



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

Date: MONDAY, 3 JUNE 2024

Time: 11.00 am

Venue: COMMITTEE ROOMS, 2ND FLOOR, WEST WING, GUILDHALL

Members: Steve Goodman OBE (Chairman)
Helen Fentimen OBE JP (Deputy Chairman)
Joanna Tufuo Abeyie
Deputy Keith Bottomley
Mary Durcan
Deputy John Fletcher
Timothy James McNally
Eamonn Mullally
Henrika Priest
Ceri Wilkins

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Ian Thomas CBE
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 30 January 2024.

For Decision
(Pages 5 - 12)

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Members are asked to note the Sub-Committee's Action Tracker.

For Information
(Pages 13 - 14)

5. **HOUSING COMPLAINTS UPDATE**

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

For Decision
(Pages 15 - 44)

6. **MEMBER ENGAGEMENT - HOUSING ESTATES**

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

For Decision
(Pages 45 - 82)

7. **HOUSING STRATEGY REPORT**

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

For Decision
(Pages 83 - 100)

8. **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY**

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

For Decision
(Pages 101 - 114)

9. **EXTENSION OF POLICY REVIEW DATES**

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

For Decision
(Pages 115 - 130)

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

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

For Information
(Pages 131 - 144)

11. **ACCESS AUDIT REMEDIAL PROJECT**

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

For Information
(Pages 145 - 148)

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

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

14. **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

15. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

To approve the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2024.

For Decision
(Pages 149 - 150)

16. **HOUSING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS - PROCUREMENT STAGE 1 REPORT**

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

For Discussion
(Pages 151 - 180)

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

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

HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB (COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE
Tuesday, 30 January 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub (Community and Children's Services) Committee held at Committee Rooms, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall on Tuesday, 30 January 2024 at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Ruby Sayed (Chairman)
Helen Fentimen (Deputy Chairman)
Jamel Banda
Mary Durcan
Deputy John Fletcher
Steve Goodman
Alderman Susan Pearson
Henrika Priest
Ceri Wilkins

Officers:

Pam Wharfe	- Interim Director Assistant Housing
Liam Gillespie	- Community and Children's Services
Jason Hayes	- Community and Children's Services
Michael Gwyther-Jones	- Community and Children's Services
David Blane	- Community and Children's Services
Polly Dunn	- Town Clerk's Department
Rhys Campbell	- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received for this meeting.

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

No declarations were made at this meeting.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 29 November 2023 be approved as a correct record.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Sub-Committee received the actions tracker and noted the following:

1. Regarding the action in respect of vehicle charging points, feasibility studies identified that many of the sites needed more remedial work to the electrical installations than originally anticipated. The Chair highlighted the changes that were expected regarding the abolition of the purchase of fossil fuel consuming motor vehicles and encouraged officers to look at infrastructure, and more innovative technologies that were available for use on City of London Corporation's estates.

2. An officer provided an update on automatic door devices in which they confirmed that an access audit was to be conducted across all of the estates and a report shall be brought to the Sub-Committee at its next meeting advising Members of the next steps needed.

3. The Chair had asked for a report to be brought to the Committee at its next meeting regarding the arbitration panel being a part of the complaints process,

4. An officer provided an update concerning the new repairs and maintenance contract, advising Members that the consultant (Pennington) tender documentation and that all issues had been discussed with Pennington and raised with both the Corporation's Legal team and Procurement team. In response a Member asked when the Sub-Committee shall be able view and comment on the tender document, and it was agreed that once a draft had been produced that it shall be circulated to Members for comment.

5. A member raised a question regarding the September 2022 Customer Service Review and asked officers for the results of this exercise and what actions the City of London Corporation had taken already; the potential costs to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) were mentioned also. Officers confirmed that repairs dominated the review, and a resident focus project was formed which aimed to improve policies, procedures and service standards. A report showing the results of this review had been expected to be submitted to the Sub-Committee in June 2023 but officers were content to circulate to Members after this meeting and also for it to be included on the agenda as an item for information at the next meeting.

5. **HOUSING GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

The Sub-Committee received a report which considered the current governance arrangements and recommends how these arrangements should be provided in the future.

The Assistant Town Clerk advised the committee that the report had already been considered by the Community and Children's Services Committee, the Barbican Residents Committee and the Barbican Estate Residents Consultative Committee. The Assistant Town Clerk advised Members that the decision

sought by this Committee was whether it had any feedback to the recommendations listed in the report that it would like to make to the Community and Children's Services Committee.

The Chair asked if more clarity could be given on the annual workplan and was keen to know when an update would be given to the Sub-Committee to which officers confirmed that this would be provided at the next meeting.

A member raised a concern, which had previously been raised at the Community and Children's Services Committee meeting held on 25 January 2023, that it was of their opinion that the Chair of the Community and Children's Services Committee should not be Chair of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee. The creation of a wider management team and a demanding workload were highlighted as factors for their concern.

RESOLVED, that - Members agreed, to the recommendations listed in the report.

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

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services providing an update on the Housing Major Works Programme.

During the discussion and questions, the following points were noted:

- Work on wider windows had been continuing and consultation on William Blake Estate had begun. Officers were exploring all possible technologies available including vacuum glazing.
- There had been advancements on Golden Lane Estate and a pilot project had been ongoing at Crescent House. Feedback regarding this project had exceeded officers' expectations, as the pilot project had received positive reviews, and officers confirmed that vacuum glazing had helped to improve thermal comfort inside the property due to the creation of effective insulation. Officers informed the committee that an architect had been living in the property to ensure that the property is properly tested to its full potential; the architect had been monitoring heating costs and testing the creation of moisture and humidity within the property. Officers also met with residents in the week prior to demonstrate how the ventilation system works.
- Officers referred to the appendices of this report, explaining the data presented and asked Members for feedback in terms of how to better present this information. An update on Avondale Estate was provided and majority of works there had been completed however there were certain clashes with other programmes (Cadent replacing the Gas Infrastructure) whilst also managing several contractors on site which consequently caused a temporary pause on certain works due to be carried out. Officers advised that the estimated costs listed in the

appendices were unfunded and that a quantitative surveyor had been tasked with revising these costs to ensure that they were current to modern day values and to ensure any inflation had been applied. A member acknowledged that a good number of works had been completed under budget however was concerned as to why costs were not predicted closer to outcome. It was suggested that the estimated costs of £110 Million had not been met and as a result the Member suggested that the underspend could be used for unfunded projects. Whilst officers were optimistic that this could be a possibility, they informed Members that this was dependant on the costs of a project as these tended to vary, however officers confirmed that they strived to come under budget where possible.

- The Deputy Chair asked if officers could arrange for a separate session for Members regarding the Housing Revenue Account where there could be a discussion regarding concerns raised. The Chair confirmed that an informal session with both Members of Community and Children's Services Committee and this Sub-Committee shall be arranged once the relevant reports had been commissioned. The Chair thanked officers for their work and acknowledged that completing a project whilst under spending was great achievement compared to previous projects.
- Regarding communal heating installation on Middlesex Street Estate, a member was pleased to see that the installations within Petticoat Tower had been completed, barring five properties, and asked officers for an update regarding these five properties. Officers advised Members that they were progressing well with the remainder of the properties left and were gaining access to these properties via the appropriate channels.
- A Member asked for an update regarding the replacements of windows at Windsor House and asked if officers were able to accelerate the process. Officers confirmed that they would investigate further and return to committee with an update.

RESOLVED, that - the report be received and its contents noted.

7. **TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS 2023-2024**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, providing an update on the planned survey of the City Corporation's tenants.

Officers informed the committee that this was the first year that the tenant satisfaction survey became mandatory, and the results were expected to be supplied to the Social Housing Regulator by 30 June 2024. Performance had increased since the last survey, however repairs needed improvements in the years to come. More analysis of the results was expected to be conducted and a report was expected to be produced for the next meeting. A member asked officers why there were tenants who had not completed the survey and whether an 18% return rate was good in comparison to previous return rates.

Officers responded to Members and explained that there was no clear reason as to why tenants had not filled out the survey, alluding to multiple factors such as personal preference, and that the minimum return rate was based on the tenant population. Acuity, the social housing consultancy firm who conducted the survey, calculated the number needed to meet the central government threshold and officers suggested that the City Corporation would exceed this threshold in the following year. However, the statistics were reliable since there were more tenant responses than both tenant and leaseholders combined in previous years.

A Member asked officers if there was more work that the City of London Corporation could do to help tenants who were struggling with the impact of the current cost of living. Officers confirmed that whilst there were ongoing initiatives, such as the Green Doctors Scheme and Winter Measures Programme, there could be more work to be done and if Members had any areas that they would like further insight on that these areas could be included in the next Tenant Satisfaction Survey.

Members asked whether before the strategy for engagement for the following year had been finalised if the allocated Members for each of the estates could be considered to provide any feedback or suggestions in regards to improvements of the housing estates, to which the Chair confirmed that Members would have a chance at the next meeting to raise any questions or concerns.

A Member asked officers what percentage of the homes situated on the City of London Corporation estates were not described as “decent” and if residents had been informed of the allocation of one survey per household. Officers advised Members that in the ensuing year tenants were to be informed that the survey invitation is personal to each household and should not be forwarded onto others. Regarding the statistics requested by Members, officers confirmed that they would return with further information which shall be included in a report expected to be brought to the next committee meeting. Officers highlighted to Members that whilst the decent homes standard was outdated the data, however, suggested that the City of London Corporation was compliant and whether people were to consider it a “decent” home was a complicated matter. The Deputy Chair was keen to know if there were any properties that did not meet this specific standard and what work could be done to rectify this. Officers confirmed that if there were some that did not meet this standard that the decent homes callback programme can be used to identify these properties.

Regarding the issuing of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey, a Member encouraged officers to ensure that these were being properly received by tenants since their neighbour had not received theirs. Officers confirmed that next year they will reconsider how they conduct these surveys; reminders and phone calls were mentioned. Officers also confirmed that there was a vast number of contact information available to them for both tenants and leaseholders, and that they tended to receive a lot of responses via email. A member enquired about the percentage of contact information attained to which

officers confirmed that they would return with statistics at the next committee meeting.

A Member asked officers if this survey was routinely carried out at the same time of year each year and officers confirmed that there was not a definitive routine but would try to get the surveys conducted in a regular cycle.

RESOLVED, that - the report be received and its contents noted.

8. SECURE TENANTS: RENT SETTING 2024-25

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, providing an update on the current rent setting policy.

A Member asked officers whether tenants in receipt of Housing Benefits or Universal Credit would be covered by these benefits mentioned regarding the increase to their rental charge. Officers confirmed that tenants would be covered by these benefits.

RESOLVED, that - the report be received and its contents noted.

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

A Member asked if the Committee could receive a report which provided further details on the progress of the new buildings and projects being constructed to which the Chair advised that this question was related to an item of business which would be picked up under item 10.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

Chair discussed the target set for the building of social and affordable housing and how this was not expected to be achieved in the estimated time given and suggested for these targets to be reset. The Chair asked for a report to be brought to committee at a later date and asked officers to provide more information on the matter. Officers confirmed that the original target had been to build 3,700 new homes; 700 of which are to be social housing units developed on existing housing estates and a further 3,000 on land acquired by the City of London Corporation. They expected that by the end of 2025, 370 of the 700 units will have been built and identified potential for further developments on other estates. Officers informed the committee that an estimated timeline had not been established in the initial report concerning the building of social housing and that officers can report to Members a target that might be more feasible. In regards to Avondale Estate, and its potential for the development of social and affordable housing, this would require demolition and regeneration of the estate to which officers suggested investigating a different approach due to financial constraints.

It was confirmed that a report would be brought to the next committee meeting detailing the status of affordable housing built, in relation to the 3,700 target,

and the expectations of the London Wide Plan and what the City of London Corporations' local plan originally set out to achieve.

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 29 November 2023 be approved as a correct record.

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

There were two non-public questions.

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

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 12:18pm.

Chairman

Contact Officer: Rhys Campbell
rhys.campbell@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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Community & Children's Services

Members Update

Date Added	Subject	Action Agreed	Responsible Officer	Target Meeting Date - HMASC	Update
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.	Peta Caine	November 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. Verbal Update at June meeting.
08.07.2022	Automatic door devices.	Report to be provided with further detail on automatic door-opening devices at estates	Liam Gillespie/Pam Wharfe	November 2023	Report to be tabled at 03/06/24.
17.04.2023	Arbitration Panel as part of the Complaints Process.	Look at introducing Arbitration Panel to review complaints before referral to Housing Ombudsman.	Liam Gillespie	January 2024	Report considered at CCS 01/05/24 and on agenda for HMASC 03/06/24
17.04.2023	New Repairs and Maintenance Contract to include consideration of compensation to be paid by contractor to residents for its failings.	Review the introduction of contractor compensation and incentivisation clauses in new R&M contract. Liaise with colleagues in legal and City Procurement.	Michael Gwyther-Jones	March 2024	Report is tabled for 03/06/24 meeting
17.04.2023	Housing Complaints Compensation Policy	Members to see the Housing Complaints Policy as part of a report into Housing Complaints generally.	Liam Gillespie	January 2024	Report was agreed at the DCCS meeting 01/05/24. DCCS asked that the report be tabled to a rearranged HMASC meeting for more discussion.

Community & Children's Services

Members Update

Agenda Item 5

Committee: Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee	Dated: 3 June 2024
Subject: Housing Complaints Update	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2, 4, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services	For Decision
Report author: Liam Gillespie, Head of Housing Management, Department of Community and Children's Services	

Summary

This report addresses two actions contained in the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee action tracker, relating to housing complaints and the potential use of arbitration as a means of resolving complaints.

The Housing Ombudsman's expectation of social landlords in complaints handling has changed, with a new Complaint Handling Code, which is now statutory following the passing of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. This Code requires landlords to identify a senior lead person and a Member responsible for complaints, and two recommendations are made about the proper people to hold these positions.

This report also outlines recent complaints and compensation figures and provides an update on how officers intend to incorporate complaints learning into current processes through a Complaints Learning Panel.

The current policies on complaints and compensation are under review and will be submitted to this Sub-Committee for approval, once they have been amended to ensure compliance with the changed Complaint Handling Code.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the report
- Comment on the suitability of arbitration as a potential dispute resolution measure for housing complaints at the City Corporation

- Endorse the suggestion that the Assistant Director for Housing Management acts as the 'senior lead person' for housing complaints in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code
- Endorse the suggestion that the Chairman of this Sub-Committee acts as the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) under the same Code
- Agree the reporting cycle for complaints matters proposed in section 11

Main Report

Background

1. This report is intended to update Members on our management of housing complaints and outline regulatory changes relating to the handling of complaints by social landlords.
2. Our current policies on Complaints and Compensation are under review and are attached to this report. Members may wish to comment on any matters they would like officers to consider as part of the review of these policies.
3. At the April 2023 meeting of this Sub-Committee, Members suggested that officers should examine the possibility of using arbitration as a means of resolving complaints. The example of Southwark Council's housing arbitration service was suggested, and officers have been in contact with counterparts at that authority regarding their process. Further information is provided below.

Housing Ombudsman - Complaints Handling Code

4. The City Corporation is a compulsory member of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme. The Ombudsman provides a free, independent, and impartial service which investigates complaints from tenants and leaseholders of social landlords, in accordance with the rules set out in the Housing Ombudsman Scheme.
5. The Ombudsman has a Complaint Handling Code, which sets out the Ombudsman's expectations of landlords and how they manage complaints. Some key areas of the Code are:
 - a universal definition of a complaint
 - providing easy access to the complaints procedure and ensuring residents are aware of it, including their right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service
 - the requirement to have two complaints stages, and clear times set out for responses
 - ensuring fairness in complaint handling with a resident-focused process
 - taking action to put things right and appropriate remedies
 - creating a positive complaint handling culture through continuous learning and improvement
 - completing an annual self-assessment against the Code

6. With effect from 1 April 2024, the Code became statutory in accordance with the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. Landlords with more than 1,000 homes are now required to return an annual self-assessment of their compliance with the Code, at the same time as they submit their Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) return to the Regulator for Social Housing.
7. The deadline for the next TSMs return and submission of the self-assessment is 30 June 2024. Officers are due to complete the latest self-assessment in April 2024. This will be published on our website so that residents can see how we are performing against the requirements of the Code.
8. A service improvement plan will be developed to address any areas of non-compliance with the Code, which will be submitted to this Sub-Committee and published on our website.

‘Senior Lead Person’ and ‘Member Responsible for Complaints’

9. The Complaint Handling Code requires:

- A ‘senior lead person’ to be appointed as being responsible for complaints handling, who must assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision
- A member of our governing body to be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints, to support a positive complaints culture (referred to as the Member Responsible for Complaints or ‘MRC’). The MRC will be responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the landlord’s complaint handling performance. This person must have access to suitable information and staff to perform this role and report on their findings

10. It is suggested that:

- the Assistant Director for Housing Management acts as the named senior lead officer for this purpose
- the Chairman of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee should hold the responsibilities of the Member Responsible for Complaints

11. The Code states that the MRC must receive:

- regular updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance
- regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling
- regular updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman’s investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings
- an annual complaints performance and service improvement report

12. To meet the requirements of the Code in relation to the MRC's responsibilities, it is proposed that officers submit a quarterly report to this Sub-Committee, outlining performance and key information on complaints.
13. Subject to Members' comments, the first such report can be submitted to this Sub-Committee's next meeting on 8 July 2024, to cover the full 2023/4 financial year, and including the self-assessment against the Code. Subsequent reports can then be provided, covering each quarter, and providing the information outlined in paragraph 8 above.

Complaints Learning Panel

14. Officers have set up a Complaints Learning Panel, which will be held quarterly to review the outcomes of complaints from residents. The purpose of the Complaints Learning Panel is to identify themes, trends and potential service improvements (including amendments to policies and procedures) arising out from resident complaints. Any identified actions will be tracked by the responsible officers. The Panel will be chaired by the Assistant Director or their delegate, as the senior lead person for complaints purposes.
15. The activity of the Panel will be used to create reports to this Sub-Committee and support the role of the MRC, as well as informing communications with residents on service improvements identified.

Complaints Figures, 2021 – 2024

16. **Appendix One** shows the total Stage One complaints received over the past three financial years.
17. There has been a marked increase in total complaints, particularly for repairs related matters (which includes Major Works complaints). In 2023/4, there was an increase in repairs complaints of 84% based on the previous year. The increase for housing management complaints was 55% for the same period.
18. A change in the Housing Complaints Policy came into force in September 2021, bringing the process in line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. Changes to the policy removed the third investigation stage, with stage two being the final stage for internal investigation. Stage Three investigations were honoured for those complaints currently under investigation at the time of the policy change.
19. In line with the Complaint Handling Code, we promoted resident awareness of how to make a complaint by promoting the service and policy changes, including updating the webpage, ways to make a complaint, attending estate drop-ins and placing articles in the @Home residents' magazine.
20. We increased complaints awareness among staff at this time, ensuring that officers are clear on what defines a complaint, and their responsibility in ensuring that complaints are forwarded appropriately and that residents are signposted to the service.

21. Increased awareness of the complaints process might explain some of the increase, however the standard of service provided in some areas, for example in responsive repairs, will likely account for a sizeable part of the noted increase. Members are aware of the challenges faced by the Repairs service at present, and the actions being taken by officers to address under-performance.
22. An analysis of trends and themes arising from these complaints is being compiled for discussion at the Complaints Learning Panel, to try to isolate the drivers for the increase in complaints over the past three years, and enable remedial action to be planned. Officers will present this further analysis to Members in July 2024.

Compensation and Housing Complaints

23. The aim of complaints resolution is to put matters right as far as is reasonably practicable. Sometimes, the appropriate solution is an amount of financial compensation, for instance where there has been a quantifiable loss to a complainant (e.g. damage to their property).
24. In some cases, it is appropriate to offer an amount in recognition of distress or inconvenience caused to a complainant. Our current Compensation Policy gives some examples of the sums that might be offered in these circumstances:
 - £25 for a missed appointment
 - Goodwill gesture up to £50 for distress and inconvenience
25. Officers have discretion under this policy to make an award of financial compensation appropriate to the circumstances. If a service failure results in serious inconvenience or distress to a complainant, a decision will be made on an appropriate amount of compensation with reference to previous complaints and typical amounts awarded by the Housing Ombudsman.
26. As outlined below, the Compensation Policy is being reviewed and it is intended that more detail will be provided about financial compensation and the typical amounts that might be offered in given circumstances.
27. The table below shows the total compensation paid to complainants over the past three years.

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
£750.00	£7,351.00	£9,221.61

28. The figures above include some substantial amounts of compensation which were payable by contractors, however they are included in the figures as they were offered in response to complaints investigated through our complaints procedure.
29. There are several possible reasons for the increase in compensation besides the increase in complaints which are upheld:

- the compensation policy had not always been referred to correctly by complaints investigators, to determine if the level of service failure warranted an award, however this has been addressed
- investigating officers for repairs and maintenance complaints had been relying on complainants requesting compensation, rather than referring to the policy to determine if the service failures identified warranted compensation

30. The changing requirements of the Complaint Handling Code and improved awareness among officers has meant that complaints investigators are now clearer on the expectations regarding awards for service failures which have caused distress and inconvenience to residents.

Policy Reviews

31. Officers are currently reviewing both the Housing Complaints Policy (Appendix Two) and the Compensation Policy (Appendix Three), to ensure that they are compliant with the expectations of the Housing Ombudsman and the Complaint Handling Code.

32. The Housing Complaints Policy was last reviewed in 2021 and best practice in this area has developed in the meantime, however it is not anticipated that the policy will change significantly. Some improvements and clarifications have been identified, to better meet the requirements of the Complaints Handling Code.

33. The Compensation Policy was last approved in 2020. Officers have identified that the current policy requires improvement in some respects, to give more detail about typical circumstances in which compensation will be offered, and, where financial remedies are appropriate, list standard amounts that will normally be offered as compensation.

34. Officers intend to submit the revised policies to the 8 July 2024 meeting of this Sub-Committee.

Arbitration as a Complaints Resolution Method

35. At the meeting of HMASC on 17 April 2023, an action was added to the Action Tracker regarding the potential for an 'Arbitration Panel' for resolving complaints from tenants and leaseholders.

36. The model used by the London Borough of Southwark was suggested as an example of the kind of solution that could be considered. Officers have spoken to a counterpart at Southwark Council about the Southwark Arbitration Service, which is used to resolve disputes between that authority and its tenants or leaseholders. It is believed that Southwark's service is the only one of its type operated by a local authority in London.

37. Southwark's Arbitration Service operates two 'tribunals'; one for tenants and one for leasehold disputes. The average caseload pre-COVID was around 45 cases

per year, however this has since fallen. It should be noted that Southwark has a housing stock of approximately 38,000.

38. Each tribunal has a set of rules, which outline the sort of disputes which can be entertained, the composition of the panels and the rules for findings and remedies. The legal basis for the service is the Arbitration Act 1996 and the provisions of the Tenancy Agreement or lease. The Tenancy Agreement lists the sort of disputes which can be referred for arbitration.

39. In outline, Southwark's Arbitration Service works as follows:

- The two tribunal panels are made up of an independent chair (often a housing professional), a Member (not from the Ward in which the dispute arose) and a resident (usually nominated by a Tenants' Association, again not from the area in which the dispute arose)
- A barrister acts as Clerk to the panel to ensure the rules are followed and to record the proceedings and decisions
- The complainant can apply to have their complaint considered by the panel once they have been through the formal housing complaints process (i.e. stages one and two)
- Taking the arbitration route is done by mutual agreement and the parties consent to being bound by the findings of the panel
- The tribunal may award compensation, require specific performance of works up to £50,000, or make a declaration as to the rights of the parties

40. Although the formal complaints process must be exhausted before arbitration may be applied for, it is not strictly a 'third' stage to the housing complaints process, as it is not compulsory; the complainant still has the choice to go to the Housing Ombudsman instead of using arbitration if they wish.

41. The status of arbitration as a quasi-legal method of dispute resolution means that arbitrated complaints will not normally be entertained by the Housing Ombudsman if the complainant subsequently approaches them, as their jurisdiction precludes becoming involved in legal and quasi-legal processes.

42. The types of complaints from tenants that Southwark Arbitration can deal with are contained in the Council's Tenancy Agreement (Conditions of Tenancy) booklet, and include:

- disrepair
- missed appointments
- lack of heating and hot water
- standard of repair

43. The types of complaints from leaseholders that the panel can deal with are:

- alleged unreasonable action regarding the Right to Buy sales process
- alleged breaches of covenant, excluding those which fall under the jurisdiction of the First-Tier Tribunal (Property Chamber).

44. While arbitration is not a 'third stage' of the complaints process, we would still need to clarify how an arbitration process would interact with the revised Complaints Handling Code expectations. The new Code requires that:

*Where a landlord's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor or **independent adjudicator**) at any stage, it must form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Residents must not be expected to go through two complaints processes.*

45. The justification for providing arbitration is presumably that it is a voluntary option open to the complainant; they may instead elect to pursue their complaint to the Ombudsman if they wish.

46. Were we to consider this further, the following implications would need to be addressed:

- Tenancies and leases would need to be reviewed to ensure that they provided for arbitration. There is reference to arbitration as a dispute resolution option in current leases, however the scope of this would need to be determined. Current tenancies make no reference to alternative methods of dispute resolution
- The potential cost of maintaining the system would need to be determined (this would largely consist of legal fees and officer time)
- The responsibility for administering any arbitration service would need to be decided (i.e. which Department it would sit in, to ensure independence and confidence in the process)
- The compliance of any process with the Housing Ombudsman's expectations would need to be clarified

47. Members are asked to comment on this process and indicate whether they would like officers to consider it further.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

A clear, transparent and fair complaints process will support the achievement of the outcomes in our proposed Housing Strategy, which is designed to support the delivery of quality resident-focused services.

Financial implications – none.

Resource implications – none.

Legal implications – none.

Risk implications – none.

Equalities implications – none.

Climate implications – none.

Security implications – none.

Conclusion

48. This report addresses two actions contained in the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee action tracker, relating to housing complaints and the potential use of arbitration as a means of resolving complaints.

49. The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, which is now statutory, outlines expectations of social landlords in complaints handling. Officers are currently reviewing the existing Complaints and Compensation Policies to ensure that our practice in this area accords with these requirements.

50. Housing complaints have increased significantly in 2023/4 and officers will analyse trends and themes in complaints to inform learning and service improvements, through a new Complaints Learning Panel. Members will be kept informed of developments in this area through Committee reports.

51. The model for housing dispute arbitration used by the London Borough of Southwark has been examined and Members are asked to comment on whether this might be suitable for our purposes. The implications of using arbitration, particularly how such a service would interact with the Complaint Handling Code, need further investigation.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Complaints totals 2021 - 2024
- Appendix 2 – Complaints Policy
- Appendix 3 – Compensation Policy

Liam Gillespie

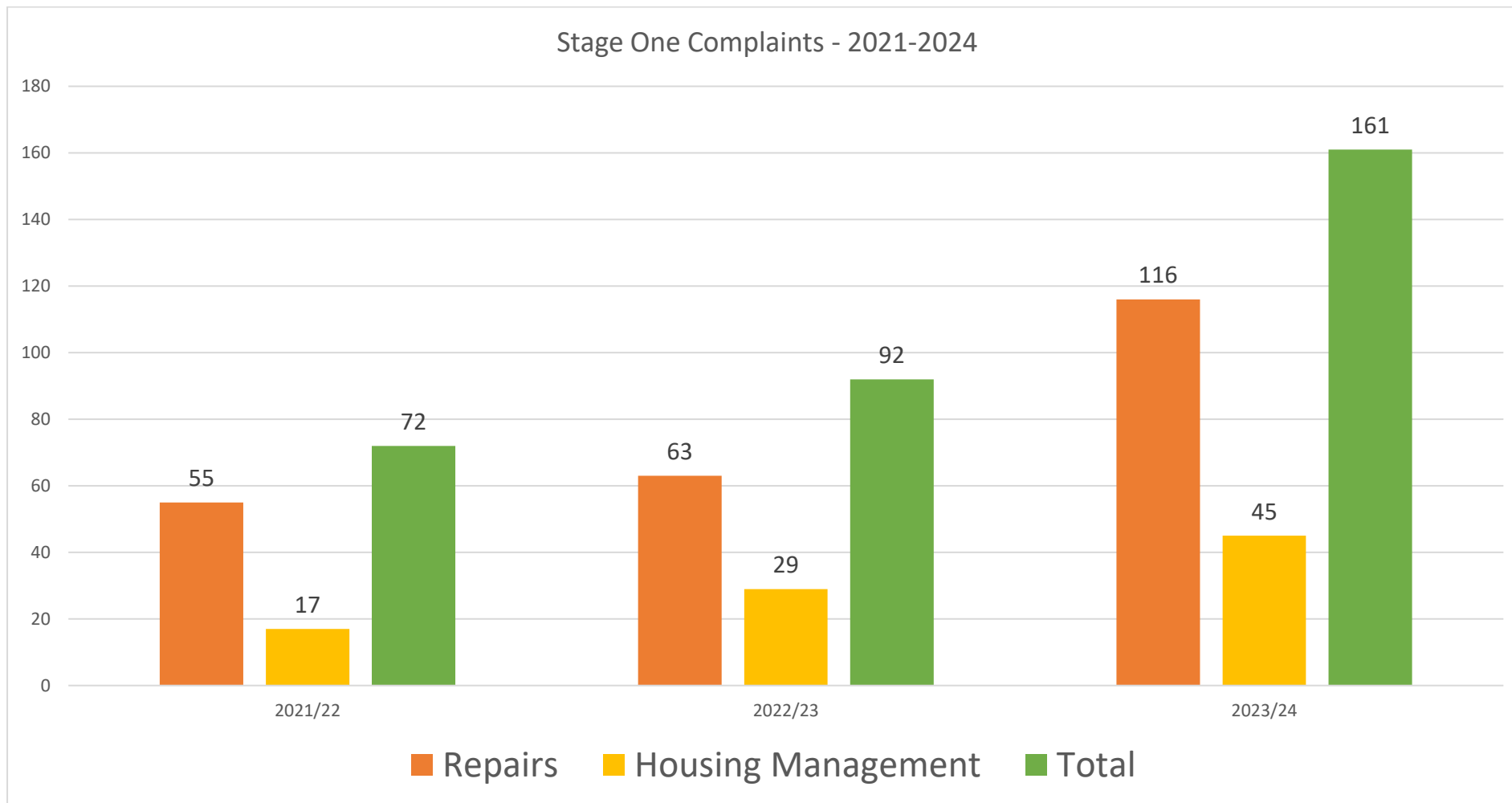
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Total Complaints: 2021/22, 2022/23 & 2023/24



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City of London Corporation
Department of Community & Children's Services
Housing Service

Compensation Policy

Approved by:	<i>Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee</i>
Original Approval Date:	<i>September 2016</i>
Review Date:	<i>April 2020</i>
Re-Approval Date	<i>30/09/2020 (v.2 – this version)</i>
Next Review Date	<i>30/09/2023</i>

1. Introduction

Compensation is often requested as a resolution to complaints, or in response to damage to goods caused by the alleged negligence of City of London employees or agents. This policy outlines our approach to dealing with requests for compensation from our residents.

2. Aims of this Policy

The aims of this policy are:

- To provide a framework for the compensation that may be due to a customer where we fail to meet our own service standards, or provide a poor service, and a customer suffers a material loss because of this failure.
- To assist staff in balancing the needs of the individual with a recognition that all compensation paid by the Department of Community and Children's Services will be funded from the Housing Revenue Account.

3. Scope

The policy applies to residents living on City of London Housing Service estates which are managed as part of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), namely:

- tenants (including sub-tenants of leaseholders)
- leaseholders
- freeholders
- occupiers of City of London and Gresham Almshouses properties

In exceptional circumstances, this policy may apply to non-residents, subject to the Assistant Directors' discretion.

4. Policy Statement

Paying financial compensation, or compensation in kind, is an exceptional course of action and will only be considered if other outcomes are not deemed appropriate. In most cases it is reasonable to resolve complaints by:

- Apologising for the failure
- Providing the service asked for
- Changing the service provision or procedures for future use where a complaint has highlighted that a change is required
- Reconsidering a decision which may have been unreasonable or unfair

In exceptional circumstances, where the situation cannot be rectified by apology or practical action, compensation may be appropriate. The types of service failures that may trigger compensation, whether caused by City of London staff, or contractors or agents acting on our behalf, are as follows:

- Failing to deliver /provide a specified benefit, service or other entitlement
- Loss of amenities
- Loss of, or damage to, personal property
- Where a customer has incurred an expense as a result of our failure to provide a service

Compensation will only be considered where a service failing, or a consequence of action or inaction on our part, has caused material loss or harm to the resident and compensation would offer an appropriate form of remedy.

5. Compensation for Loss of/Damage to Goods

This policy is not intended to cover situations where an insurance claim is a more appropriate solution. If a resident believes that they have suffered loss or damage to goods and this was due to the negligence of the City's staff, agents or contractors, an insurance claim will normally be the most appropriate course of action (whether on their own policy or a relevant policy held by the Housing Service).

Please see the Insurance Cover and Claims Policy for more information.

6. What is compensation?

Compensation is taken to mean something, typically money, which is given to someone in recognition of loss, suffering or injury.

Compensation may take three forms:

- Direct replacement of items or payment to the value of those items.
- A goodwill gesture such as flowers or vouchers
- Financial recompense for actual loss or in recognition of the significant distress and inconvenience caused

7. When may compensation be considered?

Compensation may be considered at any stage in our complaints process – our complaints policy promotes resolution of the situation as rapidly as possible.

The event giving rise to the consideration of compensation should have occurred within the last six months. Compensation in respect of an event that happened more than six months previously will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. An exception may be made if there has been continuous contact with the resident or delays in bringing the matter to a conclusion have been as a result of actions (or inaction) by those working for the City.

8. Factors that will be taken into consideration

Compensation is discretionary. Each case is different and will be considered on its own merits. Staff may discuss the situation with the resident, and their views as to what would be an acceptable remedy will be considered.

The following will be taken into consideration when considering making a compensation payment:

- **Money not paid**

Where money due to the resident has not been paid, the City will pay the money due

- **Quantifiable Costs**

Where the resident can evidence incurred costs which would not have been necessary but for the service failure, reimbursement of those costs may be appropriate. The exception to this is where the resident incurs costs unreasonably.

- **Loss of a non-monetary benefit**

The resident may have been deprived of a non-monetary benefit, such as a service or amenity which under normal circumstances they would have received. An attempt should be made to quantify the loss of such benefits, to determine the amount of compensation due. It may be possible to base this on what it would have cost the City of London Corporation to make the appropriate provision for the relevant period or what value may be put on the facility.

- **Loss of value**

Where something owned by the resident has lost value as a result of the department's actions, an objective assessment of the loss may be possible. The matter may be referred for assessment where appropriate by an independent valuer.

- **Maladministration**

Maladministration is usually considered to be a fault with the way something has been done or not done, rather than the decision or outcome. It may occur where an organisation has failed to act reasonably in accordance with the law, its own policies and generally accepted standards.

- **Distress and Inconvenience**

In exceptional circumstances, compensation may be considered for distress or inconvenience. All the relevant circumstances will be considered, including the severity of the inconvenience, the length of time involved, and the number of people affected.

It is important to note that severe inconvenience may be caused over long periods of time without fault – for example where the City is engaged in legitimate and timely repairs. In such instances, this does not warrant compensation if the City has managed the problem in a fair and proper way, for example, in accordance with our policies and procedures.

10. Offer of Compensation

Offers of compensation will be made in writing and expressed to be '*in full and final settlement*' of the matter.

11. Offsetting Compensation

Any offers of financial compensation will be offset against arrears of rent, service charges or any other debts owed to the City of London Corporation Housing Service.

13. Policy Variations

In exceptional circumstances, we may consider making a variation to this policy. Our reasoning can be provided to the affected parties on request.

14. Monitoring and Performance

We will monitor our use of this policy and the way in which it is implemented, ensuring that any relevant information is reported at appropriate intervals.

15. Training

We will provide all staff responsible for implementing this policy with comprehensive training as required.

16. Equality and Diversity

This Policy has been subject to a full Equalities Analysis and will be implemented in accordance with our responsibilities and duties under relevant legislation, including the Equalities Act 2010.

17. Accessibility

We will ensure that tenants' needs are considered when implementing this Policy to ensure that they are treated fairly. We will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that customers with distinct communication needs are not unreasonably and disproportionately affected. This could involve providing communications in alternative languages or formats, or providing interpretation or transcription as appropriate.

18. Data Protection and Information Exchange

We will comply with our obligations under relevant data protection legislation and regulations. We will process and store personal information securely.

There are some circumstances in which we are required by law to disclose information given to us.

19. Policy Review


We will review this policy at least every three years, or following relevant changes to legislation, regulation or policy.

20. Legislation

- Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulation 1994

21. Related documents

- Complaints Policy
- Insurance Cover and Claims Policy
- Disposal of Personal Property Policy
- Tenants' Agreement and Handbook

<p>Department of Community & Children’s Services</p> <p>Housing Service</p>	
<p>Policy Title: Compensation Policy</p>	
<p>Document Owner: Head of Housing Management</p>	
<p>Date Approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2016 (original) • 30/09/2020 (version 2) 	
<p>Version: 2</p>	<p>Last amendment: September 2020</p>
<p>Effective date: 30/09/2020</p>	<p>Next review date: 30/09/2023</p>
<p>Changes in this version:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formatting 	

Appendix 1: Examples of Compensation Amounts

All service failures and requests for compensation are different and will be considered on their own merits in accordance with our policies, including the Compensation Policy.

The information provided below is to help officers to assess how much compensation may be due in different types of circumstance, and to provide a benchmark to ensure compensation for similar types of service failure is considered fairly.

The City is under no obligation to pay the compensation amounts outlined in this policy.

1. Distress and Inconvenience

We are aware that for any person to have had cause to make a complaint, they will have suffered some inconvenience or distress. In exceptional circumstances, or cases where disproportionate levels of distress and inconvenience have been caused, it may be appropriate to provide a goodwill gesture such as flowers or gift vouchers up to the value of £50. It may be appropriate to talk to the resident about what they would appreciate.

2. Missed Appointment – failure of contractor to attend appointment

If one appointment is missed, no compensation is due.

If more than one appointment is missed, or a second appointment is required because the contractor attended the first appointment but was unprepared, the value of £25 per missed appointment may be appropriate. The officer considering the complaint may add a further amount of up to £50 if there are other relevant factors, for example if the customer has suffered a high level of distress and inconvenience. More compensation may be offered at the discretion of the Head of Service or Assistant Director.

3. Failure to set up direct debit details correctly leading to rent arrears

If the City of London Corporation fail to set up a direct debit arrangement correctly, a tenant's account will go into rent arrears. Whilst the responsibility to pay rent lies with the tenant, where they think the arrangement is in place they may not check. Should a

resident receive correspondence regarding rent arrears, the department will explain and resolve the situation.

Should there be a repeated failure, crediting some of the rent owed would be appropriate, linked to the amount of time that the failure had occurred. For example, if the direct debit had taken more than 6 months to resolve, the credit of an amount equivalent to 2 week's rent in recognition of the service failure, the distress and the inconvenience may be appropriate.

4. Failure to administrate steps in the Right to Buy process within published timescales

If the City of London Corporation fail to meet these timescales, and there is no negative impact on the sale, then no compensation would be due.

If we fail to meet these timescales and a negative impact is caused, then the City should look at the impact and determine what compensation may be due. For example, if a mortgage that had been arranged is no longer available to the resident, we should recompense any fees charged for that mortgage arrangement.

5. Failure to place a bid on Choice Based Lettings on behalf of a person

If the City of London Corporation had agreed to place bids on appropriate properties on behalf of an applicant, and on a particular property we failed to do so, if the data shows that the applicant would not have won the bid, there is no negative impact and no compensation is due.

However, if the applicant would have had sufficient priority to win the bid and be offered first choice on the property, the service failure is more serious. In addition to an apology and an explanation, compensation or a goodwill gesture of up to £50 may be appropriate. It may be appropriate to talk to the resident about what they would appreciate.

Further Information

There are examples of case studies, the findings made by the Ombudsman and the levels of compensation paid on the Housing Ombudsman website:

<http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/learning-faqs/case-studies/>

Appendix 2 – Right to Repair

This document provides a summary of The Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulation 1994.

The Right to Repair is a statutory compensation scheme. Therefore the process and amounts are not subject to discretion. The scheme only applies to 'qualifying repairs' including insecure windows and doors, unsafe power sockets or electrical fittings, leaking roofs and broken entry phone systems.

A repair only qualifies if the City of London Housing Service is responsible for it and it is estimated to cost less than £250.

If a resident claims a repair should be subject to the scheme, we may inspect it before we decide. We must write to the resident to confirm if the scheme does not apply.

When a resident reports a qualifying repair, and we have confirmed it qualifies, we must issue a repair notice to a contractor and send the resident a copy with information on how the right to repair scheme works. The time limit for the contractor to do the work will be set by our established timescales for completing that type of repair.

If the repair work is not done within that specified time limit, the resident must bring that to our attention and request another contractor to do the work. We must then issue a repair notice to a second contractor, subject to procurement restrictions, and send the resident a copy.

If the second contractor does not do the repair work within the policy timescales, the resident must be paid £10 in compensation. For every extra day the repair is not done, the resident must be paid another £2. The most compensation that must be paid for any one repair job is £50.

If the resident is not at home to let the contractor in as arranged, the scheme no longer applies.

The compensation may be used to reduce rent arrears if there are any.



City of London Corporation
Department of Community & Children's Services
Housing Service

Housing Complaints Policy

Approved by:	<i>Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee</i>
Original Approval Date:	<i>May 2017 (v.1), May 2019 (v.2)</i>
Review Date:	<i>September 2021 (this version – v.3)</i>
Re-Approval Date:	<i>20/09/2021</i>
Next Review Date:	<i>September 2024</i>

1. Purpose and scope

1.1 We have this policy because we want our residents and service users to know about our approach to complaints. We aim to provide good quality services but sometimes we get it wrong. When this happens, we want to make it as easy as possible for residents to tell us and know that we will respond positively, quickly and fairly.

1.2 This policy applies to:

- City of London tenants, leaseholders and freeholders who receive services from the Housing Service
- Those affected by the City of London Housing Service
- Those applying for services delivered by the City of London Housing Service

2. Policy aims and objectives

2.1 Our priority is to put things right when they go wrong. To help us do this, we aim to deliver an excellent complaint handling service that puts the complainant at the heart of what we do and gives them the chance to express their point of view and the outcome they are seeking.

2.2 A key objective of this policy is to help us better understand the resident experience. We will use this insight as an opportunity to learn and continually improve our services.

3. Definitions

3.1 We have adopted the following definition of a complaint from the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code:

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.

3.2 Regardless of the definition that we adopt, if a resident tells us that they are not satisfied with a service we will take steps to resolve the issue as quickly as possible.

4. Exclusions

4.1 We cannot always accept a complaint. Sometimes we will have valid reasons such as the following:

- **Age** – The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred more than 6 months ago, unless it is a recurring problem.
- **Legal action** – A complainant pursues the issue through a legal route. This will not stop us trying to resolve the issue.
- **Previous complaints** – A matter has already been considered and reviewed using the complaints service
- **Not within our control** – Complaints about services, people or bodies over which we have no control.
- **Insurance claims** - A claim for damages or personal injury which will be dealt with as an insurance claim.
- **Alternative appeals or review procedures** – Issues over which there is an alternative redress process.

If we cannot accept a complaint, we will explain the reasons to the complainant.

5. **Service standards**

- 5.1 When we provide a complaints service, residents can expect the following from us:

- To be provided with information about our complaints service in a variety of formats
- If we do not accept a complaint, we will explain the reasons why
- Use plain language and make clear the outcome of the complaint
- Acknowledge a complaint within 2 working days
- Provide a response at Stage 1 of our process within 10 working days
- Provide a response at Stage 2 of our process within 20 working days of the complaint being escalated.
- When we offer a remedy, we will set out what we intend to do and the timescales
- If we decide not to escalate a complaint, we will provide an explanation

6. **Legislation and regulation**

- 6.1 This policy will have regard to the following requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing:

Value for Money Standard – We will make the best use of our resources by learning from complaints and minimising mistakes.

Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard - We will adopt an approach to complaints that is clear, simple and accessible and ensure that complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly.

- 6.2 In July 2020 The Housing Ombudsman published a Complaints Handling Code. In addition, the November 2020 Social Housing White Paper proposed a new charter for social housing which includes an expectation that residents will have their complaints dealt with promptly and fairly. This policy will ensure we comply with the Code and that we are able to meet the expectations of the White Paper and subsequent legislation.

7. Our approach to complaints

7.1 Access

We will make the complaints service accessible to all residents using a range of channels through which residents can make a complaint, including our website and any official social media platforms. We will comply with our Equality Act duty and tailor our service to meet an individual's needs, making whatever adjustments are required.

We will accept complaints made by a resident's representative and fully engage with representative when we handle the complaint. We will also encourage and signpost residents to advice and advocacy services as appropriate.

We will ensure that all staff understand the difference between a service request and a complaint and are aware that complaints can be received verbally.

7.2 Awareness

We will raise awareness of our complaints service. We will use our website, newsletters and leaflets to ensure residents know how to complain.

As part of the information that we make available to residents we will include contact information for the Ombudsman. We will explain the role of the Ombudsman and ensure residents are aware that they can contact the service at any point for help and advice throughout their complaint.

7.3 Complaints handling

We want to make complaint handling a resident friendly experience. Our Housing Complaints Team will take responsibility for a complaint and work with colleagues to find a speedy resolution. Complaints will be acknowledged and recorded, and early contact made to ensure we understand the issues and the outcome the resident is seeking.

Our priority will be to resolve the complaint at the earliest opportunity. We will ask residents to allow us the opportunity to find a speedy resolution. Where the complaint requires formal consideration, we have a two-stage process.

The first stage will be a full and fair investigation. The investigation will be carried out by a senior manager who will be impartial and seek the information they need to find an outcome that would resolve the matter for the resident.

When it is not possible to find a resolution, we have a second stage in our process that allows residents to request a review of their complaint. The review will give residents the opportunity to challenge the earlier decision.

We will not unreasonably refuse to escalate a complaint to the next stage. If we refuse to allow escalation, we will explain the reasons for our decision.

When a resident is not satisfied with our response, we will ensure that are aware of how to contact the Housing Ombudsman. We will fully co-operate with the Ombudsman and continue to look to resolve the complaint.

7.4 Communication

We will make information about our complaints service available in clear and accessible formats. All our communications will use plain language. When we respond to complaints, we will make the outcome clear and explain the reasons for any decision made. We will keep residents regularly updated using methods of communication agreed with the resident.

Where a resident's expectation is unrealistic or unreasonable, we will explain this to the resident. If we consider that it may help to resolve a complaint, we seek the complainant's permission to engage with professional mediators as an alternative means of finding an effective resolution.

We will report back to our involved residents on our performance and ensure that information is regularly provided to all residents on how well we are delivering

our complaints service and improvements that have come about as a result of complaints.

7.5 Putting things right

We know that for most complainants when we have failed to provide a service the priority is to put things right. We will apologise and set out the actions we will take to resolve the complaint. Any remedy that is offered by us will reflect the extent of the service failure and the impact on the resident. When needed we will exercise appropriate discretion to find a remedy.

We recognise that finding a remedy may not in itself repair our relationship with our resident. In order to build confidence, we may at times engage the services of an independent third party to investigate or review a complaint.

7.6 Learning and improvement

We will ensure that we learn from complaints to keep improving. We will look beyond individual complaints to identify where our processes or policies need to change. We will ensure that this approach is part of our service planning framework and informs staff training.

7.7 Unacceptable complainant behaviour

If a complainant behaves unreasonably at any stage of the complaints process, we will apply our policy on unreasonable behaviour. Unacceptable or unreasonable behaviour could include:

- making numerous complaints about minor matters or matters which staff cannot change, which take up an unreasonable amount of staff time
- contacting multiple officers to complain about the same issue
- being abusive or offensive to staff or using inappropriate language
- making unfounded or unsupported complaints that may be malicious in nature.

If we consider a complainant to be unreasonable, we may close an existing complaint down or limit the means by which the resident can communicate with us. Once a decision has been made, we will inform the complainant and explain the reasons for our decision.

8. Responsibilities, monitoring and performance

- 8.1 Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation rests with the Head of Housing Management. The Head of Housing Management will ensure that staff receive the appropriate training and support to achieve the aims of this policy. Where needed we may establish appropriate operational procedures.
- 8.2 Monitoring of the implementation of this policy and our performance in handling complaints will be the responsibility of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee. We will provide complaints performance information to this Committee twice per year. Performance on complaints will also be included in our Annual Report for Tenants. We will carry out regular self-assessments against the Complaints Handling Code and ensure that our performance measures drive improvements.

9. Associated policies

- Compensation Policy
- Vexatious Complaints Policy (DCCS)

10. Document Management

Policy title	Housing Complaints Policy
Date created	September 2021 (v.3)
Policy owner	Head of Housing Management
Authorised by	Housing Management and Almhouses Sub-Committee
Date authorised	20 September 2021
Review period	3 years
Date of next review	September 2024

Consultation and assessment	
Resident consultation	Housing User Board (HUB), September 2021
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required. Minimal risk of data breaches. Use of personal data covered by Privacy Notice.

Document review history			
Version	Date amended	Date approved	Key changes
1.0		May 2017	New policy
2.0		May 2019	Re-approval only
3.0	Sept. 2021	20/09/2021	Stage three removed to comply with Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code Stage Two timescale extended to 20 working days

Agenda Item 6

Committee: Community and Children's Services Committee	Dated: 01/05/2024
Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee	03/06/2024
Subject: Member Engagement – Housing Estates	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2, 4
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services	For Decision
Report author: Liam Gillespie, Head of Housing Management, Department of Community and Children's Services	

Summary

The City Corporation has 12 social housing estates in the Square Mile and six surrounding Boroughs, with a total of 2,900 homes. Increased legal and regulatory requirements, plus the volume of major works and development activity on these estates, means that Member involvement and oversight is more important than ever.

An Allocated Members Scheme has been in place since 2000, which aims to ensure that Members are aware of the issues on each estate. This scheme requires a refresh and nominations are required to fill two existing vacancies at Avondale Square Estate and the South Bank Estates.

For Members' benefit, officers have prepared a guide to the estates, and we invite comments on this document before it is finalised.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report
- Comment on the current Allocated Members Scheme Guidelines
- Note the current Allocated Member vacancies at South Bank Estates and Avondale Square Estate, and appoint Members to act for these locations
- Comment on the draft estate guide for Members.

Main Report

Background

1. The City Corporation's Housing Division manages 12 estates in the City of London and the surrounding Boroughs of Hackney, Islington, Tower Hamlets, Southwark, Lambeth and Lewisham.
2. A total of 2,900 homes are located on these estates and Members are aware that a further 270 homes for social rent are being developed, mainly on existing estates at Sydenham Hill and York Way.
3. The effective management and governance of social housing has a growing profile nationally, and new regulatory regimes for building safety and consumer standards are now in force.
4. Additionally, Members will be aware of the amount of activity taking place in relation to improving City Corporation housing stock, building new homes and improving services delivered to residents on our estates. Active Member involvement in housing matters has therefore never been as important as it is now.

Current Position

Draft Estate Guide for Members

5. Officers have produced a guide to the City Corporation's social housing estates (**Appendix 1**), which gives Members a concise overview of each estate under our management.
6. It is intended that this document will be reviewed at least annually and circulated to Members. Officers invite Members to indicate what kind of additional information they would like to see in the document, so that the first edition can be finalised.

Allocated Members Scheme

7. The Allocated Members Scheme, which has been in operation since 2000, matches Members of the Community and Children's Services Committee with one or more of the housing estates in our portfolio. The scheme is particularly valuable for estates outside the City of London, given that they do not have direct elected Member representation within the City Corporation in the same way as Golden Lane and Middlesex Street Estates.
8. The scheme is intended to:
 - give residents and staff a named Member to 'champion' their estate
 - allow Members to take an interest in the estate, its residents, and staff

- develop a group of Members with housing knowledge and experience to contribute to the Community and Children's Services Committee.
9. Further details about the Allocated Members Scheme can be found at **Appendix 2**, with the latest list of Allocated Members at **Appendix 3**.
 10. The expectation is that Allocated Members will carry out an initial familiarisation visit to their estate, followed by two visits annually. Allocated Members will work with the local Area Manager and other officers to keep abreast of the issues affecting each estate. Area Managers will update Members at regular intervals.
 11. The Allocated Member Guidelines require an update, as they have not been examined for several years. Some of the provisions of the scheme have been discontinued or have not been carried out regularly. Members are asked to give their comments on this document and the Allocated Member scheme generally.
 12. Officers will provide a renewed commitment to ensuring that the guidelines are adhered to and will support Members in fulfilling their duties as Allocated Members.
 13. There are currently vacancies for Allocated Members at Avondale Square Estate and the South Bank Estate, both located in Southwark. These vacancies arose due to a change in Committee membership. Officers welcome any expressions of interest from current Members of this Committee to take on the role of Allocated Member at these two sites. This would ideally be one Member for each location.

Current Issues

14. Members are aware of the scale and variety of activity taking place on our estates, particularly in relation to major works projects and new developments. These initiatives have a significant impact on current residents. Effective engagement with residents and Members is vital to ensure the smooth running of these projects. Allocated Members have been playing an integral part in monitoring and delivering projects on several sites, for example, the development of new homes at Sydenham Hill Estate.
15. Members will also be aware of recent reports from Allocated Members for Middlesex Street and Golden Lane Estates, highlighting areas of concern and tracking remedial actions to address the issues raised. Officers continue to work on resolving these matters. A selection of current issues on several estates is shown below.

Avondale Square Estate

16. Several significant projects are being completed at Avondale Square, including sprinkler installation in the three Point tower blocks. The contractor appointed to complete the installation of new fire doors is now also on site.
17. Officers are also working to resolve some antisocial behaviour issues which have presented problems on the estate, largely related to unauthorised use of communal areas and instances of criminal damage to property. Staff are working with the local

Police team and are taking action under our antisocial behaviour procedures where perpetrators can be identified. Consideration is being given to commissioning a patrols service along similar lines to that provided by ParkGuard at several of our other estates.

Golden Lane Estate

18. At Members' invitation, the Chairman of Policy and Resources visited Golden Lane Estate on 4 April, with officers in attendance. In common with other locations, repairs and maintenance issues remain a concern. The issue of service charges for planned major works projects was also discussed. Following this visit, officers are preparing an action plan, and Members will receive updates on progress.

19. A report is due to be submitted to this Committee in July on the options for additional support for leaseholders with major works costs, as previously agreed.

York Way Estate

20. The development of an additional 91 new homes continues at York Way, which is due to complete in the spring of 2025. Several other projects have been carried out to upgrade existing facilities, such as installing new fire doors throughout the estate, and replacement of the communal heating system.

21. Officers from the Housing Division met recently with several Councillors from the London Borough of Islington, along with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Community and Children's Services Committee, to discuss issues raised by estate residents during a canvassing exercise carried out by the Islington Councillors. The issues raised by residents were:

- **gardening service charge:** whether this is payable when gardens are inaccessible during development works
- **communal door security:** several door frames and locks were broken, leading to misuse of communal areas and security concerns
- **communal areas:** general cleaning issues; the condition of communal areas requiring improvement; unfinished ceiling work and some inoperative lighting
- **drainage:** drainage problems leading to large puddles in the grounds
- **windows:** windows need replacing
- **damp:** several residents reported damp and mould

22. Officers are responding to these issues and will ensure that residents and Members are updated on progress as soon as possible.

Proposals

23. It is proposed that the Allocated Members Scheme is refreshed and relaunched, with officers committing to provide the required support to Members to fulfil the functions of Allocated Members. In accordance with the current guidance, officers suggest that the scheme is reviewed annually, with Members being appointed annually for each estate.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

24. Strategic implications – the Allocated Members Scheme supports good governance of our housing management functions. The scheme also helps to achieve Corporate Plan outcomes relating to the proper management of our spaces and supporting residents' wellbeing.
25. Financial implications – none.
26. Resource implications – none.
27. Legal implications – none.
28. Risk implications – none.
29. Equalities implications – none.
30. Climate implications – none.
31. Security implications – none.

Conclusion

32. The effective management and governance of social housing has a growing profile nationally and new regulatory regimes for building safety and consumer standards are now in force. Member oversight of housing management activity is therefore more important than ever. To support this work, officers propose that the long-standing Allocated Member scheme is refreshed and relaunched. Two current vacancies at Avondale Square Estate and the South Bank Estates need to be filled.
33. Officers have produced a draft guide to the City Corporation's housing estates for Members. Members' views are sought on the contents of this document before it is finalised.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – City of London Corporation Housing Estates – A Guide for Members
- Appendix 2 – Guidelines for Allocated Members
- Appendix 3 – List of Allocated Members

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City of London Corporation Housing Estates
A Guide for Members



Department of Community and Children's Services
Housing Division

March 2024

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Housing Stock Information and Estate Profiles

March 2024

This booklet is intended to give Members an introduction to each estate managed by the City Corporation as part of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). It also includes some general information about the makeup of the social housing stock managed by the City Corporation.

Information about our estates, including local office contact details, can be found on the City Corporation's website, at <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/housing/housing-estates>.

Housing Stock Profile

Estates and block names

Avondale Square, Old Kent Road, SE1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avondale House - Brettinghurst - Centre Point - Colechurch House - East Point - Eric Wilkins House - George Elliston House - Harman Close - Longland Court - Proctor House - Tevatree House - Tovy House - Twelve Acres House - West Point
City of London and Gresham Almshouses, Ferndale Road, Brixton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City of London Almshouses - Gresham Almshouses
Dron House, Adelina Grove, Whitechapel E1	
Golden Lane Estate, Fann Street EC1Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basterfield House - Bayer House - Bowater House - Crescent House - Cullum Welch House - Cuthbert Harrowing House - Gt Arthur House - Hatfield House - Stanley Cohen House
Holloway Estate, Parkhurst Road N7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Barnersbury House - Bunning House - Crayford House - Fairweather House - Hilton House - McMorran House - Whitby Court
Isleden House, Prebend Street, Islington N1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Isleden House (general needs) - Isleden House (sheltered)
Middlesex Street Estate, Middlesex Street, London E1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Petticoat Tower - Petticoat Square
South Bank Estates SE1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bazeley House, Lancaster Street - Collinson Court, Great Suffolk Street - Gt Suffolk St - Horace Jones House, Duchess Walk - Markstone House, Lancaster Street - Pakeman House, Pocock Street - Stopher House, Webber Street - Former Buildings, Summer Street

Spitalfields Market (Horner Buildings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brushfield Street - Commercial Street - Lamb Street
William Blake Estate, Hercules Road SE1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blake House - Donnelly House - Lynton Mansions - McCauley Close - St James Mansions - York House
Windsor House, Wenlock Road N1	
York Way Estate, Market Road, Islington N7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kinefold House - Lambfold House - Penfields House - Shepherd House

Summary of Housing Stock

Figures compiled March 2024

Total number of homes in management	2,832	
Tenanted homes	1,877	
Leasehold homes	955	
Houses		
Houses	45	
Flats and maisonettes	2,809	
	<i>These figures include 8 guest rooms and 14 properties leased to Habinteg Housing Association</i>	
Properties by bedroom category		
	Studios	531
	1-bedroom	777
	2-bedroom	869
	3-bedroom	594
	4-bedroom	49
Residential blocks		
Residential blocks	58	
Largest block	Crescent House (145 homes)	
Smallest block	York House, William Blake Estate (6 homes)	
Largest estate	Avondale Square (663 homes)	
Smallest estate	Isleden House (80 homes)	

AVONDALE SQUARE ESTATE, OLD KENT ROAD, SE1



Total homes	663 across 13 blocks
Tenanted	548 (83%)
Leasehold	115 (17%)
Local Authority	London Borough of Southwark
Community spaces	<p>A community centre is provided at Twelve Acres House, featuring a large hall, plus smaller meeting rooms and kitchen facilities.</p> <p>A separate communal lounge facility is provided in Harman Close for sheltered housing residents.</p>
Staffing	<p>x1 Resident Services Officer x1 Estate Supervisor x1 Customer Services Officer x1 Income Recovery Officer Estate Services Team: x7 Porter/Cleaners, x1 Gardener</p>
Residents' Association	Avondale Community Events (ACE)
Parking (car spaces and garages)	267
Storage Sheds	335

Other information:

- The land on which the estate is built has been in the City Corporation's ownership since 1251
- The estate was largely built between 1952-67, though Avondale House dates to the 1920s and Twelve Acres House was completed in 2016

- Harman Close, a sheltered housing complex, is located on the estate and provides 48 homes for older residents, with a communal lounge and private garden



Community event on Avondale Pavement



Looking towards West Point

CITY OF LONDON & GRESHAM ALMSHOUSES, FERNDALE ROAD, BRIXTON SW9



Total homes	52 (44 CoL Almshouses, 8 Gresham Almshouses)
Tenanted	52
Leasehold	Not applicable – ineligible for Right to Buy
Local Authority	London Borough of Lambeth
Community spaces	Community Room located in the administrative block of CoL Almshouses
Staffing	x1 Sheltered Scheme Manager (officially known as the “Matron”)
Residents’ Association	None
Parking (car spaces and garages)	6
Storage Sheds	None

Other information:

- The Almshouses belong to the City of London Almshouses Trust (CoLAT) and Gresham Almshouses Trust. They are managed by the Housing Division on behalf of the respective trusts
- The City of London Almshouses were constructed in 1884; the Warden’s Lodge dates from 1858

DRON HOUSE, ADELINA GROVE, WHITECHAPEL E1



Total homes	80 across 3 blocks
Tenanted	44 (55%)
Leasehold	36 (45%)
Local Authority	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Community spaces	A small community room is provided on the ground floor of Block A. This also serves as an estate office and staff welfare facility.
Staffing	The estate is covered by the Middlesex Street Estate team; there is one Porter/Cleaner for the site and a Gardener whose time is split with other sites
Residents' Association	None
Parking (car spaces and garages)	None
Storage Sheds	32

Other information:

- The estate was completed in 1925 and was built to house families displaced by the improvement of Smithfield Market
- The estate recently benefited from new windows and roof replacements

GOLDEN LANE ESTATE, FANN STREET, CITY OF LONDON



Total homes	559 across 9 blocks
Tenanted	285 (51%)
Leasehold	274 (49%)
Local Authority	City of London Corporation
Community spaces	The Golden Lane Estate Community Centre and the Sir Ralph Perring Centre provide a range of facilities for community use
Staffing	X1 Resident Services Officer X1 Estate Supervisor X1 Customer Service Officer X1 Income Recovery Officer (shared with Middlesex Street, Dron House and Windsor House) X5 Porter/Cleaners X1 Gardener (shared with Middlesex Street, Dron House and Windsor House)
Residents' Association	Golden Lane Estate Residents' Association (GLERA)
Parking (car spaces and garages)	93
Storage Sheds	467

Other information:

- The estate was constructed between 1956 and 1962 and is Grade II and II* listed



Basterfield House lawn



Stanley Cohen House

HOLLOWAY ESTATE, PARKHURST ROAD, LONDON N7



Holloway Estate

Total homes	194 across 8 blocks, split over two sites
Tenanted	94
Leasehold	100 (includes 12 homes leased to Habinteg Housing)
Local Authority	London Borough of Islington
Community spaces	A community hall is provided which features a large hall and kitchen facilities, plus a small meeting room
Staffing	Holloway and York Way estates are managed by the same team X1 Resident Services Officer X1 Estate Supervisor X1 Income Recovery Officer These staff work solely at Holloway Estate: X1 Customer Service Officer (temporary post) X2 Porter Cleaners X1 Gardener
Residents' Association	None
Parking (car spaces and garages)	117
Storage Sheds	82

Other information:

- The estate was constructed between 1962 and 1975 on land which has been owned by the City Corporation since 1832

- It is on two sites, either side of Parkhurst Road – the older part of the estate (1962-69) consisting of more traditional blocks of flats is north of Parkhurst Road, the newer part (1975) is Whitby Court on the south side
- Twelve properties located at Whitby Court are adapted for use by disabled residents and leased to Habinteg Housing



Whitby Court



McMorran House

ISLEDEN HOUSE, PREBEND STREET, LONDON N1



Total homes	80 (includes 33 sheltered housing properties and x3 new 3-bed flats currently under construction)
Tenanted	73 (91%)
Leasehold	7 (9%)
Local Authority	London Borough of Islington
Community spaces	A community room is provided for use by sheltered housing residents
Staffing	X1 Sheltered Scheme Manager X1 (Part time) Cleaner
Residents' Association	None
Parking (car spaces and garages)	None
Storage Sheds	44

Other information:

- The estate was constructed in 1948 and opened by Her Majesty Queen Mary
- It was originally managed by the London Parochial Charities before being conveyed to the City of London in 1953
- The estate was intended to provide accommodation which was suitable from “cradle to grave” and even featured a hospital ward as part of the original facilities (now converted into flats)
- The central garden is provided for use by the residents of the sheltered housing, in accordance with the original charitable settlement

- Three new 3-bed homes were recently provided on the site and are now occupied



Central garden at Isleden House, showing the sheltered housing 'cottages'

MIDDLESEX STREET ESTATE, CITY OF LONDON



Petticoat Square

Total homes	236 across 2 blocks
Tenanted	168 (71%)
Leasehold	68 (29%)
Local Authority	City of London
Community spaces	Artizan Street Library and Community Centre is located on site
Staffing	<p>X1 Resident Services Officer X1 Estate Supervisor X1 Customer Services Officer X1 Income Recovery Officer (shared) X2 Porter Cleaners X1 Gardener (shared)</p> <p>The team also manages Dron House and Spitalfields (tenancy management only for the latter)</p>
Residents' Associations	<p>Middlesex Street Residents' Association (MSERA) Petticoat Square Leaseholders' Association (PSLA)</p>
Parking (car spaces and garages)	88
Storage Sheds	160

Other information:

- The estate was completed in 1972 and features the 23-storey Petticoat Tower (the tallest block managed by the Housing Division) and the lower-rise Petticoat Square

SOUTHWARK ESTATES, SOUTHBANK, LONDON SE1



Sumner Buildings (1930)

Total homes	411 across 8 blocks
Tenanted	277 (67%)
Leasehold	134 (33%)
Local Authority	London Borough of Southwark
Community spaces	None
Staffing	The team below is responsible for the Southwark Estates, as well as Sydenham Hill Estate and William Blake Estate X1 Resident Services Officer X1 Estate Supervisor X1 Income Recovery Officer X1 Customer Services Officer (temporary post) X 4 Porter Cleaners X2 Gardeners
Residents' Association	None
Parking (car spaces and garages)	69
Storage Sheds	232

- 'South Bank Estates' refers to eight residential blocks which are not on one site but spread across the South Bank, from Waterloo Station to Tower Bridge
- The eight blocks are:
 - Bazeley House, Lancaster Street
 - Collinson Court, Great Suffolk Street
 - Great Suffolk Street
 - Horace Jones House
 - Markstone House, Lancaster Street
 - Pakeman House, Pocock Street
 - Stopher House, Webber Street
 - Sumner Buildings, Sumner Street
- The oldest blocks (Sumner Buildings, Stopher House and Pakeman House) were constructed in the 1930s, with Bazeley, Collinson, Great Suffolk and Markstone following in the 1950s and Horace Jones House in 2015

SYDENHAM HILL ESTATE, LONDON SE26

Total homes	87
Tenanted	34 (39%)
Leasehold	53 (61%)
Local Authority	London Borough of Lewisham
Community spaces	A community hall is provided at Lammas Green, which is currently occupied by an early years nursery during weekdays but is available for hire outside those times
Staffing	The estate is managed by the Southwark Estates team
Residents' Association	None
Parking (car spaces and garages)	23
Storage Sheds	43

Other information:

- The estate is made up of Lammas Green (27 houses and 30 flats) and Otto Close (30 flats and maisonettes) and was built on land held by the Bridge House Estates trust since 1812
- Lammas Green was completed in the 1957 and is now Grade II listed
- Otto Close was constructed in 1976
- A sheltered housing block, Mais House, which was built in 1974, formed part of the site until its recent demolition to make way for a new development of 110 new homes for social rent



Otto Close, Sydenham Hill



Lammas Green, Sydenham Hill

WILLIAM BLAKE ESTATE, HERCULES ROAD, LONDON SE1

Total homes	126
Tenanted	70 (56%)
Leasehold	56 (44%)
Local Authority	London Borough of Lambeth
Community spaces	None
Staffing	The estate is managed by the Southwark Estates team
Residents' Association	None
Parking (car spaces and garages)	33
Storage Sheds	54

Other information:

- The estate is made up of seven residential blocks in a variety of architectural styles, constructed between 1918 and 1981
- The site is very close to London Waterloo Station
- Commercial premises are situated at street level, below residential accommodation, on the Kennington Road side of the estate



WINDSOR HOUSE, WENLOCK ROAD, LONDON N1



Total homes	104
Tenanted	72 (69%)
Leasehold	32 (31%)
Local Authority	London Borough of Hackney
Community spaces	A community hall is located on site, featuring one large room with kitchen and storage facilities
Staffing	Customer Service enquiries are dealt with by Middlesex Street Estate Office; Estate Services functions are managed from Golden Lane
Residents' Association	None
Parking (car spaces and garages)	None
Storage Sheds	38

Other information:

- The estate was constructed in 1927
- Windsor House recently benefited from replacement windows

YORK WAY ESTATE, MARKET ROAD, LONDON N7



Total homes	275 (with an additional 91 new homes due by 2025)
Tenanted	205 (75%)
Leasehold	70 (25%)
Local Authority	London Borough of Islington
Community spaces	A new community hall is being provided as part of the new development; the former hall was demolished as part of this scheme
Staffing	Holloway and York Way estates are managed by the same team X1 Resident Services Officer X1 Estate Supervisor X1 Income Recovery Officer These staff work solely at York Way: X1 Gardener X2 Porter Cleaners
Residents' Association	None
Parking (car spaces and garages)	224
Storage Sheds	108

Other information:

- The estate was constructed in 1968-69 on a site formerly occupied by the Metropolitan Cattle Market since 1855. The names of the blocks reflect this.

- A further 91 homes are planned for the site, as part of a development which will also provide a new community centre, estate office, gardens and play spaces. Planning permission was granted in 2021 and construction is now underway. Further information can be found on a dedicated [website](#).

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Community & Children's Services Housing Service

Guidelines for Allocated Members

1. Background

- 1.1 The Allocated Members Scheme matches Members from the Community & Children's Services Committee to each of the City's social housing estates. There are eight Allocated Member positions, with some covering more than one small estates. It is possible for more than one Members to share the Allocated Member role on a large estate if they wish to do so.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Scheme is to:
- Give residents and staff a named Member to 'champion' their estate;
 - Allow Members to take an interest in the estate, its residents and staff;
 - Develop a group of members with housing knowledge & experience to contribute to the CC&S Committee.
- 1.3 Allocated Members are appointed each year by the Chairman of the Housing Management Sub-Committee.

2. Role of the Allocated Member

- 2.1 The Allocated Member exists to champion the estate and its whole community, covering staff and all residents. This involves:
- Making occasional visits to the estate and attending some events, to ensure familiarity with the estate, its residents and staff.
 - Promoting the interests of the estate within the City – raising its profile by drawing attention to new developments, initiatives and good practice.
 - Liaising with other departments, outside agencies, and home local authorities over matters which are of concern to the whole estate community. For example, a general rise in anti-social behaviour, affecting many residents on an estate might be helped by the involvement of the Allocated Member, working with managers, to encourage intervention from the police or home borough.
- 2.2 Allocated Members exist to champion the whole estate community, not the interests or issues of individual residents. If an individual attempts to raise an issue with an Allocated Member, they should be referred to local staff or managers. If the matter is a complaint, the resident must be referred to the formal complaints process.

Managers and staff cannot discuss individual residents with Allocated Members, for confidentiality reasons. Allocated Members should not normally meet privately with residents, or visit them in their homes, unless part of a formal visit with managers. The Allocated Member Scheme is not a forum through which residents can seek to challenge management decisions, and it is not appropriate for residents to request this of the Allocated Member, thus putting them in a difficult position.

- 2.3 There is a clear difference between the role of a Ward Member and that of an Allocated Member. A Ward Member has a democratic responsibility for protecting the interests of residents in his/her ward, and can, therefore, take up a matter with officers on behalf of an individual. Residents outside the City will have their own ward councillors whom they have elected to represent them, and who, therefore, can take up an issue on their behalf.

Allocated Members, however, have not been elected as democratic representatives, and, therefore, officers cannot discuss individual issues or complaints with them. The Allocated Member is selected to represent the estate as a whole, not individuals.

- 2.4 If an individual raises a personal issue with an Allocated Member, the Member will either:
- a) give the resident details of the appropriate local manager so that they can contact them, or
 - b) bring the matter to the attention of the local manager and ask them to contact the resident direct in order to resolve the issue through proper processes.

3. Responsibilities of Allocated Members

- 3.1 An Allocated Member makes an initial commitment to a familiarisation visit to the estate, to be shown around and to meet staff.
- 3.2 Following the familiarisation visit, the Allocated Member is expected to visit the estate on two occasions during the year. One of these occasions will be a formal estate walkabout, organised by the Area Manager and open to residents to take part. The other visit may be an informal one, or might be to attend the Annual General Meeting of a recognised Residents' Association, to chair an estate meeting, or to be at a social event for all residents.
- 3.3 Further visits to the estate are at the discretion of the Allocated Member. The Area Housing Manager should always be informed, as a matter of courtesy, when the Allocated Member proposes to visit the estate.
- 3.4 Officers will prepare a six-monthly report on activities on the estate and will circulate this to Allocated Members for comment in advance of it being presented to the Housing Sub-Committee, and referred to the Grand Committee. Allocated Members should be prepared to answer questions on any matter included in the estate at the appropriate Committee meeting.

3.5 The contact details for Allocated Members will be displayed on notices on the estate and in relevant publications. From time to time, Allocated Members may be asked to contribute a piece for the estate newsletter or other publication.

4. Support for Allocated Members

4.1 The Area Housing Manager responsible for an estate will contact the Allocated Member at least on a quarterly basis to discuss issues and activities on the estate.

4.2 The Area Housing Manager will also e-mail the Allocated Member at the end of each month with a short update on estate matters.

4.3 The Area Housing Manager will also contact the Allocated Member if there are any significant issues on the estate, over and above those which are purely management matters. Examples might be an emergency situation on the estate such as a fire, flood or major crime.

4.4 Allocated Members will be informed about forthcoming estate events as so as these are arranged, and will be given the dates of estate walkabouts at least six months in advance.

4.5 Briefing events will be held for Allocated Members at appropriate times. These might be to discuss matters of national housing policy and how they affect estates, or to talk about a general issue.

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ESTATE	ALLOCATED MEMBER
Avondale Square (Southwark), including Harman Close	Vacant
<u>Small Estates:</u> Isleden House (Islington); Windsor House (Hackney)	Ceri Wilkins
Golden Lane (City)	Ceri Wilkins Anne Corbett
Holloway & York Way (Islington)	Mary Durcan
Middlesex Street (City) & Dron House/Spitalfields (Tower Hamlets)	John Fletcher
South Bank Estates: Southwark Blocks (Southwark) William Blake (Lambeth)	Vacant
City of London & Gresham Almshouses (Lambeth)	Florence Keelson-Anfu
Sydenham Hill: Lammas Green/Otto Close (Lewisham)	Ruby Sayed

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Agenda Item 7

<p>Committee(s): Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee – For Decision</p> <p>Community and Children’s Services Committee – For Decision</p>	<p>Dated: 03/06/2024 05/07/2024</p>
<p>Subject: Housing Strategy 2025-2029</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p>Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</p>	<p>1, 2, 3, 4, 9,10, 11,12</p>
<p>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>If so, how much?</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>What is the source of Funding?</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Report of: Judith Finlay, Executive Director Children and Community Services</p>	<p>For Decision</p>
<p>Report author: Gerri Scott, Housing Consultant</p>	

Summary

The purpose of this report is to present the draft Housing Strategy 2024-2029 for approval. The Housing Strategy outlines the City of London Corporation’s vision for the successful delivery of housing services to residents of social housing and future supply of new housing.

The strategy focuses on improving the quality of housing services, improving housing quality, engaging, and listening to residents, improving building safety, and increasing the supply of housing.

The strategy aligns with national housing priorities and aims to address the challenges posed by the housing crisis, particularly in terms of affordability, quality, and safety.

Key priorities include improving customer service, investing in repairs and maintenance, engaging residents in decision-making, ensuring compliance with building safety regulations, and increasing the supply of affordable housing.

The strategy also emphasises the need for ongoing monitoring and governance to track progress and ensure accountability for the delivery of actions.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Approve the Housing Strategy
- Agree that oversight and scrutiny of delivery is via an annual report setting out progress against each of the priorities. This report should be presented to the Community and Children's Services Grand Committee.

Main Report

Background

The previous housing strategy ended in 2023 and the new Housing Strategy sets out the City of London Corporation's vision for the successful delivery of housing services to social housing residents and the supply of new housing.

The strategy aligns to national housing priorities and provides clear strategic direction for housing services.

Five draft priorities were developed in consultation with members, officers, and residents. The draft priorities were presented for consultation via an online questionnaire, two webinars with residents, and staff consultation events.

Current Position

There was broad consensus from both residents and staff that the draft priorities reflected the main areas of focus for housing from the customer and colleague perspective.

The online questionnaire attracted 58 responses from residents, with the main themes being improving the repairs and maintenance service, both day-to-day and long-term investment in homes, and improving customer service.

The strategy includes actions to achieve the delivery of each of the priorities. It is recommended that oversight of the housing strategy delivery should be via an annual monitoring report to the Community and Children's Services Grand Committee.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – The Housing Strategy aligns to the aspirations of the Corporate Plan, which sets the overarching context for the City of London Corporation's ambition for its existing and future housing provision and service delivery.

Financial implications - None

Resource implications – None

Legal implications - None

Risk implications - None

Equalities implications – Consultation around the priorities for the Housing Strategy was inclusive and open to a wide and diverse audience who had an opportunity to participate via an online questionnaire, webinar, or face-to-face. The Housing Strategy sets out our ambition to ensure that housing services are inclusive, fair and equitable, with a particular focus on supporting residents with vulnerabilities.

Climate implications – the Housing Strategy notes the importance of achieving net zero in all new build housing, reducing emissions in existing housing, and sustainable energy efficient solutions in retrofitting.

Security implications - None

Conclusion

The Housing Strategy sets out the ambition for the City of London Corporation's housing services over the next 5 years within the context of the new external regulatory framework.

It builds upon the current transformation programme and provides a clear focus and direction for the successful delivery of housing services.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Housing Strategy 2024-2029

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HOUSING STRATEGY 2024-2029

Executive Summary

The Housing Strategy 2024-2029 outlines the City of London Corporation's vision for the successful delivery of housing services to residents of social housing and future supply of new housing.

The strategy focuses on improving the quality of housing services, engaging, and listening to residents, improving building safety, and increasing the supply of housing.

The strategy aligns with national housing priorities and aims to address the challenges posed by the housing crisis, particularly in terms of affordability, quality, and safety.

Key priorities include improving customer service, investing in repairs and maintenance, engaging residents in decision-making, ensuring compliance with building safety regulations, and increasing the supply of affordable housing.

The strategy also emphasises the need for ongoing monitoring and governance to track progress and ensure accountability for the delivery of actions.

Vision

Our vision is for every resident to have access to safe, affordable, and high-quality housing that enhances their well-being and provides stability for successful lives.

Through working together, openness and transparency, and continuous improvement, we aim to create thriving, inclusive, and sustainable neighbourhoods, where every resident feels valued, supported, and empowered to live their life well.

Purpose of the strategy

The City of London Corporation is the landlord responsible for 1923 social rented properties and 936 leaseholder properties across London. Most residents within the Square Mile live on four estates at the Barbican, Golden Lane, Middlesex Street and Mansell Street. Three quarters of our social housing is situated outside the Square Mile on eleven estates that the Corporation manages in the six London boroughs of Southwark, Islington, Lewisham, Lambeth, Hackney, and Tower Hamlets.

The purpose of the housing strategy is to set out our vision for the successful delivery of housing services to residents of our social housing and future supply of new housing. In this document, we have outlined the priorities, ambition, and actions we consider necessary to address current housing needs and challenges and ensure that appropriate, affordable, and quality housing is available to meet the diverse needs of our existing and future residents.

The strategy aligns to national housing priorities and provides a roadmap for our areas of focus over the next five years.

Over the last year, we have reviewed how best to improve our services to residents and have reconfigured the housing service into two new departments, one for the Barbican residential estate, and one for social housing. Led by two new Assistant Directors, we have done this to ensure that there is a dedicated focus on services to leaseholders living in the Barbican residential estate, and to the remaining residents within the City of London itself and six other London boroughs.

We know that Housing is a fundamental issue for all residents. Everyone should have access to a decent, affordable home which is warm, dry, and safe. We know that poor housing, or poorly managed housing, has a negative impact on people's lives, so we are committed to getting the basics right in our housing management service to ensure a quality housing experience for all.

Five overarching priorities for the new housing strategy

The draft priorities of the housing strategy were developed and strengthened via consultation, with residents, members, and staff through face-to-face focus groups, webinars, and an online questionnaire.

The sessions provided an opportunity to highlight key housing issues and to give views on the proposed priorities and actions with the final set of priorities agreed as below:

- Improve the quality of housing services.
- Improve housing quality.
- Engage and listen to residents.
- Improve building safety.
- Increase the supply of housing.

The wider strategic context for housing

This is a critical period for the delivery of housing services. Nationally, Council landlords face a complex set of challenges which test our ability to enable all residents to have access to safe, affordable, and high-quality housing.

Today, there is a huge national shortage of affordable housing in the UK with demand for social housing exceeding available supply. This has resulted in long waiting lists for social housing and increased homelessness. The City of London is not immune from this crisis with 1056 applications currently on the housing register and a high incidence of rough sleeping, the vast majority of which are single homeless men.

Last year, 482 people were reported as sleeping rough in the City of London, and for this population, demand is particularly high for studio and one-bedroom sized accommodation. Amongst the City's rough sleepers, there were high incidences of poor mental health and drug and alcohol misuse. Those in need of long-term

accommodation come with a variety of vulnerabilities which require a supportive approach to housing management, working in partnership with social services and support agencies, which is not always easy when working across a range of different boroughs.

Following the tragic Grenfell Tower fire in 2017, which exposed a range of systemic failures in housing and fire safety regulations as well as issues related to social inequality and marginalisation, a strong focus on building safety, and particularly fire safety has issued in a new culture of regulation, particularly in relation to high rise blocks. We must ensure that our residential buildings are safe as they can be, not only because it is the right thing to do, but because of new legislation such as the Building Safety Act 2022.

This Act is intended to strengthen the regulatory system for building safety, with increased responsibilities of building developers, owners, and managers to ensure greater accountability for the design, construction, and occupation of high-risk buildings. We have taken our responsibilities seriously in this regard, not least through a widescale programme of fire sprinkler installation, but fire safety requires significant investment. The challenge is how we can ensure that we deliver much needed investment in the ongoing maintenance of our existing homes, as well as meet our statutory health and safety responsibilities.

Housing, and the quality of homes, particularly social rented homes has been in the national spotlight with successive investigations highlighting the perilous conditions that some residents have been living with for years, often without any redress. These recent high-profile cases have increased the scrutiny of housing conditions, exposing neglect, and ignoring factors that impact on the health and well-being of residents. How landlords tackle damp and mould alongside health and safety compliance of the 'big six' - fire, asbestos, gas, electrical, lifts and legionella is subject to public scrutiny and government intervention.

We are a proactive landlord, and in the last year, have commissioned two external reviews of our housing management practice to highlight where we can do more to improve the service to residents. The Altair review of the Barbican residential estate has resulted in a comprehensive action plan to improve the service to Barbican residents including a sharp focus on value for money of service charges, effective monitoring of contractor performance, and driving up the quality of customer service. Overseen by a Programme Board of residents, members and officers, the action plan arising from this review is already delivering improvements, with the Barbican team demonstrating greater responsiveness, more ownership and responsibility to resolve longstanding problems and better customer service.

The Barbican transformation programme has been driven by true partnership working with residents who have tirelessly supported the team to improve the quality of their service. It is a template that we wish to apply to all aspects of the housing service. Over the next 5 years, we want to encourage the same level of active engagement to drive up standards on those estates funded by the Housing Revenue Account.

The Pennington review of the housing management service for the social housing estates drew many of the same conclusions as that of the Altair review. Similarly, an action plan has been developed to improve the quality of the service overseen by the Housing Sub-Committee. Not only is it important to ensure that these actions are achieved internally, but there is an external driver too. In recent years, concerns about the treatment of social housing tenants have prompted the strengthening of the role of the Regulator of Social Housing with the introduction of a set of tenant satisfaction measures and consumer standards and a landlords' league table, to be published annually from April 2024.

This external scrutiny and new reporting regime are intended to strengthen the resident voice, increase transparency, and hold landlords to account. A zero-tolerance approach to poor housing service and consequences for inaction enables central government to intervene where residents are being failed.

We are pleased that currently 67% of our social rented tenants are satisfied with the service that we provide, up 10% from the year before, but we are certainly not complacent. We intend to build on this benchmark year on year, listening to what our residents have to say and working with them much more closely to make the improvements that they desire to their service. We will ensure that complaints are dealt with promptly and fairly, that the resident's voice is heard and that residents are treated with respect.

The Housing Ombudsman's service has also been bolstered to thoroughly scrutinise the service that is being provided to residents of social housing. They have produced a series of spotlight reports on the poor quality of complaint handling by local authorities and housing associations. There have been high profile deep dives into incidences of damp and mould, dealing with anti-social behaviour, attitudes towards tenants, respect, and tenant rights.

The naming and shaming of landlords who persistently let down their residents is something which we have thus far avoided, and we will continue to improve on our responsiveness to residents. However, we know that our residents are unhappy with the quality of the repairs and maintenance service and are uncertain about when they can expect investment in their homes. Getting the repairs service right and having a clear plan for housing investment, through our asset management strategy, will go a long way to reducing complaints and giving residents confidence for the future.

In 2019, central government declared a climate emergency, amending previous legislation to commit the UK to bringing down all greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. We have embraced this challenge with an aspiration to achieve net zero emissions by 2030 and have implemented measures to ensure that housing meets minimum quality, safety, and energy efficiency requirements. Where we can, we will ensure that energy efficiency is a top priority. We are committed to meeting net zero carbon in all our new-build housing, to meet government targets, and importantly reduce fuel poverty and increase comfort for new residents. We will explore fully how to achieve net zero in our existing homes through retrofitting.

Over the lifetime of this strategy, we will be informed by the accompanying asset management strategy about how we will replace gas boilers in our housing stock, with alternative energy efficient systems which are also economical to run. However, we know already that ground heat pumps are not a widescale solution for our social housing, and hydrogen boilers are costly to run. We will investigate all viable options for replacement and include a fully costed plan in our future housing investment programme.

In a period of financial turbulence and with the tail of the Covid pandemic legacy, we have witnessed a profound effect on housing, from supply chain issues which have impacted on the cost and timeliness of new development, the costs of procuring and delivering effective repairs and maintenance services, and shortage of resources, skills, and expertise. High inflation has had a severe impact on operating costs. The stark truth is whilst we aspire to do much more, we are operating within a much more constrained environment. Set alongside a cost-of-living crisis, the pandemic has also magnified existing issues such as social isolation, poverty, and scarcity of housing supply.

The rent cap worsens an already difficult financial position for the housing revenue account, with the annual 1% reduction policy in place from 2016 to 2020 leaving reserves severely depleted and demanding greater efficiency to achieve savings.

All these factors contribute to a challenging environment for housing management and a tough backdrop for the successful delivery of services to residents. Our ambition, despite these factors, is to deliver much more value to residents - value for money, community value, and strong values in our housing staff so that they are committed to creating great places for people to live.

Corporate Plan and the vision for housing

Our corporate plan provides the context for a new housing strategy. People should receive good services, live in excellent quality housing, and live independent and healthy lives. Communities should be involved in decisions that affect them and the place where they live. Housing should be a positive aspect of everyday life, enhancing health and well-being and providing stability for successful lives.

Housing services should be high-quality, generating high levels of resident satisfaction. Homes should be safe and well-maintained with a strong emphasis on fire safety and building safety. There is an aspiration to develop more affordable housing for those in housing need.

There should be meaningful engagement with residents, so they can influence the quality of their housing services and raise the standards of their homes to enhance their well-being and life chances.

We deliver housing services via a local housing management model, with estate-based offices and a patch-based service which provides for residents where they live. By having housing management services delivered at a local level, our housing

teams should be better able to tailor their services to meet the specific needs of the community and provide a more personalised and responsive service.

As our housing is in different local authority areas, a local housing management service also enables better communication between residents and housing teams, with greater transparency and oversight, and dedicated points of contact for inquiries, feedback, and concerns.

Although the local housing management model has fallen out of favour with housing providers in recent years, increasingly with the challenges of the new housing regulatory regime and a demand from residents to improve the quality of housing service delivery, many housing providers are returning to patch-based housing management.

Because our housing stock is so widely dispersed, a locality-based model works for us and therefore it is not proposed that in the short to medium term this should change. However, when we spoke to residents, we heard from them a strong desire that the service should become more customer focussed. The challenge posed by residents was that our services were not focussed enough on them as recipients and that they wanted to see higher standards of customer service with a strong focus on outcomes not processes.

The benefit of a locally delivered service is that it should be easier to be more responsive to residents, however this was not the broad experience of residents who reported back to us via the Housing Strategy online questionnaire. Despite being based in the heart of estates, there was a disconnect between 'them and us,' and a feeling that housing teams were remote and disengaged.

This was also borne out by the lack of participation in the face-to-face consultation sessions, and the lack of attendance at estate drop-in sessions. This demonstrates that there is work to be done to improve the relationship between housing teams and the customers that they serve.

We need to provide more digitally accessible service routes in recognition of the fact that people are used to doing things for themselves and at a time that suits them, however we need to capitalise on our existing local presence and utilise it to its best effect. Increasingly too, we see many more vulnerabilities amongst residents who need that local, tailored support so we should not pursue modern options of service delivery without recognising that our resident base requires both; smarter ways to connect as well as one-on-one support.

Improve the quality of housing services

We believe that it is paramount that we employ people with the right attitude to deliver housing services and that this is essential for building a successful customer focussed approach.

Our senior leaders will set the tone for the right attitude and behaviours to create a positive culture which puts residents at the heart of everything we do. Residents

want to be confident that when they contact us their enquiry will be dealt with promptly by someone who is knowledgeable, professional, and empowered to resolve their request, so we have invested in mandatory customer service training for all. We are recruiting new staff specifically for their customer service skills because we know that we can train them in housing management.

We will make it easy for residents to give feedback on our services and we will listen to what they have to say. Although nearly three quarters of our residents said that they were happy with the service that we provide in the most recent resident survey, that still leaves a significant swathe of dissatisfaction that we need to address through continuous improvement of service delivery.

Both residents and staff tell us that the main area for improvement is the quality of the repairs and maintenance service, and it is certainly the most frequent generator of complaints. New contracts are currently being procured, and their term will align with the housing strategy.

Residents have been fully involved in shaping the new contracts, which have prioritised the quality of the maintenance service as well as ongoing cost control and efficiency. The new contracts will require stronger collaboration between teams to avoid repairs being dropped and there will be better communication and sharing of information to frontline staff who are the main point of contact for residents.

We are committed to more much rigorous performance management of contractors to ensure that they are properly held to account, and the new contracts set stretching targets to ensure repairs are timely and completed right first time, and that there is less reliance on sub-contractors to reduce cost and improve efficiency.

There is a strong view that if the repairs service improves, residents will have an overall better perception of the housing service, and staff will be freed up to concentrate on other tasks rather than deal with repeated failure demand.

We also recognise that we need to be better equipped to deal with the increasing number of tenants with complex needs. Within the City of London, there is excellent joint working with corporate colleagues to get residents the help that they might need. However, this becomes less easy when dealing with the other boroughs in which our housing is located where those natural day to day relationships with colleagues are less familiar and embedded.

We will focus on establishing better networking and partnership working with outer borough social services and agencies to get vulnerable tenants the support that they need. We will also ensure that we are providing more support at the start of the tenancy for the most vulnerable residents to ensure that tenancies are sustained and that there is appropriate signposting to support services. We are keen to ensure that tenancy support becomes a core skill for frontline staff, alongside the existing specialist provision.

Knowing our customers is key to success in this area, and we have already increased the frequency of tenancy visits to ensure that we continue to build up a rounded picture of who is living in our housing, and what they might need from us as

their landlord. Improving the quality of core data will be a key area of focus to ensure that we have a continuously refreshed profile of our customers, and we can tailor our services based on this information.

Over the last year, we have invested in the installation of a new housing management system, Civica, which should enable a better base of core information to support the housing management service. The system implementation has not been without disruption, but we have invested to improve the reliability of the system and support staff through training so that they are using it to its maximum capacity. We will work with our teams and residents to ensure that data is constantly refreshed and updated at all points of contact.

Although we work across London, we have not always been as curious as we could be in exploring best practice and using it to improve our housing management service. The benefit of external review is that we have had our practice validated against an external evidence base which has provided lots of excellent case studies and examples of what works well. Building on this for the future, we know that we need to continue to actively seek out how things work elsewhere and actively benchmark with other organisations through informal peer review, Housemark, the sector-wide quality network, and London Councils' directors' groups.

In line with the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing, all staff providing housing services have received customer service training, and we will refresh this through an ongoing training plan. We will continue to invest in communication skills and conflict resolution to ensure that residents receive respectful, consistent, and responsive services.

Senior management staff will also receive accredited management training to equip them with the required managerial skills to ensure effective oversight of housing management services, and to meet the standards of the new monitoring regime by central government.

We recognise that over time, some frontline housing management roles may have been deskilled by an over-reliance on policies and procedures to the detriment of relationship building, problem solving and the ability to exercise sound judgement. We will create a culture in which everyone has a strong customer focus and performs to their best. Our teams are not large, and our structures are not complicated so we will focus on collaboration between teams, breaking down internal silos, and reducing handovers between teams to create a more seamless customer experience.

Whilst we are committed to a local housing management model, and services which are easily accessible to residents, we can do more to lever modern technology, including providing multiple channels for communication, and ordering online platforms for service requests. We will employ more sophisticated communication methods such as apps and customer portals to enable customers to do things for themselves where they are willing and able to do so, and generally embrace smarter ways of working.

We will collect data on service usage and resident satisfaction and use this data to actively inform decision-making, measure impact, identify any areas of non-compliance and make improvements to housing services. We will continually evaluate and monitor to assess effectiveness, identify areas for improvement and ensure that services are meeting the needs of residents.

Our ambition

- We will meet the demands of the Regulator of Social Housing, increasing year on year performance against consumer standards and tenant satisfaction measures.
- We will increase the level of customer satisfaction through the effective management of services for tenants and leaseholders.
- We will build strong person-centred relationships with residents, enabling staff to take early, appropriate, and effective action with specialist interventions for those with complex needs.
- We will develop tenancy support to maintain tenancies and know our residents better by conducting annual visits to all tenants who live in Council housing.

Improve Housing quality

Improving the quality of our existing housing is hugely important to residents. Throughout the consultation process, the quality of the current repairs and maintenance service and the lack of clear plans for housing investment were raised as major causes of concern, by residents and by colleagues working to deliver the housing service.

A lack of a clear plan for housing investment has caused dissatisfaction and increased the demand for the day-to-day repairs and maintenance service in the absence of a long-term plan for asset management.

Alongside this housing strategy, the asset management strategy is being developed, a 5-year plan which will provide a fully costed plan for major works to improve the fabric of our homes. The asset management strategy will include measures to enhance the safety, comfort, energy efficiency and overall liveability of homes. This will include investing in renovation and retrofitting projects to upgrade existing homes, improving building condition, and addressing maintenance issues as well as meeting central government targets for decent homes.

The asset management strategy will set out clear, timetabled plans to implement energy-efficient measures such as insulation, window upgrades, and roof renewal to reduce energy consumption, lower utility costs and improve sustainability.

For the Housing Strategy, we recognise that there is untapped potential to regenerate our existing stock, which could bring a range of benefits to communities and residents, primarily improved housing but also enhanced public spaces, economic opportunities, social cohesion, and environmental improvements.

The ambition for regeneration should be one rooted in the local community, for the benefit of existing residents as well as welcoming new ones, through the provision of more and better housing by refurbishing existing homes and building sustainable new homes. New housing should be also at the forefront of net zero carbon development, with sustainable design principles to deliver significant reductions in CO2 emissions and cheaper energy costs for residents.

We are keen to develop a coordinated and structured approach to estate regeneration. This will be rooted in a corporate understanding of how regeneration has the potential to realise real benefits for existing residents, through large scale refurbishment of estates and the delivery of new housing to meet local housing need.

We will also involve frontline staff and residents in the design of new housing so that it can be managed most effectively, and issues foreseen before they occur, futureproofing new homes especially when it comes to accessibility.

As part of the asset management strategy, appraisals will be undertaken across all estates, and recommendations around viability, enabling decisions around estate regeneration to have a robust evidence base.

Alongside our strategic ambitions, we recognise the need to improve operational management to keep homes well-maintained and in good condition. That sense of neighbourhood and home is enhanced by surroundings that are clean, tidy, and well-maintained, with inviting and functional spaces for residents to socialise, exercise and engage in community activities.

With a locally based workforce, we are well-placed to see neighbourhoods' quality first-hand as experienced by those who live there. Getting the basics right, through effective property management, regular maintenance and cleaning schedules and responsive repairs services will go a long way to keeping homes well-maintained and in good condition.

Our ambition

- We will develop a new asset management strategy and plan, supported by survey information on our housing stock that is constantly updated.
- We will invest in our estates and homes to achieve ongoing decent homes standard compliance.
- We will provide a high quality, responsive repairs, and maintenance service.
- We will build new zero carbon housing, retrofit where it is cost-effective to do so in our existing housing, and explore off-setting carbon emissions.
- We will develop and implement a plan to replace gas heating systems and improve the energy efficiency of homes.
- We will publish a 5-year planned maintenance and cyclical decoration programme to provide residents with visibility of planned works.
- We will meet the requirements of the Homes Fitness for Human Habitation Act.

- We will develop a 5-year estate regeneration strategy, outlining a plan for revitalising and improving the City of London's housing estates, which drives the completion of existing schemes and identifies new opportunities to keep development on track through an effective programme management approach.

Engage and listen to residents

Despite a housing management service which is rooted firmly within the local community, our relationship with residents needs strengthening. Engaging with residents to gather feedback, address concerns and involve them in decision-making processes related to the management and maintenance of their homes is essential for building trust and collaboration, however we know that this is an area which requires some improvement.

The Social Housing Regulation Act places a legal duty on social housing providers to ensure that tenants' voices are at the heart of their services. It expects landlords to tailor engagement so all tenants can engage through a wide range of methods. Effective resident engagement has many benefits, highlighting services that are valued by residents, identifying areas for improvement, improving communication, and building relationships with residents. If residents feel that they are valued and are being listened to, in turn they will feel happier about where they live and that their voice makes a difference.

For us, putting in place more meaningful and long-lasting resident engagement is more than just a tick in the legal tick-box. We want to do this well to build trust, enhance well-being and reduce complaints about the housing service.

Although we have many active established tenant associations and committees, there needs to be more effective liaison between residents and housing management teams. We have already recognised that this is an area of concern, and have been working with TPAS, the tenant engagement experts, to help us build model constitutions and better ways of working together.

Where it works well, we can see how joint working really drives service improvement and a greater sense of accountability. However, we do not have a strong sense of advocacy, or established forum, for residents to voice their opinions, share feedback and raise concerns about housing matters.

We are committed to improving resident forums so that these are stronger conduits for communication about the things that matter to residents. As well as door-to-door outreach and estate inspections to connect with residents, we will make more use of online platforms, social media, and digital communication to engage with residents, share information and facilitate feedback and dialogue.

Residents told us that we could improve the way in which we communicate with them, and how we provide feedback to those who do actively engage. At the heart of our organisational culture, must be a new approach to resident engagement and the opportunity for residents to influence decisions that impact them.

Giving residents the opportunity to opt in or out of the conversation is just as important as formal structures. We recognise that engagement needs to be tailored to residents' needs and the type of home that they live in, which is particularly pertinent to involving residents in discussion around fire safety for example.

Our Ambition

- We will create a culture of co-production through the creation of a separate forum for social housing residents, reporting into Housing Sub-Committee, so that the tenant voice can be fully heard.
- We will develop more proactive and specific engagement with residents on matters of local concern using innovative and non-traditional methods.
- We will provide responsive services and effective customer care to all by identifying the needs of vulnerable households.
- We will proactively involve residents in monitoring the performance of services where they live.

Improve Building Safety

We have been focussed on ensuring that the lessons from the Grenfell fire are learned and that action has been taken to ensure that every resident is safe in their home.

We have an effective fire safety regime and have recently completed the building safety cases required by law for all our high-rise blocks. We have commissioned an external check of our health and safety compliance monitoring regime to ensure that all our reporting is accurate and that there are no risks associated with our management of fire, asbestos, gas, electrical, lift and legionella safety.

Regular building inspections to identify and address maintenance issues, structural defects, and safety hazards, are conducted addressing any concerns related to damp, mould, and other health hazards.

The costs of building safety fall on our already overstretched housing revenue account and this work must be prioritised, and potentially redirected from planned maintenance or the development of new homes, however our sprinkler installation programme is well underway, and we have not faced the significant remediation costs that other landlords have had to bear.

We agree that the construction industry should be made to fix the fire safety defects built into blocks owned by councils and housing associations, and although this does not apply to any stock currently owned by the City of London Corporation, we will support residents who are facing these issues through our enforcement activities.

We will work closely with the police and the local community to address safety concerns and promote a safe living environment for residents.

Staying updated on changes to building regulations and safety guidelines is important to ensure that homes meet the latest standards, and we will actively engage with sector forums.

An important part of our resident engagement activity will be working with residents to raise awareness about building safety measures, emergency procedures and reporting mechanisms for safety concerns. We will continue to provide information and resources to help residents understand their rights and responsibilities related to building safety in their homes and continue to invest in training for staff and contractors on building safety practices, regulations, and emergency response protocols.

Our ambition

- We will achieve full compliance with the regulatory framework for building safety.
- We will ensure effective fire safety management, maintaining up to date fire risk assessments, publishing documents and renewal dates.
- We will achieve full health and safety compliance on the 'big six' - fire, asbestos, gas, electrical, lifts and legionella.

Increase the supply of housing

The average house price in the City of London in February 2024 was £809,000, more than double the national average (£298,000). The average monthly private rent for a two-bedroom property between October 2022 and September 2023 was £2,685 per month which is higher than the average rent in London (£1,860). For those in housing need, affordable housing is not within easy reach.

We have had a steady development programme in recent years, and projects are already underway at COLPAI (66 new homes), York Way Development (91 new homes), Sydenham Hill Development (110 new homes) and potential future developments at Sumner Building Estate and Avondale Square Estate. These schemes will increase the number of homes available for social rent, improve the existing housing stock and provide ongoing rental income for the Housing Revenue Account.

Our model for the supply of new affordable housing is supported by s106 contributions from developers (contributions towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure), delivering new office accommodation within the Square Mile. Historically, we have used these commuted sums to develop new social housing on our existing estates in the City and other London boroughs.

Social housing provides affordable and secure housing options for low-income households who may struggle to afford market-rated housing. Increasing the supply of affordable housing provides a stable base for family life and, where we can, we will strive to deliver more housing to provide long term security of tenure, address homelessness, and provide a safety net for those in unstable housing conditions. We also want to ensure that our housing is inclusive and supports accessibility for

people with additional needs, or who may need additional support, such as care leavers or people with specific vulnerabilities.

Although mixed tenure housing is in accordance with our Local Plan objectives, historically there has been a commitment that any new housing development should be social rented housing. However, the cost of construction and the availability of grant funding means that we may need to review what we build in the future, to futureproof the funding of council housing by building other forms of tenure as cross-subsidy. Moving away from this would require a policy refresh, and potentially new ways of working on housing delivery via a partnership with a developer contractor, housing association or other local authority under a development agreement, or joint venture.

Over the lifetime of this strategy, we will develop a clear plan for the future supply of new homes and will clearly define our definition of affordable housing, as we recognise that there is an increasing demand for all types of affordable housing including intermediate market rent, shared ownership, rent to buy and outright sale.

Our ambition

- We will identify and secure an ongoing pipeline of funding streams, primarily s106 contributions, to support our development ambition.
- We will make housing development economically viable and better value for money.
- We will explore new development funding delivery models, including cross subsidy models.
- We will clearly define what we mean by affordable housing and who it is for
- We will set new achievable housing targets.
- We will prioritise new housing for local people through local letting policies.
- We will use our existing stock more efficiently by helping residents to downsize to more suitable properties.
- We will deliver an effective housing options and homelessness service, aimed at reducing the number of people at risk of homelessness and need for temporary accommodation.

Monitoring and Governance

The strategy is designed to drive progress and deliver measurable outcomes for the quality of service provision, investment in our homes and new housing supply, underpinned by a delivery plan with clear actions against each of the priorities with timescales.

Oversight of performance against the ambition of the strategy will be via the Corporation's Community and Children's Services Grand committee with an annual report confirming the progress which has been made to ensure there is ongoing accountability for the delivery of actions.

Agenda Item 8

Committee: Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee	Dated: 03/06/2024
Subject: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1,2,3,4,5,6,8,9,10,
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community & Children's Services	For Decision
Report author: Zoe Gayle, Service Improvement Manager, Department of Community and Children's Services, Housing Division	

Summary

The Housing Division aims to foster an inclusive and respectful environment where all residents and service users are treated fairly and with dignity, regardless of their characteristics or backgrounds. To support our aims an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy has been drafted for use of the Housing Division.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Approve the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy for use by the Housing Division

Main Report

Background

1. City Corporation's Housing Division manages 1,900 social tenanted properties and over 950 leaseholder properties, located on twelve estates across London.
2. London's diversity is a rich blend of cultures, ethnicities, and traditions, making it one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world. As a housing provider, particularly in London, we recognise the importance of promoting equality and embracing diversity within our communities.

3. As a public sector organisation, we hold specific duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the duty to have due regard to eliminating discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.
4. The Housing Division is committed to ensuring that all residents and service users, regardless of their background or characteristics, have equal access to housing and are treated with dignity and respect.
5. We are committed to meeting these duties in the provision of housing services and the proposed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is intended to outline our approach to achieving this.

Current Position

6. The policy reflects the framework and commitments in the City Corporation's Equality Objectives 2024-29.
7. The key objectives of the proposed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy for the housing division are as follows:
 - **Inclusive Housing:** To ensure that all residents have equal access to housing opportunities and services, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or any other protected characteristic.
 - **Respectful Environment:** To foster a respectful and inclusive environment within our housing communities and in the delivery of services, where all residents feel valued and supported.
 - **Compliance:** To comply with relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2010 and the consumer regulations for housing providers, which include obligations regarding equalities and the fair and respectful treatment of tenants
 - **Fair Treatment:** To ensure that our policies, procedures, and practices are fair and support the aim of minimising discrimination and unequal treatment
8. The proposed policy includes the following key components tailored to our division:
 - **Purpose and Aims:** A clear statement expressing our commitment to providing inclusive housing and promoting diversity within our communities and the workplace.
 - **Definitions:** Clear definitions of key terms
 - **Employee Responsibilities:** Clarification of the responsibilities of employees in upholding the principles of equality and diversity in their interactions with residents and colleagues.
 - **Training:** Provision of training for employees to ensure they understand their responsibilities and the importance of promoting equality and diversity.
9. The implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy will bring several benefits to the Housing Division, including:
 - Enhanced resident satisfaction and community cohesion.
 - Enhanced reputation as a socially responsible housing provider.
 - Increased access to housing opportunities for marginalised groups.

Proposals

10. Based on the above considerations, it is therefore proposed that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is approved for use of the housing division. By adopting this policy, we demonstrate our commitment to creating inclusive communities where diversity is celebrated, and everyone has equal access to housing opportunities.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – This policy supports the following outcomes of our Corporate Plan 2024-29:

- Diverse, engaged communities
- Providing excellent services

Financial implications

None

Resource implications

None

Legal implications

None

Risk implications

None

Equalities implications – The policy will support us in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010, s.149) by ensuring that we have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and foster good relations. Proportionality and equalities principles are an integral part of the policy. We will ensure that officers take account of protected characteristics and any applicable support measures that may benefit an individual when invoking the policy. Decisions taken under the policy will be fully documented and, in some instances, subject to approval and regular review.

Climate implications

None

Security implications

None

Conclusion

11. To support our commitment to delivering excellent services, promoting equality and embracing diversity within our communities and the workplace an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy has been drafted for use by the Housing Division.

12. The policy outlines our commitments to delivering excellent, safe and fair services for residents and other persons who may occupy, visit, or use its premises, as required by the Equality Act 2010.
13. The implementation of the policy will include delivering training to the staff within the Housing Division, including ensuring the corporate mandatory training has been completed by all staff.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Appendix 2 – Responses to Housing User Board (HUB) consultation, March 2024

Zoe Gayle

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City of London Corporation
Department of Community & Children's Services
Housing Service

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy

Approved by:	<i>Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee</i>
Original Approval Date:	
Review Date:	
Re-Approval Date	
Next Review Date	<i>**3 years from re-approval**</i>

1. Purpose

This policy provides an overview of the Housing Division's commitment to promoting equality and diversity in the services it provides to households living in homes managed by us.

The Equality Act 2010 has nine protected characteristics which are:

- Race
- Gender
- Gender Reassignment (including Gender Identity)
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion or Belief
- Age
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity explicitly.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) applies across Great Britain to public bodies, and to other organisations when they are carrying out public functions.

The duty requires organisations to have due regard to equality in the way it conducts its business. We must take steps to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people
- Foster good relations between people.

This policy outlines our approach to implementing EDI principles in relation to housing services.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the delivery of services by the City of London Corporation's Housing Division, to residents and other users of services provided by us.

External parties commissioned to provide services are responsible for ensuring that their workers and sub-contractors work to this policy and other relevant City Corporation policies regarding equalities.

3. Aim of Policy

The Housing Division is committed to delivering excellent customer service. We recognise the different needs of our residents, service users and employees and actively work to minimise potential issues of exclusion and to challenge discrimination.

The City Corporation's Equality Objectives are aligned to the Corporate Plan 2024-2029 and People Strategy 2024-2029. These are to deliver:

- **Inclusive and Trustworthy Leadership** - The commitment to making systemic change through championing and advancing equity, equality, diversity, and inclusion (EEDI) in everything we do.
- **Inclusive and Diverse Community** - Representation and experience ensure the City Corporation is an employer of choice where people thrive.
- **Accessible and Excellent Services** - Equity, equality, diversity, and inclusion (EEDI) is integral in the design, development, implantation and evaluation of our services. This aligns to our ambition to be world class through providing excellent services to all.
- **Socio-Economic Diversity** - This focus is external and internal including social mobility and social inclusion. Activities are cognisant with the Social Mobility Index recommendations for improvement.
- **Cross-cutting activity** - focussing on data and evidence to inform and deliver the Equality Objectives 2024 – 2029. Robust data is integral to the effective delivery of equity, equality, diversity, and inclusion (EEDI) and requires building from a very low baseline

We will support the achievement of our Corporate objectives around equality, diversity and inclusion.

4. Definitions

Diversity: Being inclusive. Understanding, respecting and valuing differences between individuals.

Equality: Treating people fairly, in ways that are free from discrimination and providing the same opportunities for all. Taking positive action to create a fairer society where everyone has the same chance to fulfil their potential, have access to services to meet individual needs and participate in the community.

Inclusion: Creating an environment where everyone feels welcomed and valued as an individual.

Protected Characteristics: The Equality Act 2010 defines nine protected characteristics that protect employees and customers from discrimination. It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of a protected characteristic.

Vulnerability: A person with vulnerability or individual service needs is someone who may have difficulties managing their tenancy or affairs as a result of health,

disability, learning, behavioural or mental health issues, family, social and financial or other circumstances, or any combination of these. Any person or household can experience needs or vulnerabilities at some point in their life.

5. Regulator for Social Housing – Regulatory Standards

The following regulatory standards are relevant to this policy:

- Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard
- Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- Tenancy Standard

The Housing Division will comply with regulatory requirements and respond to residents' differing needs in the way we provide services.

In relation to the above standard, we will:

- Treat tenants (and prospective tenants) fairly and with respect
- Take action to deliver fair and equitable outcomes for tenants and, where relevant, prospective tenants
- Ensure our services, and communications, are accessible

6. Policy Statement

The Equality Act requires that people with one or more protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are able to access services.

To achieve the policy aims, we will:

- Ensure that decision-making structures consider equality and diversity, through a process of Equality Impact Assessing.
- Ensure the widest possible representation and involvement of residents and service users
- Collect data to enable us to understand the diverse needs of residents and assess whether our services provide fair and equitable outcomes
- Take account of individual needs when providing or planning services
- Ensure that equality and diversity is a fundamental principle in policies and procedures and that policies are equality impact assessed.
- Ensure that all employees are supported in developing the skills and abilities they require to deliver their functions with due regard to equality, diversity and inclusion
- Ensure that our staff understand and follow the standards of behaviour that are required for the appropriate management of equality and diversity.

The Housing Division wants to make sure that our commitment to equality and diversity is reinforced by the organisation's values and embedded in day-to-day working practices.

We recognise that everyone is different and should be treated as an individual. Fair treatment, inclusion and valuing diversity are paramount to reducing inequality and discrimination. We do not tolerate any discriminatory or offensive behaviour, including harassment, bullying or victimisation.

7. Vulnerabilities

When providing services, we will have due regard to residents' vulnerabilities, which may or may not include a person's disability, and which may or may not fall directly under the Equality Act 2010.

Vulnerability may not be a permanent status; however, people may have periods of their life when they experience vulnerability. We recognise that some people may not see themselves as vulnerable and must ensure staff members can manage these situations with sensitivity.

Any person or household can experience needs or vulnerabilities at some point in their life and may have difficulties managing their tenancy or affairs as a result of health, disability, learning, behavioural or mental health issues, family, social and financial or other circumstances, or any combination of these.

Without the right support in place, the following groups of people may potentially be vulnerable:

- Frail elderly people
- People with a physical or sensory disability including those with long term, fluctuating or progressive illness
- People with mental health issues
- People with learning disabilities or difficulties
- People who are isolated
- People who neglect themselves
- People at risk of abuse and harassment (including domestic abuse and hate crime)
- People with challenging or antisocial behaviour
- People with literacy difficulties
- Rough sleepers and those with a history of street homelessness
- People who misuse alcohol
- People who misuse drugs
- People moving from supported accommodation
- People discharged from institutional care
- Refugee/asylum seekers
- Ex-offenders or people who are vulnerable as a result of having served a custodial sentence.

- Young people leaving care or evicted by parents
- Those who are made vulnerable due to circumstance (e.g. recent bereavement or relationship breakdown)
- Those who are vulnerable due to domestic violence, harassment, or victims of repeat burglary or crime

8. Policy Exceptions

In exceptional circumstances, we may consider making a variation to this policy. Our reasoning can be provided to the affected parties on request.

9. Monitoring and Performance

We will monitor our use of this policy and the way in which it is implemented, ensuring that any relevant information is reported at appropriate intervals.

10. Training

We will provide all staff responsible for implementing this policy with comprehensive training as required.

11. Equality and Diversity

This Policy has been subject to a full Equalities Analysis and will be implemented in accordance with our responsibilities and duties under relevant legislation, including the Equalities Act 2010.

12. Accessibility

We will ensure that tenants' needs are considered when implementing this Policy to ensure that they are treated fairly. We will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that customers with distinct communication needs are not unreasonably and disproportionately affected. This could involve providing communications in alternative languages or formats, or providing interpretation or transcription as appropriate.

13. Data Protection and Information Exchange

We will comply with our obligations under relevant data protection legislation and regulations. We will process and store personal information securely.

14. Legislation

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Mental Capacity Act 2005

<p>Department of Community & Children's Services</p> <p>Housing Service</p>	 <p>CITY OF LONDON</p>
<p>Policy Title: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</p>	
<p>Document Owner: Head of Housing Management</p>	
<p>Date Approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (original) • [DATE] (this version) 	
<p>Version:</p>	<p>Last amendment:</p>
<p>Effective date:</p>	<p>Next review date:</p>
<p>Changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	

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Feedback from the Housing User Board (HUB) – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

- I have read through both documents, and they are clear and easy to understand.
- The EDI policy is very comprehensive and needed in an ever-changing society. It fully covers everything that I think it should. I cannot think of any obvious omissions. As someone who has suffered from unfair treatment from other parts of society in the past, I welcome that this issue is now being recognised for what it is.
- The policy is easy to understand and as far as I can see covers all areas that may cause concern and gives clear guidelines for addressing any instance arising.
- I read documents on Reasonable Adjustment and EDI and [found] them clear and easy to understand.
 - The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion document had a very full coverage with explanations of group identification clear and accurate.
 - I have recently done an EDI training day in connection with the church and I compared coverage and the City of London was much more comprehensive.
 - I personally found both [this document] very clearly laid out and the language used easily understood."

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Agenda Item 9

Committee: Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee	Dated: 03/06/2024
Subject: Extension of Policy Review Dates	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1,2,3,4,5,6,8,9,10,
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community & Children's Services	For Decision
Report author: Zoe Gayle, Service Improvement Manager, Department of Community and Children's Services, Housing Division	

Summary

This report asks Members for permission to extend the review date on several current policies.

These policies have remained the same with the exception of the Estate Management Policy which requires minor adjustments to reflect our practices and revised responsibilities of Estate Services staff.

These policies serve as the foundation of our operations, providing guidelines and regulations that ensure efficiency, compliance, and ethical conduct across all departments within the Housing Division.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Approve the extension of the policy review dates as recommended in Appendix 1
- Approve the revised Estate Management Policy for use by the Housing Division

Main Report

Background

1. The standard review period for housing management policies is three years and some approved policies are due for review.
2. It is proposed that the policies indicated in Appendix 1 are extended in order to avoid having to bring them back to Committee individually and using Committee time unnecessarily.
3. The only exception to this is the Estate Management policy which requires slight adjustments to clarify the responsibility of staff and expectations of residents.
4. The extension of a review date does not mean that a policy might not be reviewed before that date if there is a change to legislation, regulation or internal procedures in the area in question.

Current Position

5. There have been no significant changes to our work in any of the areas covered by the policies in question. This has been cross-referenced with information and best practices on the Housing Ombudsman website.
6. The Estate Management policy was first approved in 2018 and has been reviewed as part of the usual three-year cycle. The policy addresses our commitment to providing quality estate services ensuring our estates are cleaned and maintained to a high standard.
7. The following sections have been updated in line with the current practice:

3. Scope

The current policy states “The scope of the estate services function consists of...undertaking communal repairs” and “delivering improvement works”

This has been updated to state “The scope of the estate services function consists of... raising communal repairs” and “delivering minor improvement works”

Repairs are delivered under the Repairs and Maintenance contract and improvement works are delivered under the Major Works team. Minor improvement works is in line with the responsibilities of the estate team.

4.1 Cleaning Standards

The current policy states the cleaning standards are graded A (excellent) to D (totally unacceptable). The grading is now A to E for the estate services standards. Excellent, good, room for improvement, poor and unacceptable are the terms used for grading.

4.2 Estate Inspections

The current policy states that “Upcoming inspections will be advertised on our website, estate/office notice boards and newsletters. We will encourage residents to attend and participate in inspecting their estate.” This has been clarified to

“Residents can join estate staff on Walkabouts, a walk around the estate where any areas of concern can be pointed out and discussed. Upcoming walkabouts will be advertised on our website, estate/office notice boards and newsletters. We will encourage residents to attend and participate in these, inspecting their estate.” The current policy does not reflect our already publicised practice of scheduled walkabouts which residents are encouraged to attend.

8. On approval, the policies will be updated with approval dates and continue to be readily accessible to all employees through SharePoint and uploaded to the public website for residents and service users ensuring easy reference whenever needed.

Proposals

9. Appendix 1 shows a list of some policies currently in use by the Housing Service. It is proposed that the policies are extended by the recommended period (three years in all cases).
10. All the policies recommended for extension are due for review already or within the next 6 months.
11. It is also proposed that the Estate Management Policy be approved with the mentioned amendments.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

The policies support our work in effectively managing estates and ensuring that our residents enjoy a safe environment and home.

Strategic implications - This proposal aligns with key objectives in the Corporate Plan for 2024-29 where there is a commitment to ensure people receive good services, live in good quality homes, and can live independent and healthy lives.

Financial implications

None

Resource implications

None

Legal implications

None

Risk implications

None

Equalities implications – These policies will support us in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010, s.149) by ensuring that we have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and foster good relations. Proportionality and equalities principles are an integral part of the policy. We will ensure that officers take account of protected characteristics and any applicable support measures that may benefit an individual when

invoking the policy. Decisions taken under the policy will be fully documented and, in some instances, subject to approval and regular review.

Climate implications

None

Security implications

None

Conclusion

12. The Estate Management Policy, first approved in 2018, is re-submitted for approval with the amendments to reflect our current practices and clarification of role responsibilities.

13. Members are also asked to extend the review dates on several other current policies which are due for review.

14. Officers will continue to review policies before their official review dates should the need arise.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – table of policies
- Appendix 2 – Revised Estate Management Policy (version three – 2024)

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Appendix 1 – Table of policies

Policy Title	Original Approval Date	Review Approval Date (1)	Review Approval Date (2)	Review Period	Review Next Due Date	Decision
Anti-Social Behaviour Policy	23.07.18	May-21		3 years	May-24	Extend
Debt Recovery Policy	22.03.21			3 years	Mar-24	Extend
Disposal of Personal Property Policy	16.04.18	May-21		3 years	May-24	Extend
Domestic Abuse Policy	24.09.18	May-21		3 years	May-24	Extend
Estate Management Policy	27.11.18	May-21		3 years	May-24	Slight Amendment
Estate Parking and Storage Sheds Policy	24.09.18	May-21		3 years	May-24	Extend
Filming and Photography on Estates Policy	24.09.18	May-21		3 years	May-24	Extend
Gas Safety Policy	27.11.18	May-21		3 years	May-24	Extend
Guest Rooms Policy	27.11.18	May-21		3 years	May-24	Extend
Insurance Cover and Claims Policy	27.11.18	May-21		3 years	May-24	Extend
Income Recovery Policy	22.03.21			3 years	Mar-24	Extend
Introductory Tenancies Policy	05.06.18	Jun-21		3 years	Jun-24	Extend
Mutual Exchange Policy	12.02.18	Sep-20		3 years	Sep-23	Extend
Rents Policy	22.11.19			3 years	Nov-22	Extend
Safeguarding Policy	01.01.16	Mar-21		3 years	Mar-24	Extend
Shift Allowance (Downsizing) Policy	01.02.18	Nov-20		3 years	Nov-23	Extend



City of London Corporation
Department of Community & Children's Services
Housing Service

Estate Management Policy

Approved by:	<i>Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee</i>
Original Approval Date:	27/11/2018 (v.1)
Review Date:	27/11/2021
Re-Approval Date:	24/05/2021
Next Review Date:	November 2024

1. Introduction

The City of London Corporation is committed to providing quality estate services and ensuring that our estates are cleaned and maintained to a high standard.

Estate management primarily concerns communal or shared areas of estates and private spaces such as balconies, gardens and frontages which contribute visually to the estate. We are not responsible for areas on or near our estates which are privately or externally owned or managed.

Residents are at the heart of our service delivery and are given the opportunity to be involved in the upkeep of their estate, to agree standards, monitor performance against these standards and hold the City of London to account.

2. Aims of this Policy

- To ensure that residents enjoy a safe, clean and tidy environment
- To involve residents in the management and upkeep of their estate
- To monitor and publish performance against clear service standards
- To carry out regular inspections of all estates
- To publicise estate inspections and encourage resident involvement

3. Scope

The scope of the estate services function consists of:

- Cleaning communal areas (including window cleaning)
- Maintaining communal areas
- Grounds maintenance (grass, trees, shrubs and flowerbeds)
- **Raising communal repairs**
- **Delivering minor improvement works**
- Managing parking restrictions
- Removing abandoned vehicles
- Removing drug litter
- Removing graffiti
- Ensuring communal areas are safe
- Conducting estate inspections
- Monitoring and reporting on performance against standards

This policy applies to housing estates managed by the City's Housing Service as part of the Housing Revenue Account, including any areas adjacent to commercial premises. It also applies to the City of London and Gresham Almshouses, which we manage on behalf of the respective trusts. "Commercial tenant" applies to all commercial users, including lessees, tenants and licensees.

4. Estate Services

4.1 Cleaning Standards

Pictorial cleaning standards will be introduced for use on our estates. These will consist of four photographs per task, each of which indicates a standard. **These are graded A (excellent) to E (unacceptable) and carry a score of 5 (A standard) down to 0 (unacceptable).** This will then inform the final estate score.

The cleaning standards also provide staff and residents with the tasks and areas, setting out the scope of the cleaning service.

Where we provide a cleaning service we expect that residents and commercial tenants will assist us to maintain cleanliness on estates, by minimising mess and disposing of rubbish and litter appropriately.

4.2 Estate Inspections

The standard of cleaning will be assessed through consistent and regular inspections, appraising the quality of all communal areas and services. We will manage a planned programme of inspections, with the frequency of each inspection based on the size of the estate, services provided, repair history, current issues, and resident involvement and satisfaction. Inspections may therefore vary in frequency depending on the location.

All caretaking and cleaning issues identified through estate inspections will be recorded and updated prior to the next inspection. The results of our estate inspections will be published, along with a total score for the estate against the published standards.

Issues identified outside of estate inspections, from residents, estate officers or other staff, will be recorded and dealt with by estate staff.

Residents can join estate staff on Walkabouts, a walk around the estate where any areas of concern can be pointed out and discussed. Upcoming walkabouts will be advertised on our website, estate/office notice boards and newsletters. We will encourage residents to attend and participate in these, inspecting their estate.

4.3 Resident engagement

We will involve and engage residents in decision-making around estate management where appropriate. Resident involvement ensures we understand our residents' expectations, so we deliver the service according to their needs and priorities. We will work with residents to help shape how services are provided and to what standard. We will also work with residents to ensure they are able to hold us to account by regularly sharing with them our estate services standards and how we are performing against these.

4.4 Estate Standards - Communications

We will publish information on our performance on estate notice boards. Specifically, they will:

- set out future inspection dates
- update actions following inspections
- publicise the results of inspections
- record the latest cleaning activity
- identify fire and safety issues
- list staff or team contacts
- promote community events

Performance data relating to estate inspections will also be published online.

4.5 Disposal of Refuse and Fly-Tipping

Residents and commercial tenants are responsible for ensuring that their refuse and recycling is disposed of safely, tidily and as directed by estate staff. Refuse collection is the responsibility of the local authority. We will work with the local authority to ensure that appropriate facilities and arrangements are available for the disposal, storage and collection of refuse.

Dumping unwanted bulk items or rubbish anywhere other than designated locations is fly-tipping, as is use of these facilities by non-residents. We will take prompt action to remove hazardous material.

Fly-tipping will be dealt with in accordance with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

4.6 Signage

We will ensure that signage on our estates is clear, necessary, appropriate and well maintained. We will ensure that health and safety and other mandatory signage is present where required, such as 'no smoking' signs in internal communal areas.

We will avoid unnecessary signage and will remove outdated and obsolete signage.

4.7 Parking

Many of our estates feature parking for residents and visitors. We have controlled parking schemes in operation on our estates to deter unauthorised vehicles.

Please refer to the *Estate Parking & Storage Sheds Policy* for more details.

4.8 Abandoned or Unsafe Vehicles

We will deal promptly with any abandoned vehicles on our estates and will act to secure their removal. If the owner can be identified, we will charge any costs back to them.

Vehicles which are not abandoned but which are in an unsafe or unroadworthy condition will be dealt with in accordance with our *Estate Parking & Storage Sheds Policy*.

4.8 Lighting

We will maintain the lighting we are responsible for on our estates and will replace bulbs and fixtures as necessary. Lighting will be inspected regularly as part of the standard estate inspection.

5. Health and Safety

We will ensure that cleaning materials are environmentally friendly, safe and non-corrosive. We will take appropriate precautions with the control of substances hazardous to health and will provide comprehensive training to staff who are responsible for using them.

Staff will adhere to the City of London's Corporate *Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy*, as well as other relevant policies and local procedures relating to safe working practices.

6. Communal Areas

6.1 Use of shared or common areas

Communal areas are those parts of the estate not included in tenancies, leases or licences and for which we are responsible as a landlord. This includes:

- Staircases and stairwells
- Communal landings, walkways and balconies
- Shared paths, gardens and yards
- Roadways and parking areas
- Playgrounds and play equipment

There is no general right for residents or commercial users to store, display, place or keep anything in communal areas. This may only be done with our permission. We have a duty to actively manage communal areas and remove any items posing a hazard, causing an obstruction, or any item left there without our permission.

We will remove items without notice if they pose a risk or cause an obstruction. In other cases, we will give reasonable notice for the item to be removed.

Items commonly kept outside, such as bikes, push-chairs or mobility equipment, must be kept in areas designated or approved for this purpose, or in the resident's home or a storage facility.

Any items removed from communal areas will be dealt with in accordance with our *Disposal of Personal Property Policy*.

6.2 Managed Use Policy

We operate a 'managed use' policy for most communal areas under our management. This means that residents may keep some items in communal areas provided they have permission from us and the items meet the conditions outlined in our *Fire Safety Protocol (Communal Areas in Residential Buildings)*.

We may consider adopting a 'sterile' policy for some communal areas. This may be implemented where the 'managed use' policy cannot be maintained within the requirements of the *Fire Safety Protocol* (for instance due to the nature of the building's layout), or where residents or commercial users have persisted in breaching the *Fire Safety Protocol*, the terms of their tenancies or leases, or any other estate management policy relating to safe use of communal areas. Reasonable notice will be given of any change in local policy.

Differences in building layouts and dimensions may result in different rules being enforced between locations.

6.3 Activities in Communal Areas

Communal spaces, such as gardens, are intended for the peaceful enjoyment of all residents. Some activities in these spaces are prohibited or subject to permission from the estate office:

- **Fireworks** may not be used anywhere on our estates
- **Barbecues** may not be used anywhere on our estates unless prior permission is granted by the relevant estate office. Permission will generally only be given for barbecues held in a communal outside space as part of an estate event and conditions will be attached to the permission

7. Items Left in Communal or Public Areas

Our staff, agents or contractors may move items in communal areas as part of their routine cleaning and maintenance duties, or to allow non-routine cleaning or works to take place.

Any items of personal property left in communal areas on City of London estates are left entirely at the depositor's risk. We accept no liability for any damage, theft or other interference with any item left on our estates.

8. Cold Weather Actions

We will have a procedure in place for responding to snow and ice on our estates. We will take reasonable care to ensure that our communal areas are safe during ice or snow.

Where possible, we will grit communal pathways when ice is expected, or apparent on inspection.

We will clear snow from priority areas first (thoroughfares and pedestrian routes to properties occupied by vulnerable residents). Due to resource limitations, we cannot guarantee that all pathways will be cleared of snow.

If ice or snow occurs outside normal working hours, we will begin clearance or treatment as soon as we can on the next working day.

9. Policy Exceptions

In exceptional circumstances, we may consider a variation to this policy. This will depend on the individual circumstances of the case. The decision and its reasoning can be provided in writing to the parties on request.

10. Monitoring and Performance

We will monitor our use of this Policy and the way in which it is implemented, ensuring that any relevant information is reported in a timely way to appropriate bodies. We will do this through:

- Estate inspections. These will be graded, recorded and monitored as part of the City of London's key performance indicators
- Complaints, compliments and comments
- Satisfaction surveys

This information will be used by staff and tenants and the outcomes used to improve the service.

11. Training

We will provide all staff responsible for implementing this policy with comprehensive training as required.

12. Equality and Diversity

This Policy has been subject to a full Equalities Analysis and will be implemented in accordance with our responsibilities and duties under relevant legislation, including the Equalities Act 2010. We may consider making an exception in accordance with section 9 to ensure that those with a protected characteristic are not discriminated against.

13. Accessibility

We will ensure that residents' needs are considered when implementing this Policy to ensure that they are treated fairly. We will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that residents with distinct communication needs are not unreasonably and disproportionately affected. This could involve providing communications in alternative languages or formats or providing interpretation or transcription as appropriate.

14. Data Protection and Information Exchange

We will comply with our obligations under relevant data protection legislation and regulations. We will process and store personal information securely.

There are some circumstances in which we are required by law to disclose information given to us.

13. Policy Review

We will review this Policy at least every three years, or following relevant changes to legislation, regulation or policy.

14. Legislation & Regulation

This Policy is informed by the following regulation and statute:

Legislation

- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Occupiers' Liability Act 1957

Regulation

Homes & Communities Agency Standards:

- Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard
- Value for Money Standard


15. Related documents

This Policy is implemented by the following procedures:

- Estate Services Procedure

This Policy is supported by the following policies:

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Disposal of Personal Property Policy
- Estate Parking & Storage Sheds Policy
- Fire Safety Protocol (Communal Areas in Residential Buildings)

<p>Department of Community & Children’s Services</p> <p>Housing Service</p>	
<p>Policy Title: Estate Management Policy</p>	
<p>Document Owner: Head of Housing Management, DCCS</p>	
<p>Date Approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27/11/2018 (original – v.1) • 24/05/2021 (version 2) 	
<p>Version: 3 (this version)</p>	<p>Last amendment: N/A</p>
<p>Effective date: 27/11/2018</p>	<p>Next review date: Nov. 2024</p>
<p>Changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor amendments to Policy to reflect current practices • Review date extended by 3 years 	

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Committee(s): Housing Management and Almshouses Sub (Community and Children's Services) Committee	Dated: 03 June 2024
Subject: Housing Major Works Programme – Progress Report	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author: David Downing Acting Head of Major Works Housing, DCCS 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. From its original inception, this report has since been expanded to include information relating to Phase 2 of the Housing Major Works Programme (Future Programme).

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The purpose of this report is to present progress and highlight slippage within the portfolio of projects which make up the Housing Major Works Programme to Members of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee.
2. The City of London Corporation (City Corporation) is committed to investing around £110million 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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 and Procurement Sub Committee;
 - Housing Management & Almshouses Sub Committee;
 - Housing Programme Board.
6. The Housing Programme Board (HPB) is a cross-departmental group which meets every two months to oversee the Major Works Programme. It is 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.
7. 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.

8. Following 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).
9. 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.
10. As members will see from the 'Future Programme' at Appendix 2, there are nearly £44 million 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.
11. Members will note that the Future Programme is substantively unchanged from that submitted to previous meetings of this Sub Committee. An uplift to costs reflecting the persistent cost inflation in the construction industry has been applied to bring the forecast costs up to 2024 price levels. The Future Programme will likely be further affected by current and future economic factors and, at some time in the future, a substantial review and redrafting 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.
12. 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.

13. 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:

Progress of note on key projects

H39b – Window Replacements and External Redecorations (Holloway Estate)

Practical completion of the works achieved on 24th January. Scaffolding removed from all elevations. A few minor snagging items remain to be resolved. Final accounts to be agreed.

H39c – Window Replacements and External Redecorations (Southwark Estate - Pakeman, Stopher, Sumner)

Redecoration is nearly complete across all three blocks. The replacement of windows for Pakeman House started in early April. Windows for Sumner Buildings and Stopher House are being now manufactured; installations are expected to begin mid May for Sumner Buildings and end May for Stopher House. Practical completion was expected by the end of June 2024 although the addition of the balcony doors at Sumner Buildings will require an Extension of Time which is currently being calculated. An Issues Report seeking a budget uplift is in preparation for the next Community & Children's Services Committee.

H39d – Window Replacements and External Redecorations (Sydenham Hill)

Practical completion of the works achieved on 14th March. Scaffolding removed from all elevations. A few minor snagging items remain to be resolved. Final accounts to be agreed. An Issues Report seeking a small budget uplift is in preparation for the next Community & Children's Services Committee.

H39e – Window Replacements and External Redecorations (William Blake Estate)

Statutory pre-tender section 20 leaseholder consultations for the services of a design team closed 11th March 2024. The design team brief is now being finalised and the project team will engage with the energy and procurement teams to ensure that the project aligns with City's climate action and responsible procurement strategies. Once appointed, the design team will be working alongside the project team undertaking pre-planning advice ahead of submitting a new planning application. While the planning applications are underway the design team will also be working alongside the project team drawing specifications to re-tender for the works, which will also be subject to the statutory pre and post tender section 20 consultations with leaseholders. Subject to further committee approvals, successful statutory consultations, tenders, and planning consents the works are expected to start early 2025.

H39f – Window Replacements and External Redecorations (Windsor House)

Snagging and final inspection of the redecoration work is expected shortly, and the replacement of the dormer windows is ongoing with final making good to the dormer surrounds to follow. Practical completion is expected 6th June 2024. An Issues Report seeking a budget uplift is in preparation for the next Community & Children's Services Committee.

H40a – Window Refurbishment, Roofing, Ventilation and Heating (Crescent House)

Listed Building Consent and Planning application for the whole block has now been approved. Tender documents are being finalised ahead of publication of stage 1 of the tender which will be advertised in late June/early July. Once the pricing document is ready it will be presented for legal opinion in terms of recoverability of costs as well as considering issues such as status of decanting costs and costs relating to converting leasehold flats to electric heating.

H40b, c, d, e – Window Refurbishment, Roofing and Ventilation (Golden Lane Estate - Remaining Blocks)

Much of the design work for Stanley Cohen and Cullum Welch is now complete but awaits some final pieces of work to be completed such as structural surveys and embodied carbon assessments. Additional budget to support his work and to refurbish void flats ready for decanting was approved at the last Community & Children's Services Committee. Once the funds have been made available on the City's financial systems the relevant consultants and contractors can be instructed to progress this piece of work.

H46 - Middlesex Street Estate Communal Heating

The works are ongoing around Petticoat Square. Residents of Petticoat Tower are experiencing noise issue within the internal ducts. Following extensive investigations, it has been determined that this is the result of the old, existing system. A drain down of the old system cannot be actioned until all properties in the Tower have their installations completed; four leasehold properties continue to refuse access to allow the works. Action to resolve is with City Solicitors.

H54 – Fire Door Replacement Programme (Multiple Estates)

- Lot 2 (Avondale Square Estate)

Gerda have begun installing residential front doors in the Point Blocks. Replacement of communal corridor doors within these blocks is on hold pending resolution of an issue relating to the sprinkler installation.

- Lot 3 (Sumner Buildings, William Blake, Dron House, Petticoat Tower communal doors)

Works at Dron House and William Blake Estate are complete. One flat in Sumner Buildings continues to deny access; this is with City Solicitors to resolve. Works to the communal doors in Petticoat Tower remain on hold pending the completion of the sprinkler install.

- Lot 4 (Southwark Estate, Windsor House, Isleden House, Sydenham Hill, Spitalfields)

Reform Architects have been appointed to lead the design work for Lot 4. There will be an initial focus on Sydenham Hill due to the extra complications of the Listing and previous experience of lengthy timescales when dealing with Lewisham.

14. Members will appreciate that there will always be problems with contracts and projects such as those contained within the Housing Major Works Programme. The last few years have been particularly challenging. Indeed, the increasing cost of construction projects nationally remains a particular concern. The Corporation is not immune from these cost increases which, typically, are between 20 and 30%.

15. 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.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Housing Major Works Programme Progress Report (April 2024)

Appendix 2: Housing Major Works Programme (Future Programme)

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GOLDEN LANE ESTATE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME - DELIVERY FORECAST MAY 2024

REF	PROJECT	ESTIMATED COST	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	CURRENT STATUS	SLIPPAGE SINCE LAST REPORT	TIMELINE																	
						2023/24				2024/25				2025/26									
						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4						
A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
H40a	Window Refurbishment, Roofing, Ventilation & Heating (Crescent House)	£11,958,695	£734,530	planning approved, procurement																			
H40b	Window Refurbishment, Roofing & Ventilation (Cullum Welch House)	£3,270,448	£53,000	design																			
H40c	Window Refurbishment, Roofing & Ventilation (Great Arthur House)	£1,281,482	£21,000	design																			
H40d	Window Refurbishment, Roofing & Ventilation (Stanley Cohen House)	£1,668,596	£27,000	design																			
H40e	Window Refurbishment, Roofing & Ventilation (Maisonette Blocks)	£11,653,474	£191,700	design																			
H41	Great Arthur House - Front Door Replacement/Compartmentation	£675,000	£60,536	design (with sprinklers)																			
H54	Fire Door Replacement Programme (Lot 5 - GLE)	£1,160,000	£4,800	Lot 5 of 5. Lots 1,2 & 3 in delivery.																			
H55c	Installation of Sprinklers (Great Arthur House)	TBC	£130,000	contract with UL withdrawn																			
H61	Golden Lane Area Lighting & Accessibility	£500,000	£450	project to restart with CAS funding																			
TOTAL		£32,167,695	£1,223,016																				

MIDDLESEX STREET ESTATE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME - DELIVERY FORECAST MAY 2024

REF	PROJECT	ESTIMATED COST	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	CURRENT STATUS	SLIPPAGE SINCE LAST REPORT	TIMELINE																	
						2023/24				2024/25				2025/26									
						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4						
A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
H46	Communal Heating (inc Cold Water Distribution)	£4,349,389	£3,834,184	on site																			
H54	Fire Door Replacement Programme (Lot 3 - inc Petticoat Tower communal doors)	£180,000	£4,800	doors to follow sprinkler install																			
H55b	Installation of Sprinklers (Petticoat Tower)	£1,324,554	£480,744	on site																			
TOTAL		£5,853,943	£4,319,728																				

AVONDALE SQUARE ESTATE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME - DELIVERY FORECAST MAY 2024

REF	PROJECT	ESTIMATED COST	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	CURRENT STATUS	SLIPPAGE SINCE LAST REPORT	TIMELINE																	
						2023/24				2024/25				2025/26									
						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4						
A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
H54	Fire Door Replacement Programme (Lot 2 - Avondale Square Estate)	£2,790,000	£1,292,800	on site																			
H55a	Installation of Sprinklers (Point Blocks)	£3,548,027	£2,969,153	awaiting building control sign off																			
H59	George Elliston & Eric Wilkins Refurbishment	£3,700,000	£130	design	TBC																		
TOTAL		£10,038,027	£4,262,083																				

SOUTHWARK/WILLIAM BLAKE ESTATES INVESTMENT PROGRAMME - DELIVERY FORECAST MAY 2024

REF	PROJECT	ESTIMATED COST	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	CURRENT STATUS	SLIPPAGE SINCE LAST REPORT	TIMELINE																	
						2023/24				2024/25				2025/26									
						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4						
A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
H39c	Window Replacements & External Redecorations (Pakeman, Stopher & Sumner)	£4,294,565	£3,495,416	on site																			
H39e	Window Replacements & External Redecorations (William Blake)	£3,035,720	£54,350	gateway 3/4 approved																			
H54	Fire Door Replacement Programme (Lot 3 - Sumner & W. Blake, Lot 4 - Southwark)	£1,454,000	£659,343	Lot 3 on site, Lot 4 design																			
H50	Southwark Estate Concrete Testing & Repair	£1,500,000	£70,332	on hold - Capital Programme Review																			
TOTAL		£10,284,285	£4,279,441																				

HOLLOWAY ESTATE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME - DELIVERY FORECAST MAY 2024

REF	PROJECT	ESTIMATED COST	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	CURRENT STATUS	SLIPPAGE SINCE LAST REPORT	TIMELINE																													
						2023/24				2024/25				2025/26																					
						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4																		
						A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S
H39b	Window Replacements & External Redecorations (Holloway)	£4,681,409	£4,491,934	complete																															
TOTAL		£4,681,409	£4,491,934																																

YORK WAY ESTATE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME - DELIVERY FORECAST MAY 2024

REF	PROJECT	ESTIMATED COST	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	CURRENT STATUS	SLIPPAGE SINCE LAST REPORT	TIMELINE																													
						2023/24				2024/25				2025/26																					
						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4																		
						A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S
H60	York Way Estate Communal Corridor Improvements	£900,000	£0	procurement																															
TOTAL		£900,000	£0																																

SYDENHAM HILL ESTATE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME - DELIVERY FORECAST MAY 2024

REF	PROJECT	ESTIMATED COST	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	CURRENT STATUS	SLIPPAGE SINCE LAST REPORT	TIMELINE																													
						2023/24				2024/25				2025/26																					
						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4																		
						A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S
H39d	Window Replacements & External Redecoration (Sydenham Hill)	£1,664,370	£1,481,187	complete																															
H54	Fire Door Replacement Programme (Lot 4 - inc Sydenham)	£192,500	£4,800	design																															
TOTAL		£1,856,870	£1,485,987																																

SMALL ESTATES (DRON, WINDSOR, ISLEDEN, COLA, GRESHAM) INVESTMENT PROGRAMME - DELIVERY FORECAST MAY 2024

REF	PROJECT	ESTIMATED COST	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	CURRENT STATUS	SLIPPAGE SINCE LAST REPORT	TIMELINE																													
						2023/24				2024/25				2025/26																					
						Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4																		
						A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S
H39f	Window Replacements & External Redecoration (Windsor)	£2,260,939	£2,068,075	on site																															
H54	Fire Door Replacement Programme (Lot 3 - inc Dron, Lot 4 - inc Windsor, Isleden)	£890,000	£621,000	on site																															
TOTAL		£3,150,939	£2,689,075																																

TOTAL PLANNED EXPENDITURE (ALL ESTATES) ACTIVE PROJECTS

	TOTAL PLANNED	SPENT TO DATE
Golden Lane Estate	£32,167,695	£1,223,016
Middlesex Street Estate	£5,853,943	£4,319,728
Avondale Square Estate	£10,038,027	£4,262,083
Southwark/William Blake Estates	£10,284,285	£4,279,441
Holloway Estate	£4,681,409	£4,491,934
York Way Estate	£900,000	£0
Sydenham Hill Estate	£1,856,870	£1,485,987
Small Estates	£3,150,939	£2,689,075
TOTAL	£68,933,168	£22,751,264

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Committee(s): Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee	Dated: 3 June 2024
Subject: Access Audit Remedial Project	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2, 3, 4, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	Y
If so, how much?	£TBD
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N
Report of: Judith Finlay Executive Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Jason Hayes, Head of Major Works	

Summary

This report outlines progress made with the access audit remedial project for City of London Housing Estates. This is following an accessibility audit which assessed how well City of London estates performed with regards to access in and around the estate.

Whilst this report provides a brief update, the project requires authorisation through the necessary steps of the Corporation's governance structure and project processes.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. An accessibility audit was completed by Direct Access Consultancy Ltd. With recommendations made per estate. The audit assesses the buildings against

the Equality Act 2010 as well as other codes of practice and Building Regulations where applicable.

2. The audit assessed approaches into the estates, routes, steps, signs, ramps, means of escape, corridors and other provisions that help make access easier and compliant.
3. The audit was undertaken in two parts, the first being information gathering by visiting the site and then results, and recommendations, made via the report, together with priorities.

Current Position

4. A full review has been undertaken by the Major Works Team to identify what work is to be prioritised and what work has been undertaken to date.
5. Work completed as part of the capital works programme will have had a positive impact to protected characteristics of residents or their visitors. This can include accessible bathroom adaptations as part of the decent homes project or adaptations to doors as part of the fire door replacement project. Any replacement work within the capital works programme will usually require compliancy with the latest Building Regulations, such as approved document Part M, which ensures that people are able to access and use the buildings, and their facilities. With each new project a Test of Relevance is undertaken before deciding if the work requires a full Equality Impact Assessment.
6. The project manager for the access audit remedial work has set out a prioritised list of immediate work and is working through the costs to complete the more essential items. They are also identifying work which will fall into the scope of other imminent projects such as lighting upgrades or corridor refurbishment work.
7. Some information is missing in the reports that will help finalise the range budget estimates. This information has been requested directly from the consultants. Any cost estimates will be checked with a Quantity Surveyor for accuracy.

Options

8. The options appraisal should identify:
 - a. Actions that are covered by existing or upcoming projects for the essential improvements identified by the report.
 - b. Other less urgent items that can be aligned with the future works programme.
 - c. The cost of completing the recommendations in the report.

Proposals

9. Consultation on the proposals will need to be undertaken with residents, and officers, and other key stakeholders to identify any additional needs or requirements. Some of the remedial work may impact accessibility whilst the work is being undertaken. This will need careful planning and communication. A communications strategy has not yet been finalised.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – Remedial work undertaken as part of the recommendations set out within the reports will ensure our estates are compliant, meet the expectations of the Equalities Act 2010 and other codes of practice that support accessibility.

Financial implications – Funding will be required to support the remedial work. No external funding has been identified yet.

Resource implications – None.

Legal implications – Legal action for non-compliance, lack of support or discrimination against protected characteristics.

Risk implications – As per legal implications above.

Equalities implications – Remedial work will support the protected characteristics outlined in the Equalities Act 2010.

Climate implications – None.

Security implications – None.

Conclusion

10. The report provides progress update on work completed to date and what the next steps are to undertaken essential work to estates to improve the facilities provided making them more accessible to those living, visiting and working on the estate.
11. Once the current review is complete, and costs estimated, a further report starting the project under the gateway process, can be undertaken. The gateway report is expected at the next Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee meeting on 8 July 2024.

Appendices

None

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Head of Major Works

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