

North East Local Housing Forum

December 2020 Highlights Report



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New Homes



- Rennie Estate Scheme was approved by planning committee on the 21st November and is now with the GLA for final approval. The scheme will provide 49 new council homes across 2 blocks with associated amenity and new landscaping for the estate.
- 345 Southwark Park SE16 and Cherry Gardens School are providing new council and private homes and have secured planning. Works are due to commence shortly.
- Rotherhithe New Road 213-219 has been submitted for planning. Construction of a new building 6 storeys which will provide approx. 200sqm of commercial space and 14 new council homes.

New Homes

- Haddonfield Garages started on site in July 20, this will provide 14 Flats and improved landscaping. Due to a change required to position of the building an amendment to the planning permission has been submitted.
- Welsford Street involves the development of 10 family houses and a pocket park and is due to complete Spring 21.
- Other on site schemes include Tenda Road, Maydew as well as Chilton Grove.

Asset Management

- A QHIP major works scheme is now on site at Harbord House. Schemes at Parkers Row, Coopers Road Estate and Kirby Estate are due to finish soon. Around 10 schemes are now in design and looking to start early in the next financial year.
- Lift refurbishments at Blick House and Addy House:
- Blick House: Lift works were rescheduled to allow further consultation. The works to this lift are now in progress with an expected completion date of 28/12/20.
- Addy House: First lift (No. 5144) has been refurbished and has been returned to service. The works to the 2nd lift are now in progress with an expected completion date of 20/12/20.

Asset Management

Due to the second lockdown, the Repairs Service has moved to offering the following service:

- Emergency and urgent repairs
- Void property refurbishments
- Housing adaptations emergency repairs and urgent installations
- Emergency and urgent fire safety works
- External communal inspections
- External communal repairs at a reduced capacity
- External handyman works
- Customers with repairs, works or claims that are unable to continue are being called and updated.

Resident Services

- Resident Services Officers in the North continue to make contact with all identified and known vulnerable residents as part of the welfare check programme being conducted since the first lockdown in March 2020. This is to ensure that our residents are well, responding positively to the changing times and that they are provided with the support and assistance they require.
- RSOs have continued to conduct weekly estate visual audits and monthly estate inspections.
- RSOs have noticed an upward trend in complaints of antisocial behaviour, mostly to do with noise nuisance, breach of social distancing guidelines or loud music since the relaxation of the lockdown rules and they are working with colleagues in SASBU, Noise Team and the police to address the concerns.

Communities

- The online panel of residents was launched at an inaugural event on October 13th. The panel consists of over 500 residents who have told us that they are willing to participate in discussions with the council around issues they are specifically interested. The panel is now up and running, with a task and finish group on leaseholder service charge statements its inaugural project.
- The council's new Getting Involved Grants programme (GIG) was re-launched in September 2020. These project-specific grants are for community organisations, aimed at promoting cohesive communities. The council received 20 applications from various groups across the borough, and a total of 17 projects have been awarded funding. The funding awarded covers projects ranging from £450 to £5,000.

Anti social behaviour, grounds maintenance

- The teams are concentrating on leaf removal which should be completed by early December, we are also continuing to deploy grass cutting teams as due to the unseasonably mild weather the grass is continuing to grow on most estates.
- We have also received the green light to proceed with the installation of a number of Cleaner, Greener, Safer soft landscaping schemes involving the replanting of existing beds and the creation of new planted areas on the following sites in the North East area:
 - Wrayburn House (Dickens Estate)
 - Harold Estate
 - Arnold Estate
 - Cherry Gardens Estate
 - Unity Court
 - Hawkstone Estate

Anti social behaviour, grounds maintenance

- Recently the Rotherhithe and Surrey Docks forum areas experienced increased levels of Firework misuse which was widely reported in the media, social media and increased reports to the Police and Council. A multi agency response was called to address this which resulted increased Police and warden patrols as well as work by the anti social behaviour team to address the behaviours with those identified.
- As an area we also receive reports of drug related activities and we continue to work with Police and partners to address this behaviour that impacts communities.
- Stats since April 2020
 - 4 x Closures of properties of disorder.
 - 5 x Acceptable behaviour contracts
 - 4 x Injunctions

Exchequer Services

- There has been some improvement in the COVID-19 related rent arrears position since that reported at AHF in September – and an even bigger improvement in service charge collection among homeowners.
- The impacts of the new COVID restrictions from earlier this month are still unknown but are not expected to be positive. We still expect to see overall collection levels for rent and service charges to be significantly down on last year (2019/20).
- Government imposed restrictions mean that no evictions are likely to take place until next year – the Council will only seek to evict those with persistent arrears that pre-dated the pandemic.

Modernise

- Over 37, 000 Southwark properties have now been connected to full-fibre broadband as a result of the council's closely working with suppliers Hyperoptic and Community Fibre. Hyperoptic and Community complete their installation programme in Q1 2021/22
- Openreach are due to continue this work in early 2021, once a wayleave agreement has been put in place. The council will look to engage with resident groups in advance of Openreach's programme - to discuss the nature of works, proposed schedule and answer any questions representatives may have. We will also work with Openreach to communicate with residents, as we have done previously, to inform them of the start of infrastructure works on each estate