That Members receive the report and note its content.

9. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

The Chair referred to a customer services and repair webinar that would be taking place on the evening on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022, confirmed an estate visit was being arranged for Members and referred to a poster that was being produced to go on display at all estates showing who their Common Councillor was and their email address.

A Member referred to an excellent initiative on Golden Lane Estate through offering help with winter warmth. It was suggested that Members needed to know what was happening and the initiative needed publicising. In response, it was confirmed that officers were working with contractors looking at winter measures that can be applied on Golden Lane and other estates; looking at a shopping list of what can be installed and looking at supporting residents going forward.

11. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds

that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

12. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – That the non-public minutes of the meeting held on Friday 8 July 2022 be approved as a correct record.

13. **MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT : THE CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES (REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1005857)**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services relating to a management update of the City of London Almshouses.

14. **RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE: THE CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES (REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1005857)**

The Sub-Committee considered a joint report the Director of Community and Children's Services and Managing Director of Bridge House Estates relating to a risk management update of the City of London Almshouses.

15. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK THE SUB COMMITTEE**

There were no non-public questions.

16. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE SUB COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

**REDEVELOPMENT OF MAIS HOUSE**

The Chair updated Members regarding a letter that had been received relating the Maise House Redevelopment.

**The meeting ended at 1.22pm**

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Chair

Contact Officer: Chris Rumbles  
christopher.rumbles@cityoflondon.gov.uk

## Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee (HMASC)

### Outstanding Actions

Date Added	Subject	Action Agreed	Responsible Officer	Target Meeting Date - HMASC	Update
20.11.2019	Member Estate Visits	Members to visit North and South Estates preferably before or after HMASC meeting.	Liam Gillespie / Town Clerk	As soon as possible after this years' elections.	An open invitation has been offered to all Members of the HMASC and CCS to join in on the estate walkabouts.  The wider estate visits for all Members are yet to be arranged but will be better conducted in the spring.
22.02.2021	Vehicle charging points at Middlesex Street and Golden Lane	Members noted that it would still be possible to apply for funding for the 2021/22 financial year, and Members will be updated once the initial report is received from the consultants.	Paul Murtagh	March 2023	Our consultant, WSP has completed the assessments across our estates and submitted its reports. WSP is preparing a specification to procure the works and, an application for funding.
26.05.2022	Use and installation of 'ring' doorbells	Officers to review the current policy in consultation with the local police and in consideration of current guidelines and regulations.	Liam Gillespie	October 2025	This matter will be reviewed when the policy is up for reviewal in October 2025.
08.07.2022	Automatic door devices	Report to be provided with further detail on automatic door-opening devices at estates	Paul Murtagh	March 2023	To be incorporated into the Security/Access Report to go to C&CS in March and then to HMASC.

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<b>Committee(s):</b> Housing Management and Almshouses Sub (Community and Children's Services) Committee	<b>Dated:</b> 30/01/2023
<b>Subject:</b> Housing Major Works Programme – Progress Report	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	1, 2, 12
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	N
<b>If so, how much?</b>	N/A
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	N/A
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report authors:</b> Paul Murtagh Assistant Director Barbican & Property Services	

## Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the progress that has been made with the Housing Major Works Programme and to advise Members on issues affecting progress on individual schemes.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

## Main Report

### Background

1. At its meeting on 27 November 2017, the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee received a presentation from officers in Housing Property Services on the scope of, and progress with, the Housing Major Works Programme. Members subsequently agreed that it would be useful if further updates and progress reports be brought to future meetings of this Sub-Committee.
2. The first update and progress report was presented to this Sub-Committee at its meeting on 12 February 2018. This latest update report highlights specific areas of 'slippage' or 'acceleration' since the last meeting of the Sub-Committee on 6 December 2022, as well as progress against the programme as originally reported in November 2017.

3. In line with a request from Members and, as subsequently agreed by the Community & Children's Services Committee (C&CS Committee), this report has been expanded to include information relating to Phase 2 of the Housing Major Works Programme (Future Programme).

## **Considerations**

4. The City of London Corporation (City Corporation) is committed to investing around £95million on a Major Works Programme for the maintenance, refurbishment and improvement of its social housing portfolio. The works, in the main comprise:
  - Window replacements;
  - Re-roofing;
  - Decent Homes (new kitchens and bathrooms);
  - Electrical rewiring and upgrades;
  - Heating replacements;
  - Concrete repairs;
  - Fire safety improvement works.
5. The funding for these extensive works, which is intended to bring all the City Corporation's social housing stock up to, and beyond, the Decent Homes Standard, comes from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which is ring-fenced solely for housing. The HRA is made up of:
  - Income from rents;
  - Income from service charges.
6. The Housing Major Works Programme was originally intended to be a 5-year programme however, the size and complexity of some of the projects included, along with initial staff resourcing issues, has meant that it is more likely to take 7 or 8 years to complete.
7. The Housing Major Works Programme is monitored and managed at several levels both corporately and within the department. This includes:
  - Gateway Process;
  - Community & Children's Services Committee (C&CS);
  - Projects Sub-Committee;
  - Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee;
  - Housing Programme Board.
8. The Housing Programme Board (HPB) is a cross-departmental group, chaired by the Director of Community & Children's Services and comprising senior officers from:
  - Housing Management;
  - Housing Property Services;
  - City Surveyors;
  - Planning;

- Finance;
  - Town Clerks;
  - City Procurement.
9. For the purpose of the HPB, officers have developed detailed report templates that show progress of the various works programmes, and these are analysed and discussed monthly. At its meeting on 27 November 2017, following a presentation from officers in Housing Property Services on the scope of, and progress with the Housing Major Works Programme, Members agreed that a simplified version of the progress reports be brought to future meetings of this Sub-Committee.
10. Attached at Appendix 1 to this report, for Members' consideration, is the latest version of the progress report for the Housing Major Works Improvement Programme. This progress report will be submitted to and considered by the HPB at its meeting on 23 February 2023.
11. Following recent requests from Members, projects that have been added to the original five-year Housing Major Works Programme over the last few years have been highlighted in the progress report. This helps to demonstrate the extent as to which the scope of the five-year Housing Major Works Programme has increased since its inception. Members will note from the latest progress report that the value of these additional projects is approximately £23.4million (a 43% increase in the cost of the original programme).
12. In line with a request from Members and, as subsequently agreed by the C&CS Committee, attached to this report as Appendix 2 is Phase 2 of the Housing Major Works Programme (Future Programme). The format of Phase 2 has been designed to reflect the following:
- a new, revised five-year programme with the dates reset to the start of the 2022/23 financial year.
  - the carryover and incorporation of projects from the original five-year Major Works Programme that will be incomplete by the beginning of the 2022/23 financial year.
  - the omission of all projects on the original five-year Major Works Programme that were substantially completed before the beginning of the 2022/23 financial year.
13. As members will see from the 'Future Programme' at Appendix 2, there are nearly £30million of new projects that are currently '**unfunded**'. These projects comprise works identified in the Savills Stock Condition Survey (2018) and, projects that have been identified as a result of further surveys and testing works carried out as part of the current Major Works Programme.
14. Members will note that the Future Programme is substantively unchanged from that submitted to the November meeting of this Sub Committee. The projected dates for these future works are still as originally forecast and, do not reflect the potential 'two-year' affordability break reported previously. The Future Programme will also likely be affected by current and future economic factors and, at some time in the future, a substantial review and redrafting of the Future Programme will be

required. Clearly, this can only be done once we have more clarity on the future funding capacity of the HRA. The report, as it stands, remains a useful reminder of the extent of work to be carried out (and forecast costs) to maintain the Corporation's Housing Estates to the required standard.

15. Although, the Future Programme does include some provision for 'Net Zero Pilots' across all our social housing estates, Members are reminded that no provision has been made for any future Net Zero Capital Projects. The reason for this, as Members will be aware, is that these projects are still largely unknown and, will only emerge over the next few years, as further research, surveys, and investigations are completed in line with the Housing Net Zero Action Plan. It is likely that Housing Net Zero Capital Projects will be funded from a combination of external grant funding and the City Corporation's Climate Action Strategy Budget.
16. Members will note from the progress report at Appendix 1 that there have been several changes to the status of the various projects since the last meeting of this Sub-Committee. Members are asked to specifically note the following updates:

***Slippage in relation to timing of commencement of contract***

H39 – Window Replacement and External Redecorations (Multiple Estates)

**William Blake Estate** – as forecast in the November report, the delay in authorising the Gateway 5 report due to the Capital Programme Review, has resulted in the expiry of the period that the tender prices can be held. Furthermore, because of this delay, it is no longer feasible that works will commence before the planning consent expires later this month. The London Borough of Lambeth's Planning Team has confirmed that a resubmission of the planning application is necessary.

It is estimated that this project will be delayed for six months to allow for the re-engagement with the planning process, review, and update of the of the tender documents, consultation, re-tendering and tender evaluation, award of contract and, obtaining the necessary Committee approvals. It is also expected that the continuing challenging economic climate will result in further uplifts to material and labour costs in 2023 although, these remain difficult to quantify at this time.

H54 - Fire Door Replacement Programme (multiple estate programme)

**Lot 2 – Avondale Square Estate** - authorisation of the Gateway 5 report was delayed by 2½ months, because of the Capital Programme Review. The Gateway 5 report has now been approved and the tender has been awarded. The process of exchanging contracts with our contractor (Gerda) is well underway.

***Slippage in relation to projects in progress***

H45 - York Way Communal Heating

The project completion date has slipped by two months, with an anticipated completion date for the end March 2023. The slippage is primarily due to issues

with access from residents including, 14 cancellations and continuing problems with Covid. We continue to work closely with the Estate Team and, our colleagues in the City Solicitor's team to overcome these and, any further access issues.

#### H55 – Installation of Sprinklers

**Avondale Estate** - United Living commenced works at West Point on the Avondale Estate on 20 September and, out of the 75 units in the block, 40 are substantially complete. Full completion of all units was forecast for the end of December 2022 and, it had been intended that work would commence at East Point late January 2023, with Centre Point to follow. The programme for the Avondale Estate was estimated to take 12 months in total, with full completion expected in September 2023.

Unfortunately, we have recently been advised by United Living that its specialist sub-contractor has gone into liquidation. Clearly, this will have a considerable negative impact on the contract, which will be suspended until United Living has procured and appointed a new sub-contractor. We now expect that the project will be completed by the end of December 2023.

The project remains a challenging one with, extensive parallel gas infrastructure works being carried out on the blocks by Scotia Gas Network.

**Petticoat Tower** – as set out in previous reports, Petticoat Tower was removed from the United Living contract and the procurement process for the installation of sprinklers in Petticoat Tower is now complete. Tenders have been received and evaluated, and a Gateway 5 report will be presented to the Community and Children's Services Committee at its meeting in March. Assuming we can execute a contract with the successful contractor in April, retrofit works could commence on site by September 2023, with a view to completing by March 2024.

**Great Arthur House** – as set out in previous reports, Great Arthur House was also removed from the United Living contract and will be procured separately, in conjunction with other related fire safety works including, fire doors and compartmentation works. City Planning has requested that the current application for Listed Building Consent be withdrawn and a more comprehensive application for all fire safety works be submitted in due course.

#### ***Progress of note on key projects***

#### H39 – Window Replacement and External Redecorations (Multiple Estates)

**Holloway Estate** – The contractor, Mulalley, has taken possession of the community centre for its site welfare facilities and, is currently on site carrying out condition surveys. A recent update in the Building Regulations requires trickle vents to be installed in the windows which, the existing planning permission omitted. We will shortly be appointing a Design Consultant to deal with this amendment to the planning permission. Meanwhile, the Contractor will continue with external redecorations and surveys to minimise any delay.

Works to the pilot project installation at 20 Fairweather House will progress and will be used as part of the process to regularise the planning application documents and the planning consent.

**Southwark Estates** – ‘Meet the Contractor’ events took place on Tuesday 15 November and Thursday 17 November. The contractor, ETEC Contract Services, has mobilised its main site welfare facilities in the courtyard of the Sumer Buildings, with smaller facilities planned for Stopher and Pakeman House. The Resident Liaison Officer (RLO) will soon be arranging the individual surveys. The scaffolding installations have now started and colour schemes for the decoration works are to be agreed. An updated set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ’s) will shortly be distributed to all residents on the three estates.

**Windsor House** – ‘Meet the Contractor’ events were carried out on Monday 14 November and Wednesday 16 November. The contractor, ETEC Contract Services, has taken possession of the community centre as its site welfare facility and will shortly be starting the individual surveys.

The installation of the scaffolding around the building has started and a colour choice sheet for communal areas has been provided to residents, who have been balloted on their preferences. The most popular option for the masonry walls has been Frosted Lake and Black for the external wood and metal works (27 residents participated in the exercise). An updated set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) will be distributed estate wide to all residents and copies are also available in the Estate Office.

#### H40a – Crescent House Window Refurbishment/Replacement

The Pilot Project is progressing, with the scaffolding started on 9 January and, the tender for the specialist window contractor complete and the contract awarded. Various consultants have been engaged for testing the options, as well as Party Wall surveyors and a Planning Consultant. The Resident Liaison Group is positive in providing good two-way communications between residents and the project team. Pricing submissions have been received and are currently being analysed for the vacuum glazing option for Crescent House. An Issues Report will need to be produced shortly for the funding for the pilot project.

#### H40 – Golden Lane Estate Window Refurbishment/Replacement (excluding Crescent House)

As members will be aware, we have been concentrating our efforts on the design options for Crescent House, due to the particularly poor condition of the windows across the block. However, now that design options for Crescent House have been drawn up, we are now able to focus more on the needs of the wider estate.

A draft report for Stanley Cohen House has been received, reviewed, and returned with comments to the Design Team. The reports will be shared on the Golden Lane Windows website. Specialist manufacturers have been visiting properties, including the maisonettes, to provide valuable input into the various options for consideration.

#### H46 - Middlesex Street Estate Communal Heating

The project has resumed on site following the conclusion of the planning issue resulting from an unsuccessful objection from a handful of residents. Completion date is now expected to be 31 December 2023. There will be an uplift in costs following the protracted delay due to escalating prices in material and labour costs. We are currently waiting for an application for additional costs from our contractor TSG Building Services PLC.

#### H54 - Fire Door Replacement Programme (multiple estate programme)

**Lot 1 – Holloway and York Way Estates.** The York Way Estate installations are virtually complete and, the Holloway Estate installations are complete except for two residential properties. The first property involves an extremely vulnerable resident and, we are working with the relevant parties to engage with the resident and gain access. The second property, has an absentee leaseholder who, has left the property padlocked, vacant, and in a badly neglected condition. We have now gained access but, have had to engage a pest control company to attend before the door can be replaced.

**Lot 3 – William Blake, Dron House, Summer Buildings, Petticoat Tower (communal doors only)** – the tender documents have been issued to the supplier to commence the design and pricing process.

17. As part of the Corporate Capital Programme Review, it has been necessary to review the projects in the current Housing Major Works Programme to ensure that the cost of the Programme remains within the current budget envelope. As a result, the following four pre-Gateway 5 projects have been reduced in scope or deferred.

#### ***Reduced Scope***

#### H50 – Southwark Estate Concrete Testing and Repairs

This project was set up to address any identified essential structural repairs to buildings on the Southwark estate. It has a £1.1m approved budget with £0.2m drawn down to date. The funds drawn down were to enable extensive intrusive surveys (including associated scaffolding costs).

Officers have reviewed the scope of this project following the results of the concrete surveys undertaken and determined that the level of structural works required is far less than originally anticipated and budgeted for. There is provision in the current redecoration budget to carry out essential pre-painting repairs to the structure that will address many of those areas in the report identified as needing repair. To mitigate any risk going forward, the structure of these buildings will continue to be inspected annually to identify any subsequent structural works that may be required.

This reduction in scope reduces the cost of the project down from £1.1million to £200,000.

### H59 – George Elliston and Eric Wilkins Refurbishment

The original budget estimate of £3.7million for this project included the provision of 13 new homes by way of a new infill block between the two existing blocks and, rooftop extensions to the two existing blocks. However, the Community and Children's Services Committee (C&CS) subsequently agreed to abort the new build element of this project due to significant cost increase above the £3.7m budget (last estimate was around £7m).

Currently £0.2m has been drawn down from the budget. The budget has subsequently been revised down to £2.0million for the project, which will provide for the replacement of windows, doors, roofs and, lift refurbishment works to the two blocks to bring them up to the City Standard (previous Decent Homes Standard). There are 14 separate blocks on the Avondale Square Estate, and, except for these two blocks, all others have had replacement double-glazed windows in the past, some of which, have recently been refurbished.

The realignment of this project, in line with decisions taken by the C&CS Committee, reduces the budget for the project down from £3.7million to £2million.

### H17 – Golden Lane Heating Replacement Phase 2 (Crescent House and Cullum Welch House)

This project originally provided for the design and installation of a new communal heating scheme into Crescent House and Cullum Welch House. Initial analysis and studies into this proposal conclude that the introduction of a communal heating scheme would only be feasible if covering the whole of the Golden Lane Estate and, not just two of the nine blocks. The logistics of doing this project, including buy-in from leaseholders who will be required to contribute proportionately to the significant cost of the works, are substantial and, something that is best appraised in 10- or 15-years' time.

The scope of this project has now been reduced to replacing inefficient and unreliable individual heating systems in our tenanted properties, as has been done in other blocks on the Golden Lane Estate.

This reduction in scope makes sense as, the introduction of an estate-wide communal heating system is much more logical and achievable than for just two blocks. However, this is a complex, expensive and extensive project that is best considered in 10- or 15-years' time. The residual budget will allow us to address issues with the existing individual heating systems in our tenanted properties.

This reduction in scope reduces the cost of the project down from £2.9million to £1million.

## ***Deferred Project***

### H61 – Golden Lane Area Lighting and Accessibility

A successful Capital Bid for £500,000 was agreed for this project, which would enable the upgrading of lighting and signage across the whole of the Golden Lane Estate. To date, we have drawn down £15,000 of the available budget. It has been agreed to defer this project until the 2024/25 financial year.

Pausing this project will give officers time to review the scope and objectives of the project and, to explore options for alternative funding sources including external grant funding and funding from CAS. The repair and maintenance of the existing lighting will continue to be undertaken as part of the normal operational cycle, ensuring that the area remains safe and accessible for residents. These repairs can be funded from existing repairs budgets.

18. The reduction in the scope of the three projects above (H50, H59 and H17) will result in a reduction of £4.5million of capital spending. This should be sufficient to cover the forecast overspends across the whole of the current HRA Major Works Programme and, provide a small buffer for future overspends.
19. If it is subsequently found that alternative proposals are required to ensure that the HRA remains within its funding envelope, these will need to be agreed by the C&CS Committee and reported back to the Resource Allocations Sub Committee.
20. Members will appreciate, there will always be problems with contracts and projects such as those contained within the Housing Major Works Programme. The last 18 to 24 months have been particularly challenging and, one of the most significant challenges we are currently facing is the huge increase in the cost of construction projects nationally. The Corporation is not immune from these cost increases which, typically, are between 20 and 30%.
21. Members will also recognise that progress with any of the projects included in the Housing Major Works Programme can change at short notice. It is often the case that notable changes in projects will have occurred from the time that reports are written to the time that they are presented to this Sub-Committee. Where appropriate, Officers will provide further updates to Members when presenting this report.

### Staffing Resources

22. As highlighted at previous meetings of this Sub-Committee, up until recently, the Major Works Team has had significant resource issues (staff). Following a recent focused recruitment process however, we have managed to make several new appointments to vacant posts. We do still have vacancies within the team and, we continue to try and recruit to these vacant posts as quickly as possible.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Housing Major Works Programme Progress Report (December 2022)

Appendix 2: Housing Major Works Programme (Future Programme)

Paul Murtagh

Assistant Director, Barbican & Property Services

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<b>Committee(s):</b> Housing Management and Almshouses Sub (Community and Children's Services) Committee	<b>Dated:</b> 30/01/2023
<b>Subject:</b> Damp and Mould in our Social Housing Stock – Update Report	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<b>1, 2, 12</b>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Community and Children’s Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report authors:</b> Paul Murtagh Assistant Director Barbican & Property Services	

## Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the work that we do to deal with damp and mould in the City of London Corporation’s Social Housing Stock and, our response to recent national concerns raised by government.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

## Main Report

### Background

1. In November 2022, Rochdale Coroner’s Court’s verdict on the tragic death of Awaab Ishak in 2020, concluded that the two-year old died as a result of a severe respiratory condition caused by prolonged exposure to mould in his home. The coroner’s verdict also noted a number of failures by his housing provider, Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH) including:

- Poor or inappropriately provided advice to the family about how to manage damp and mould within the property.
- Despite survey evidence of insufficient ventilation, the landlord repeatedly failed to take sufficient action and incorrectly blamed the mould on ‘lifestyle issues’.

- RBH refused to act once a disrepair claim was made by lawyers representing the family. The verdict noted that this is common practice within the sector but, is not a legal requirement.
  - IT systems with critical household information were not accessible to all relevant staff.
2. This case has been identified as a ‘defining moment’ for the housing sector. It has significant implications for councils in delivering on their responsibilities as landlords and, for enforcing standards within private sector housing. The case raises questions and challenges for social housing providers (including local councils) about their assurance processes, particularly in the following areas:
- The extent to which landlords understand conditions within their housing stock.
  - Approaches to the safeguarding of tenants.
  - The accessibility of data and information held on IT systems about repairs and tenant vulnerabilities.
  - How landlords will deal with disrepair following engagement by legal bodies.
  - The extent to which councils can effectively deliver on their regulatory duties to enforce standards within the local private sector housing stock.
3. Damp and mould are a problem that disproportionately affects London. A report by the Housing Ombudsman in 2021, showed that 56% of damp and mould maladministration cases against social housing providers were in London, compared to 19% of the national social housing stock. The 2020 English Housing Survey found that 4.7% of all London properties suffer from damp problems, compared to the national average of 4%. The problem is greater in the private rented sector. Nationally, 5.4% of local authority properties suffer from damp, compared to 9.6% in the private rented sector.

## **Considerations**

### Housing Ombudsman

4. Published in October 2021, the Housing Ombudsman’s Report entitled ‘Spotlight on damp and mould – It’s not lifestyle’, says that social landlords should adopt a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould. Addressing damp and mould needs to be a higher priority for landlords, states the report, with a change in culture from reactive to proactive, in order to improve the experience of residents.
5. The report examined 410 complaints, investigated 142 landlords over a two-year period, with maladministration found in 56% of cases, rising to 64% for complaint handling alone. As well as casework, the report also draws on more than 500 responses to the Housing Ombudsman’s call for evidence issued earlier in 2021. The failure rate was often the result of inaction, excessive delays, or poor communication.
6. During the Housing Ombudsman’s investigation, it found a general sense of frustration among residents, many saying they felt they were not being heard or that their landlords were not taking their repair reports or complaints seriously. The

impact on residents was clear, with distress and inconvenience reported together with concerns about health and well-being.

7. The report recognises the challenges for landlords in tackling the issues including, overcrowding, poverty, the age and design of homes but, it says that landlords should avoid inferring blame on residents due to 'lifestyle', when it is often not solely their issue, and take responsibility for resolving problems. In support of this, the report identifies best practice and makes 26 recommendations for landlords to implement, including:
  - greater use of intelligence and data to prevent issues.
  - adopting a consolidated policy for actions it may take based on diagnosis.
  - reviewing communications with residents to improve tone.
  - improve access to the complaints process to help resolve issues, including alongside disrepair claims, and learn from them.

#### Regulator of Social Housing (RSH)

8. In the aftermath of the Rochdale Coroner's Court verdict, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) wrote to local authorities about conditions in housing of all tenures, requesting information and assurance (Appendices 1 and 2). Responses to the RSH were due by 19 December and, the City of London Corporation (the Corporation) complied with the deadline. A summary of the Corporation's response is attached at Appendix 3 to this report.

#### Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

9. Housing standards are assessed using the HHSRS, which was introduced under the Housing Act 2004 and replaced the old Fitness Standard. The HHSRS is a risk assessment approach that considers whether defects identified within a property affect the health and safety of the current or future occupants of that property. It is applicable to all owners and landlords, including social landlords. Most Stock Condition Surveys undertaken by social housing providers will include an assessment of defects under the HHSRS.

10. The legislation lists 29 different hazards including:

- damp and mould growth
- excess cold
- crowding and space
- domestic hygiene and pests
- fall hazards
- fire and electrical safety
- collision and entrapment hazards.

11. The HHSRS provides a way that hazards can be assessed and identifies the best way of dealing with them. If a hazard is a serious and immediate risk to a person's

health and safety, it is classified as a Category 1 hazard. If a hazard is less serious or less urgent, it is classified as a Category 2 hazard.

### The Corporation's Position

12. In 2018, Savills undertook a 100% internal and external Stock Condition Survey of the Corporation's social housing portfolio, which included an assessment of defects under the HHSRS. There were no properties identified with Category 1 or Category 2 damp and mould hazards.
13. Despite the findings of the Savills Stock Condition Survey, the Corporation does have homes that are affected by damp and mould and, reports and complaints we receive from tenants have always been given a high priority. We continue to raise tenants' awareness of the potential problems with damp and mould in their homes which, includes setting out what the Corporation is doing to address the problem and, the steps that tenants can take to help reduce the amount of moisture in their homes that can lead to condensation and problems with damp.
14. We positively encourage our tenants to let us know of any issues with condensation/damp/mould as soon as possible. Wherever possible, we will inspect within five working days (subject to access) to identify the possible causes and associated remedial works which, will be completed within seven working days of an order being placed. We will also discuss the matter with our tenants, providing advice and guidance as appropriate. Completed works are post-inspected by our Property Services Officers.
15. Most of our properties are regularly accessed by various contractors carrying out either day-to-day repairs (including gas servicing, electrical checks, general repairs etc) or major works such as replacement windows and replacement fire doors. Our contractors are instructed to look out for and report any issues relating to damp and mould.
16. Like most social housing providers however, we have been reviewing our processes and procedures for dealing with damp and mould and, we have introduced some new initiatives including:
  - Reviewing all previous cases of damp and mould reported in the last 12 months to ensure that the problem was effectively dealt with and has not recurred.
  - Carrying out independent specialist sample condition surveys of a number of homes to assess whether there are problems with dampness and mould that we are not aware of.
  - Further specific targeted communications with our tenants/residents to raise awareness of the potential problems (including health) caused by damp and mould in their homes.
  - Providing further specific training for housing and property staff on identifying and dealing with damp and mould.
17. The Corporation continues to make significant investment in its social housing stock to ensure it meets and exceeds the Decent Homes Standard. Major works

such as roof renewals, replacement windows, re-roofing, new heating and ventilation systems, will go some way to addressing potential sources of damp and mould.

### ***Installation of new windows***

18. With particular regard to the installation of new windows, it should be noted that, in isolation, new windows will not prevent damp and mould and, indeed, can, in certain circumstances, exacerbate the problem.
19. It is normal for condensation to form on the inside of new windows. This shows that the windows are performing as they should in that, they are helping to keep the home energy efficient. This is because the double glazing (or triple glazing) reduces the amount of heat transmittance from one side of the glass to the other. When it does this however, it creates a significant temperature difference from one side of the glass to the other. Condensation forms when warm air meets a cold surface, meaning that the warm air inside the home is meeting the cold surface of the glass.
20. This type of condensation on new windows is more common in winter because of the difference in temperature between the inside and outside of the home. Therefore, conditions for the formation of condensation are ideal, which is why many new windows have condensation in the colder months.
21. Whilst, as stated previously, condensation is a sign that the new windows installed are working properly, excessive moisture can cause mould to grow around the window frames. There are some important steps that our tenants can take to prevent excessive condensation and prolong the life of the windows including:
  - opening windows for at least 20 minutes a day, but preferably for longer periods.
  - ensuring that 'trickle' vents are open and not blocked.
  - drying washing outside wherever possible. If this is not an option, washing should be dried in a well-ventilated area.
  - where possible, using an extractor fan when cooking, showering, or bathing. These tasks are notorious for creating excess moisture in the home.

### ***Specific current initiatives/works***

22. Members attention is drawn to the following specific current initiatives/works that are being undertaken as part of our approach to dealing with damp and mould in our social housing stock:

#### Almshouses

We are currently undertaking a specific programme of damp surveys across the whole of the Corporation's Almshouses portfolio. All the Gresham and Rogers Almshouses are included in the survey programme and, approximately 20% of the Brixton Almshouses.

### Golden Lane Estate

Members have raised concerns about the extent of damp and mould in properties across the Golden Lane Estate particularly, Crescent House. We are working with members to identify the extent of the problem and, to develop an appropriate strategy to tackle it.

### New Technology

As part of the significant investment we are making in our social housing stock to ensure it meets and exceeds the Decent Homes Standard, we are installing humidity tracking mechanical extract fans in new kitchen and bathroom installations and, we are currently trialling the installation of environmental sensors that will provide real-time reports on air condition (including humidity and dampness) within our homes.

The environmental sensors have been fitted in several properties on a 'pilot' basis including, a number of the Almshouses.

### Communication with Tenants

We are developing a dedicated 'newsletter' that will soon be delivered to all the Corporation's social housing tenants. The newsletter relates entirely to the issue of damp and mould and, sets out what the Corporation is doing about the problem, the extent of the problem and the potential health implications, what tenants can do to help us and themselves, encourages tenants to report any problems with damp and mould and, clearly sets out how tenants can communicate with us on this matter.

In addition to the above, we are developing a webpage on the Corporation's housing website that is entirely dedicated to the issue of damp and mould in our homes.

### Private Rented Sector

We are working closely and collaboratively with colleagues in the Corporation's Environmental Team to ensure a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to dealing with problems with damp and mould across all tenures within the Corporation's local authority area.

Whilst the Environmental Team has a responsibility for housing conditions across the private rented sector (as opposed to our responsibility for social housing), there are common themes that we can all benefit from including, training, guidance and best practice, policies, and procedures and, our responses to government.

23. Members will appreciate that the issue of damp and mould in social housing is a high priority for social housing providers (including the Corporation) and, will likely be so for some time to come. It is hoped that this report gives members some comfort and reassurance that the Corporation is taking this matter seriously and, is taking positive action to deal with the problem. It is intended that further reports

will be brought back to this Sub-Committee, setting out the progress we are making, the challenges we face and any further support we require from members.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Letter from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)
- Appendix 2: Letter from the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH)
- Appendix 3: Summary Response to the RSH

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## Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

**Rt Hon Michael Gove MP**  
*Secretary of State for Levelling up Housing &  
Communities*  
*Minister for Intergovernmental Relations*

**Department for Levelling Up, Housing and  
Communities**  
4th Floor, Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

19 November 2022

To: All providers of social housing

### **ENSURING QUALITY IN SOCIAL HOUSING**

The tragic case of Awaab Ishak, who died at two years old as a direct result of mould in his family home, has rightly shocked people across the country. This is an appalling case of the utmost gravity, and it is abhorrent that anyone should have to live in such conditions in Britain today.

As I said in Parliament this week: every single person in this country, irrespective of where they are from, what they do, or how much money they earn, deserves to live in a home that is decent, safe and secure. I expect those who hold the high responsibility of managing people's homes to ensure that no family experiences such a tragedy again.

Together, we must raise the bar dramatically on the quality of social housing and empower tenants so that their voices are truly heard. I want to be clear about what this must mean in relation to damp and mould, as I have been made aware of many cases where this has gone unaddressed for far too long and am concerned that they are not treated with sufficient seriousness.

#### **Treating damp and mould seriously**

The coroner's report into Awaab's death is a litany of failure. As housing providers, I expect you to read it in full and absorb its lessons. All social homes must meet the Decent Homes Standard; you must be aware of any that do not and undertake rapid remedial works. However, in light of this case I expect you to go further than the letter of the Standard and have particular regard to damp and mould.<sup>1</sup> Damp and mould are not 'lifestyle issues' as the Housing Ombudsman Service underscored last year. Where people complain about damp and mould, you must listen; where you find them, you must take prompt action. To keep tenants safe, you must not hide behind legal process.

It is vital as we go into a challenging winter that you know the extent of damp and mould issues in your stock and that these are being addressed. To that end, I expect you to be undertaking assessments of:

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<sup>1</sup> Specifically, as well as category 1 damp and mould hazards, to have regard to and take action on high scoring (bands D and E) category 2 damp and mould hazards, as outlined in the relevant guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-health-and-safety-rating-system-enforcement-guidance-housing-conditions>

- damp and mould issues affecting your properties, including the prevalence of category 1 and 2 damp and mould hazards;
- the action you have identified that may need to be taken in relation to damp and mould issues affecting your properties.

The Regulator of Social Housing will be writing to you imminently on this and you should respond promptly. You should also self-refer to the Regulator of Social Housing should you become aware through those assessments, or other means, that you may be in breach of its regulatory standards.

### **Taking responsibility**

I am more determined than ever to deliver our drastic reforms to the housing sector, protecting the rights of tenants and ensuring social landlords do not put people's lives and livelihoods at risk. Our Social Housing Regulation Bill will enable a rigorous new regime that holds all landlords to account for the decency of their homes and the service they provide. The Regulator of Social Housing will proactively inspect landlords – and will have the power to issue unlimited fines. It will be able to intervene in those cases where tenants' lives are being put at risk because landlords are dragging their feet in actioning repairs. And in the very worst cases, it will have the power to instruct that properties are brought under new management.

We are bringing in these changes to rebalance the relationship between residents and landlords by enhancing the current system of regulation and redress, but there is already a well-recognised minimum quality standard, the Decent Homes Standard, and clear guidance from the Housing Ombudsman Service on how complaints should be handled. Landlords must ensure their homes meet this Standard and handle complaints in line with the Ombudsman's guidance.

It is vital that we learn from the mistakes that led to the tragic death of Awaab, and I look forward to working collaboratively with you to improve standards. I firmly believe in the right of everyone to feel safe in the place where they and their loved ones sleep at night. I hope you will join me in doubling down on our efforts to provide the high-quality social housing this country deserves.

Yours,

**Rt Hon Michael Gove MP**  
**Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities**  
**Minister for Intergovernmental Relations**



22 November 2022

Dear Chief Executive

## Assurance on addressing risks relating to damp and mould in tenants' homes

The tragic case of Awaab Ishak, who died of a respiratory condition caused by mould in his home, has rightly focused attention on the responsibility of all registered providers – private and local authority – to ensure that the homes they provide are well-maintained and of a decent standard. It demonstrates the serious effects that having damp and mould in their homes can have on people's health and it has highlighted once again the importance of providers listening to their tenants' concerns, understanding their diverse needs, removing barriers to accessing services and responding promptly.

Damp and mould are potential hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System; failing to address them could lead to failure of the Decent Homes Standard and our Home Standard. All providers should have systems in place to ensure that their homes are free from hazardous levels of damp and mould, and to identify and deal with cases promptly and effectively.

As we move into winter, cases of damp and mould are likely to increase. We are therefore seeking assurance from all providers that they have a clear understanding and strong grip on damp and mould issues in their homes and are addressing risks to tenants' and residents' health. Where we consider providers are not meeting the standards, including the Decent Homes Standard, we will take appropriate action.

To inform this work, please provide:

- Firstly, your approach to assessing the extent of damp and mould issues affecting your properties, including how you assess the prevalence of category 1 and 2 damp and mould hazards
- Secondly, and in the context of that approach, your most recent assessment of the extent of damp and mould hazards in your homes, including the prevalence of category 1 and 2 damp and mould hazards
- Thirdly, given those findings, the action you are taking to remedy any issues and hazards, and ensure that your homes meet the Decent Homes Standard
- Lastly, tell us how you ensure that individual damp and mould cases are identified and dealt with promptly and effectively when raised by tenants and residents

Explanations should be supported with recent data. If data are not available, this should be noted.

Submission of this information should be made through this MSForms survey <https://forms.office.com/r/ravGxEizWR> by 19 December 2022. We will review all the information provided and may request further information if necessary. Should you identify that your homes do not meet the relevant standards, you should self-refer immediately.

I look forward to receiving your data and working with you to improve conditions for tenants and residents – ensuring they are treated equitably and with respect, there are no barriers to reporting problems, and that their concerns are appropriately addressed.

Yours sincerely

Fiona MacGregor  
Chief Executive

	Question	Response
1.	Please provide your registered provider code.	Provided
2.	Please provide your registered provider name.	City of London Corporation
3.	Please detail your approach to assessing the extent of damp and mould issues affecting your properties, including how you assess the prevalence of category 1 and 2 damp and mould hazards.	<p>The starting point for this is the (100% internal and external) Stock Condition Survey carried out on our social housing portfolio in 2018 by Savills. The survey identified that there were no Category 1 or Category 2 damp and mould hazards.</p> <p>We continue to raise our tenants awareness of the potential problems with damp and mould in their homes which, includes information on what the Corporation is doing to address the problems and, the steps that tenants can take to help reduce the amount of moisture in their homes that can lead to condensation and problems with damp.</p> <p>We encourage our tenants to let us know of any issues with condensation/damp/mould as soon as possible and, these are given a high priority. Wherever possible, we will inspect within five working days (subject to access) to identify the possible causes and associated remedial works which, will be completed within seven working days of an order being placed. We will also discuss the matter with our tenants, providing advice and guidance as appropriate. Completed works are post-inspected by our Property Services Officers.</p> <p>Many of our properties are accessed by various contractors carrying out either day-to-day repairs (including gas servicing, electrical checks, general repairs etc) or major works such as replacement windows and replacement fire doors. Our contractors are instructed to report any issues relating to damp and mould.</p>

<p>4.</p>	<p>In the context of the approach detailed in Q3, please provide details of your most recent assessment of the extent of damp and mould hazards in your homes, including the prevalence of category 1 and 2 damp and mould hazards.</p>	<p>Our most recent assessment of the extent of damp and mould hazards is based on the 2018 Stock Condition Survey, along with reports received from tenants, inspections carried out by our own Property Services Officers and, information passed to us from our contractors as set out in Question 3 above. All of this information is recorded and monitored on our asset management database.</p> <p>Whilst the Corporation does have cases of dampness and mould in its homes, there have been no Category 1 or Category 2 damp and mould hazards identified to date.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Given the findings of the assessment outlined in Q4, please outline the actions you are taking to remedy any issues and hazards, and ensure that your homes meet the Decent Homes Standard.</p>	<p>The Corporation continues to make significant investment in its social housing stock to ensure it meets and exceeds the Decent Homes Standard. Major works such as roof renewals, replacement windows, new heating and ventilation systems, will go some way to addressing potential sources of damp and mould.</p> <p>Like most housing providers, we have been reviewing our procedures for dealing with damp and mould in our homes and, we have introduced some new initiatives including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reviewing all previous cases of mould and damp reported in the last 12 months to ensure that the problem was effectively dealt with and has not recurred.</li> <li>2. Carrying out independent specialist sample condition surveys of a number of homes to assess whether there are problems with dampness and mould that we are not aware of.</li> <li>3. Further specific targeted communications with our tenants/residents to raise awareness of the potential problems caused by damp and mould in their homes.</li> <li>4. Providing further specific training for housing and property staff on identifying and dealing with damp and mould.</li> </ol> <p>As set out in Question 3 above, we encourage our tenants to let us know of any issues with condensation, damp or mould as soon</p>

		<p>as possible and, these are given a high priority. Wherever possible, we will inspect within five working days (subject to access) to identify the possible causes and associated remedial works which, will be completed within seven working days of an order being placed. We will also discuss the matter with our tenants, providing advice and guidance as appropriate. Completed works are post-inspected by our Property Services Officers.</p> <p>As part of the significant investment we are making in our social housing stock to ensure it meets and exceeds the Decent Homes Standard, we are installing humidity tracking mechanical extract fans in new kitchen and bathroom installations and, we are currently trialling the installation of environmental sensors that will provide real-time reports on air condition (including humidity and dampness) within our homes.</p>
6.	<p>Please tell us how you ensure that individual damp and mould cases are identified and dealt with promptly and effectively when raised by tenants and residents.</p>	<p>As set out previously, we continue to raise our tenants' awareness of the potential problems with damp and mould in their homes which, includes information on what the Corporation is doing to address the problems and, the steps that tenants can take to help reduce the amount of moisture in their homes that can lead to condensation and problems with damp.</p> <p>We encourage our tenants to let us know of any issues with condensation/damp/mould as soon as possible and, these are given a high priority. Wherever possible, we will inspect within five working days (subject to access) to identify the possible causes and associated remedial works which, will be completed within seven working days of an order being placed. We will also discuss the matter with our tenants, providing advice and guidance as appropriate. Completed works are post-inspected by our Property Services Officers.</p>

		Again, as stated previously, we are reviewing all previous cases of mould and damp reported in the last 12 months to ensure that the problem was effectively dealt with and has not recurred.
7.	Please provide the name of the person in your organisation that we can contact further queries.	Paul Murtagh
8.	Please provide the job title of the person provided in Q7.	Assistant Director, Housing and Barbican
9.	Please provide the email of the person provided in Q7.	<a href="mailto:Paul.Murtagh@cityoflondon.gov.uk">Paul.Murtagh@cityoflondon.gov.uk</a>
10.	Please provide the phone number of the person provided in Q7.	020 7332 3015

# Agenda Item 7

<b>Committee(s):</b> Housing Management and Almshouses Sub (Community and Children's Services) Committee – For Information	<b>Dated: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Repairs & Maintenance and Voids Update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<b>1, 2, 12</b>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Mike Saunders, Head of Repairs and Maintenance	

## Summary

This report gives an update on the repairs and maintenance (R&M) service delivered by Wates Living Space and the void process.

The R&M service covers all HRA estates including the Almshouses and commercial properties

## Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note the report

## Main Report

### Background

1. The repairs and maintenance service is varied and is delivered by several contractors who specialise in particular areas of the service. These include, but not limited to:
  - Day-to-Day Responsive Repairs
  - Gas Servicing and Repairs
  - Lift Maintenance and Repairs
  - Active Fire Safety

## Current Position

2. Various contracts are in place to deliver repairs and maintenance service. This report will focus on the service delivered by Wates Living Space (Wates). On average there are approximately 6,500 responsive repair orders raised to Wates each year. These are on several different priorities depending on the type of work, the urgency and complexity. Below details Wates performance against the various priorities for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022

KPI Results for 2021/22	Target	Achieved
P0 completed within 4 hours (%)	95%	<b>91.92%</b>
P1 completed within 24 hours (%)	95%	<b>96.08%</b>
P2 completed within 3 working days (%)	95%	<b>95.60%</b>
P3 completed within 5 working days (%)	95%	<b>90.72%</b>
P4 completed within 20 working days (%)	96%	<b>91.73%</b>
Emergency Out of Hours	100%	<b>100.00%</b>

3. Wates' performance has been varied over the course of the contract. A number of factors have attributed to the lower than expected performance. The contract was awarded using NHF National Schedule of Rates (NatFed). NatFed rates are set. Bidders either uplift each rate, bid at that rate or offer a discount. It is not unusual or bidders to apply a set percentage across all rates.
4. Wates submitted a highly competitive bid and were subsequently awarded the contract. In delivering the service, Wates use sub-contractors to carry out a high volume of work. Whilst this is not unusual, the highly competitive rates result in limited availability of sub-contractors and, in some cases, leads to poor quality of work.
5. Management of the contract has become increasingly difficult as the industry faces limited resources, increased labour costs, increased material costs. The rates within the contract are fixed and are uplifted annually in line with the BCIS rates. Taking these factors into account, the decision was made to terminate the current contract with Wates. Work has now commenced for the procurement of a new contract which, we expect will commence on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023. Officer delays and committee cycles has meant the new contract will commence later than initially anticipated. Resident involvement will be an important part of the procurement process and we will look at engaging with residents to review the submissions made to provide feedback to the evaluation team as part of the formal moderation process
6. Wates have other contracts in place with the City of London Corporation and have confirmed that they remain committed to the current contract until it terminates.

## **Void Properties**

7. In 2022, Property Services completed 68 void properties. In most cases, Property Services will have access to the property on a Monday with the aim to complete void works within 10 working days for a basic void. For complex voids, the target is 20 working days.
8. Complex void includes those where the property has been handed back in a poor condition, extensive clearance, complete redecorations. Occasionally a void will require kitchen and/or bathroom replacements. They may also require installation of central heating. In these cases, Property Services liaise with Housing Management and agree an extended date for completion. Whilst voids involve a number of contractors which requires a high level of co-ordination, Wates performance in completing void works has been to a good level
9. During the void period, various statutory checks are carried including electrical safety inspection and gas safety inspection. Attached is a draft, revised void letting standard. This is currently under review and is provided for members information. This will be part of the pack provided to new tenants before the tenancy commences.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A - Voids Letting Standard (Draft)

### **Mike Saunders**

Head of Repairs and Maintenance

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# HOUSING LETTINGS STANDARDS



**City of London  
Property Services**

# Welcome to your new Home

This booklet is designed to provide you with the standards with which you can expect your new home to be in at the point of you moving in.

Prior to moving into the property, the City of London Housing division is responsible for ensuring your new home is in a suitable condition in line with current living standards and expectations for social housing.

This will require carrying out clearances, repairs and cleaning to the property to make sure these standards are being met.

It is a legal requirement for the City of London as the social landlord to also ensure the property is safe and any gas and electric is checked, and repairs carried out as required. This will only be carried out by certified professionals and certificates are available once complete.

Once you have moved into your new home it will be your responsibility to ensure we are made aware of any repairs in future and access will need to be provided so they can be carried out.

If you have any enquiries or concerns, you can contact us via the details on the reverse of this booklet.



## Floors

- Carpets and Laminate flooring will be removed before moving into your home.  
In certain instances where the flooring is in good condition it may remain in the property.
- Any missing or damaged floorboards or floor tiles will be replaced.
- Any solid flooring will be made good where necessary.

## Ceilings and Walls

- Ceilings and walls will be made good and free of cracks and holes where necessary.
- Polystyrene tiles will be removed from the property.
- Walls will not have damp and mould and will receive treatment where necessary.



## Stairs

- Stairwells will be safe, secure and stairs fixed.
- Any handrails will be secure and replaced where necessary.

## Windows and Doors

- Windows and doors will be secure and able to open and close properly.
- Locks to Front doors will be changed before moving into your home.
- Locks to back doors will be changed where applicable.

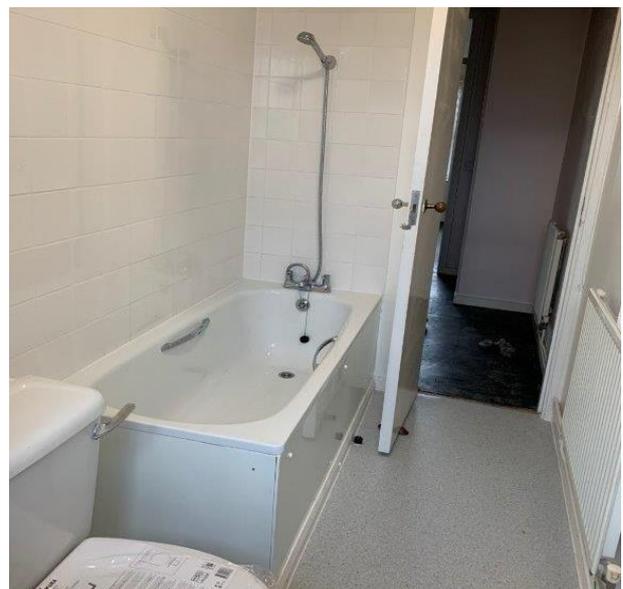


## Kitchen

- Sinks will be clean with taps in good condition and no leaks or drips.
- We will provide a plug and chain.
- There will be cold and hot water.
- Space will be available for a cooker with either an electricity or gas supply and with one electric cooker switch.
- Space will be available for either a fridge freezer, washing machine or both, depending on the size of the kitchen.

## Bathroom and Toilet

- Each property will have a washbasin, a toilet and either a bath or shower. We will provide a plug and chain for the washbasin and bath or shower.
- All taps will be in good condition and will not leak or drip.
- The toilet will work properly, have no cracks and will be securely fixed.
- There will be a secure seat, and the flush handle or chain will be working properly.



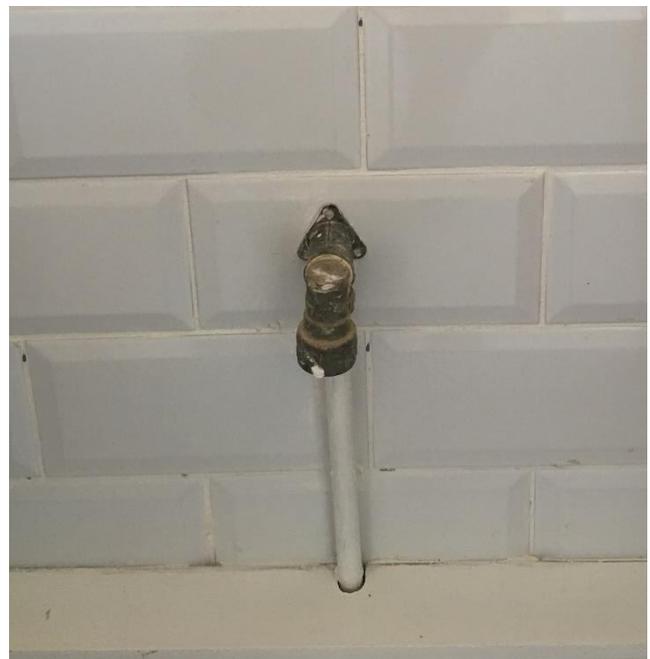


## Electricity

- We will have the electrical supply checked in line with the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contractors (NICEIC) inspection procedure
- Sockets, switches and fittings will be safe to use
- Each room (except the bathroom and toilet) will have at least one plug socket

## Gas

- We will have the gas supply tested in line with current gas safety regulations to make sure they are in safe and working order
- We will give you a copy of the landlord's gas safety certificate at the sign-up
- A disconnected gas supply may not have been checked before you have moved in but it will be capped. Once reconnected, the cap will be removed, and a test will be carried out.



## Heating

- Heating will be either gas or electric
- We will provide energy performance certificates with all new properties we let. We will give you the certificate at the sign up
- There will be a stop tap (stopcock) for water and an emergency control valve to turn off the gas supply



## Cleaning

- We will sweep and vacuum all hard floors to remove loose dust
- We will sweep, mop and dry all tiled, concrete and hard floors to remove dirt
- We will sweep all storage cupboards
- We will wipe clean all fixtures, fittings, windowsills and ledges, radiators, pipes, door frames, door handles, picture rails, skirting boards and fire surrounds
- We will remove cobwebs from walls, ceilings and cupboards
- There will be no graffiti
- We will remove Blu-tak, Sellotape, drawing pins, chewing gum and labels
- We will wash the inside and outside of kitchen cupboards, drawers, sink, taps, plugs, worktops, wall tiles, grouting and sealant
- We will wash the shower, bath, washbasin, taps, toilet and pipes

## Decorations

- If the property has not already been decorated during its works period, an allowance will be reimbursed on confirmation of decorations taking place. This allowance will be based on the size of the property.
- We will decorate sheltered properties before you move in.

## Adaptations

- We will not remove adaptations (except stairlifts)
- We will leave in place any fixtures from previous tenants if they are in a working condition (for example, washing machine plumbing fittings)

## Asbestos

- At the sign-up you will be provided details of what checks have been made, what asbestos has been found (if any) where it is and how you should manage it safely.

# Contact Information

Repairs – 0800 035 0003

Option 1 – General Repairs

Option 2 – Gas

Complaints

[housing.complaints@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:housing.complaints@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

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