

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Housing Management and Almshouses Sub - Committee	Dated: 30/06/25
Subject: Golden Lane Estate Update Briefing	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • provides statutory duties • provides business enabling functions 	Providing Excellent Services Flourishing Public Spaces Diverse Engaged Communities
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	No
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Summary

Proposals approved by Members in March 2023 around window and roof replacement on the Golden Lane Estate (GLE) gave an incomplete picture of the work and resources required.

It emerged late in 2024 that all required residential blocks on the GLE had not been registered as required with the Building Safety Regulator. This has since been rectified. However, this has prompted consideration of electrical upgrade, fabric repairs, fire safety, and redecoration works that were not previously included in the £29m package.

The March 2023 programme was not fully funded and unidentified Housing Revenue Account (HRA) were needed to deliver that plan.

To execute the works 2 options have been assessed (10 and 20 years) the option preferred by members is the 10 year programme commencing 2025. As a result, we have been asked to focus on working up the high-level costs needed to develop a 10-year programme to inform decision making.

Continued steps have been taken to support and communicate more effectively with affected residents. We are in discussion with GLERA in the first instance on a number of issues arising from the further delay of this project.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. Golden Lane Estate (GLE)

GLE is a Grade II Listed Estate consisting of nine blocks, one of the blocks, Crescent House, is a Grade II* Listed Building. The Estate was completed in the 1960s and consists of 559 homes.

Tenanted homes	285	51%
Leasehold homes	274	49%
TOTAL	559*	

* Does not include the 6 guest rooms

2. The Window programme - reasons for delay

Residents advise that the window replacement project has been discussed with them for 20 years. In March 2023 the C&CS Committee agreed the window works and roof coverings for Crescent House and the wider estate, highlighting the use of a pilot flat to demonstrate the potential on window repair & new glazing. The timescale put forward did not consider the impact of residents having to vacate their homes to allow the work to take place on the timescale for works, or the additional works required on the estate including fire safety and compliance works, fabric repairs or the sequencing of any works. The redecorations were subsequently removed and reduced to making good due to budgetary constraints. The report gave an incomplete picture of the work required, insufficient resourcing was identified and was therefore inaccurate and unachievable.

At the end of 2024, it was identified that not all residential blocks on the GLE had been registered as required with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR). All buildings of 18m high or seven storeys with at least 2 residential dwellings should have been registered with the BSR by the end of September 2023. The City of

London's team failed to do this. The submission was led by officers of the Corporation, who are no longer employed.

All of the buildings have since been professionally measured by a consultant. The implications of not recognising the blocks at the GLE as HRBs is critical because any works to be progressed in a HRB now need to be agreed by the BSR and there is a significant backlog of such work nationally sitting with them.

Basterfield, Bayer, Bowater, Cullum Welch and Hatfield Houses as Higher Risk buildings (HRBs) are now registered. By virtue of their physical connection to one or more of these buildings, Crescent House and Stanley Cohen House are also now registered.

Whilst those blocks are now registered, the impact means that we had to withdraw from the tender process.

In response to this critical development, a fire strategy commissioned for Crescent House contains a series of recommendations, but it critically assumes that all the flat entrance and communal door sets within the block are fire rated. We have to incorporate this element of work within the scope of works which is a contributory factor to the delay in terms of the surveys, design and planning/listed building consent associated with the fire door sets.

Although for residents this is deeply frustrating and distressing, progressing the works outlined in the previous programme was unlikely to be successful for the reasons outlined above.

We are now taking a holistic view of the GLE and ensuring a clear and integrated programme of works which will enable us to properly fulfil our Landlord obligations, ensure the compliance of key issues such as fire and other safety works are completed and essential planned maintenance work (such as electrical upgrades, fabric repairs and communal decorations) which weren't previously included in the package. We will achieve better value for money and aim to reduce as far as possible disruption for residents. This will put us in a better place for the future in building a prudent and practical approach to long term maintenance.

3. Finance

The programme as outlined in March 2023 was not fully funded and unidentified HRA savings were required to deliver the plan. The new programme has an expanded scope that includes all essential compliance works on the GLE. Detailed costings for Crescent House will be available in August 2025 following completion of the revised programme of works. Funding of each of the other phases will follow as the design is completed in November 2025 (Cuthbert Harrowing), April 2026 (Great Arthur House) with the remaining blocks concluded by August 2026. To facilitate a more urgent understanding of the likely finances required, we have asked our main consultant to provide a budget estimate. This will be available in April/May 2025 and will support budget planning.

4. The Proposed 10 Year - Accelerated Programme Option

Based on a 'combined package' approach, using different criteria. Instead of decanting 6 flats (as planned for the 20-year option) at a time, a total of 12 flats would be decanted at a time, but as part of separate contracts with different main contractors. This would allow for all works to be completed at one time in each block without splitting the work into two separate packages for 5 of the blocks, as with the 20-year programme.

Therefore, the idea would be to adopt the same approach as for Crescent House so that all of the other blocks are delivered as packages to deliver the works two blocks at a time, instead of one. Great Arthur House would progress concurrently.

With this 10 year programme, the programme costs would be front loaded and additional project managers, accommodation and decant support officers would be required. With the increased amount of work being undertaken at any one time, we would need more management capacity to manage the disruption and a potential increase in resident issues. Residents would be living on a building site for an extended period of time.

5. The short – term improvements we are seeking to either promote or expedite in summary below

- Considering a fuel payment for residents of GLE to recognise the disadvantage experienced arising from the delays.
- Communicating and coordinating more effectively.
- New project website - www.goldenlaneprojects.co.uk launched.
- Regular meetings with GLERA including attendance at the GLERA AGM in June 2025 and more frequent meetings with ward Members.
- A drop-in surgery every two weeks on GLE led by the AD Housing – first session took place 19 March 2025, attended by twelve residents.
- Consultation events and drop-in sessions for Major works projects.
- An additional senior member of staff to co-ordinate housing services on the estate to include all housing projects, repairs and maintenance housing management and estate services. The co-ordinator joined us 28 April 2025.
- New Repairs and maintenance contract should provide improvements in the delivery of R&M – more focus on planned, preventative work and less on reactive repairs.
- A deep clean of the communal areas of the Estate has taken place.
- Putting a plan in place for interim or 'meanwhile' health and safety repairs until such time as the major works are delivered.
- A fact sheet on Higher Risk Buildings (HRBs) has been produced for residents.
- Working with residents to appreciate the impact of the higher risk building status
- A leaseholder letter explaining the issues of betterment vs repair was sent to all leaseholders. We will have a continuous dialogue with leaseholders and all residents.

Key Data

A

Addressing the Key Issues and Risks – Disruption for Residents

Resident Decanting and storage of goods is required because of health and safety and spatial concerns. The full extent of decanting required will be finalised once there are contractors on board. There will also be disruption caused by the number of contractor site set-ups required to accommodate a number of contractors operating on GLE at any one time. We recognise that this issue is critical to residents and we will look to give residents as much clarity as possible in this area.

B

Addressing the Key Issues and Risks – Availability of Funding

Our lead consultant has been asked to provide us with a budget estimate which will be suitably caveated and should be available by the end of April / early May 2025.

C

Addressing the Key Issues and Risks – Change from Gas to Electric Heating for some Homes at Crescent House

Some homes in Crescent House have their gas flues that go through glazing. This cannot be accommodated by the proposed vacuum glazing of the refurbished windows that have been designed for Crescent House. This will mean that electric heating will be required. Legal advice has been received on this issue. We have put forward 2 options to leaseholders for further discussion.

D

Addressing the Key Issues and Risks – Leaseholder Recovery – Repair Vs Betterment and Dispensation Required

A letter has been written to leaseholders recently outlining the internal legal advice received on this issue. To develop the expanded scope of works we need to extend the appointment of the lead consultant Studio Partington and appoint a number of consultants in the areas of fire safety, mechanical and electrical, and post contract professional services. These appointments would ordinarily be subject to Section 20 Consultation but we may have to seek dispensation as an alternative because framework mini tenders may be the appropriate way to stay on track. The cost implications of this are yet to be confirmed.

E

Addressing the Key Issues and Risks – Communication with Residents

Due to the nature and length of this project it is critical that a good working relationship is developed with residents. Work is being done to reset our relationship with GLERA and residents. Of late this includes direct communication with every household, updating the project website, holding resident consultation events, the next one is planned to take place 1 May 2025, holding surgeries on the estate and employing a GLE Co-ordinator to systemise our multi-disciplinary work at GLE.

F

Addressing the Key Issues and Risks – Resourcing: City of London Corporation and Contractors

This project requires a team that is assembled to see this project through to completion to cover project, construction management. There is an Issue Report on this agenda that covers the Organisational Restructure of the Major Works team. The proposed reorganisation will develop the foundations needed to steward this and other major works programmes successfully.

Contractor

Any contractors used will have to have knowledge of working on listed buildings in general and have the skills necessary to do the specialist works required to the windows specified for Crescent House.

G

Addressing the Key Issues and Risks – Site Management and Co-ordination

We may have as many as 3 contractors on site at any time, they will have to manage in relatively close proximity. Thought will have to be given to site setup and welfare facilities. There will also be other major works projects on the GLE including the Great Arthur House roof refurbishment, podium waterproofing and the Leisure Centre refurbishment.

H

Addressing the Key Issues and Risks – Health and Safety and Winter Measures

Health and Safety Works

There is likely to be a requirement for health and safety meanwhile window repairs, intended to preserve the health and safety of frames and sashes until such time as the major works are delivered.

Winter Measures

The previous Head of Major Works implemented the purchase and supply of draught excluders, curtains, drapes etc. and potentially flooring to mitigate the impact of the works being delayed further.

Thought is being given to the development of a fuel payment to recognise the disadvantage experienced arising from the delays experienced by residents living at Crescent House. A proposal will be brought to CCS in June 2025.

Appendices

None

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