

Central East Local Housing Forum Highlights Report



9th March 2021



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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 handyperson works**
- **Customers with repairs, works or claims that are unable to continue are being called and updated.**

Asset Management continued

- Communal / Emergency Intelligent Lighting Installations are progressing as follows:

PECKHAM RYE, 145A-D & 147C,NUNHEAD Complete

PECKHAM RYE, 147A-B,NUNHEAD Complete

PECKHAM RYE 153 A-C Complete

PECKHAM RYE 149 A-B Complete

PECKHAM RYE 149 C - 151 A-C Complete

TAPPESFIELD ROAD – Works in progress

SASSOON HOUSE, - Complete

BLACKTHORNE COURT Complete

ADYS ROAD Complete

BLANCH CLOSE Complete

PENNACK ROAD Complete

Asset Management continued

- **Lift refurbishments at Walkingscroft House and Crane House:**

Walkingscroft House: Lift works completed and returned to service in Sept 2020.

Crane House". L3016 – L3017 Both returned to service.

Wickway 3106 started on the 7th January expected to be complete and tested next week (week commencing 8/2/21).

Works to the underground mains at Brimington are on site and due to complete in Sept 2021, as are QHIP works on the Acorn Estate. Heating works at North Peckham and Gloucester Groves Estates are due to begin in the summer. A number of other QHIP schemes are now in design and looking to start early in the next financial year.

Consort Estate, surveys and design works are underway to undertake Fire Risk Assessments, installation of LD1 smoke and heat detection systems to properties that have a secondary means of escape. The LD1 works are currently in progress and additional fire stopping will also be undertaken to the communal corridor areas ahead of the main QHIP project for Consort Estate.

Asset Management continued

- **Clifton Estate QHIP – Currently in the process of finalising final designs and costs expected by March 2021. Several low rise blocks have been removed from the QHIP programme as Roof Top Homes developments are proposed.**
- **Pelican Estate QHIP – Finalising designs and costs ahead of works commencing.**
- **Nunhead Estate QHIP Works – feasibilities issued to New Build Team to proceed with alongside proposed roof top homes. Should roof top homes not proceed QHIP works will return to investment delivery.**
- **Priory Estate QHIP – Structural monitoring complete, pilot works to external balcony planters in progress, design options to be considered with residents and then finalise costs ahead of any works commencing.**

Asset Management continued

- **Tappesfield Estate QHIP – Currently reviewing feasibilities ahead of main design elements.**
- **Brenchley Gardens QHIP – Estate houses only at feasibility/survey stage. Blocks moved to New Build Roof Top Homes as proposed for RTH.**
- **Linden Grove - Currently reviewing feasibilities ahead of main design elements.**
- **Rye Hill Estate – Main QHIP works are essentially complete, additional health and safety works were agreed to provide safety walkways within the loft spaces, due to a history of previous and recent incidents where operatives would accidentally damage ceilings below. Loft boarding works are due to complete in June/July this year.**
- **Arnold Dobson, Lugard & Magdalene QHIP works – Works to Lugard and Magdalene are complete and works to Arnold Dobson will be complete by mid April 2021.**

Asset Management continued

- **Attwell Estate QHIP works – All works complete and now in defects liability period.**
- **Brookstone Court QHIP Works – All complete and in defects liability period.**
- **Oakhill Court QHIP works – All complete and in defects liability period.**
- **Medina House QHIP – Some external works progressing. Complex scheme means some external works will be on hold until internal works can be progressed. Information is being reviewed in relation to any Extension of Time claims and a decision on whether to leave scaffold up or strike and re-erect will now be made by the end of February 2021.**

New Homes

- **Rye Hill Park Garages started on site in July. This is a redevelopment of existing garage site to create 23 new dwellings in two linked buildings of 4/6 storeys with associated landscaping and children's play space.**
- **On site are Daniels Road, 19 new council homes, Meeting House Lane [1-29 Lillac House, Dene Community Centre], Tustin Hidden homes, Copeland Road car providing 85 new council homes**
- **Planning approved : Fenham Road site, providing 5 new council homes**
- **Submitted to planning shortly: Lindley Estate, 157-177 Commercial Way and Bells Gardens Community Centre providing 109 new council homes,, new community centre and landscaping, along with some housing for sale .**

Customer Experience Services

MySouthwark Home Owners Service:

- We have finalised internally, our cross departmental homeowners' improvement plan to present to the first Home Owners Forum for feedback and input now scheduled for February 2021.**
- Our My Southwark Home Owners office in the Blue in Market Place Bermondsey remains close due to COVID restrictions but all of our services remain open to our customers on line. We are experiencing high volumes of requests from leaseholders for permission to alter their property and new right to buy applications.**

Housing Solutions:

- We will need the Housing Allocations consultation on these meetings agendas in March.**

Customer Experiences Services - continued

Specialist Services

- The service point continues to remain closed in line with government guidelines in relation to Covid-19 however, we have now launched the Service Point Telephone Appointment Service (Interim Service) The Service Point online booking portal (Choose and Book) has been amended to allow customers to request a telephone appointment rather than a face to face appointment. This is to ensure we support as many vulnerable residents as possible.
- The first Jury inquest since March 2020 started on 7th September 2020, taking place at Tooley Street due to space restrictions in the coroners court. We were one of only two boroughs able to recommence this service. Inquests have continued until February 2021 however, due to the new strain of the virus “Read Only” inquests will be completed only from March 2021.
- Email performance continues well with 95% of customer queries responded to within 24 hours.

Customer Services - continued

- **The Freedom pass renewal is currently in place, this phase will end by March 2021. Response to date has been very positive (please encourage those who haven't responded to do so)**
- **Upon the Tier 4 restrictions announced on Saturday, 19 December, the team immediately contacted couples with weddings scheduled during January offering them a ceremony for that evening. Staff worked until after midnight with 10 couples getting married that evening.**

Communities

The Tenant and Homeowner Involvement Team has begun working with a team of Independent Resident Advisors and the elected residents to launch the council's three new strategic bodies for resident participation – the Tenant Forum, the Homeowner Forum, and the Joint Tenant and Homeowner Forum. The Independent Resident Advisors have also commenced a coaching role with the chairs of the five Local Housing Fora, to help them in their chairing role in an online environment.

The council is planning on making the Getting Involved Grants programme more flexible this year, given the current circumstances, with three shorter rounds spread over 9 months so that there are more opportunities for TRAs to apply. The provisional date for launching the first round is April. These grants are aimed at funding projects that bring communities together and strengthen social cohesion. Details of the grant programme, including who can apply and what can be funded (and how much) will be publicised nearer the time

Communities continued

The Tenant and Homeowner Involvement Team is about to commence a further round of outreach work with the borough's 130+ tenant and resident associations (TRAs). This work will take the form of an informal telephone survey of TRA officers, with a view to understanding the well-being of the group, its current level of activity (if any) and the nature of this activity, and any help that any of the groups may need from officers of the council.

For more information contact resident.participation@southwark.gov.uk or visit the council's website at the following link:

<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/housing/housing-getting-involved>

Resident Services

- **Resident Services Officers continue to contact all vulnerable residents on our estates for welfare checks. They carry out welfare checks and signpost residents to supporting agencies.**
- **They also conduct weekly estate visual audits and monthly estate inspections to ensure the estate remain a clean and safe place for residents.**
- **We have signs in the lift lobby and communal areas to remind residents to follow government guidelines on social distancing, use of masks, washing of hands etc.**
- **Due to the lockdown, most of our residents are spending more time at home which is generating increased low level nuisance and anti social behaviour complaints on some of the estates . Most of the complaints involve domestic noise nuisance including loud footsteps, people talking etc, we are asking residents to be more considerate of neighbours and keep noise however caused to a minimum.**

Officers are working with partners including social services, Police, surrounding Schools, Anti-Social Behaviour Unit etc to resolve the issues.

- **The Police are carrying out robust patrols in the areas identified. There are regular meetings with residents to reassure and update the community.**
- **Cleaning - With Southwark moving in to Tier 4 there is a restriction the cleaning staff shifts to minimise C-19 risks. This is likely to have an impact on estate cleaning while Tier 4 remains in place.**

The Resident Services Officers will continue to monitor and pick up any issue during their weekly visual audits and monthly estate inspections and liaise with the cleaning team to resolve. This cleaning arrangement will remain under review and revert to normal service as the restriction is relaxed.

- **There has been a reduction in the number of Rough sleepers found on our estates. Residents are encouraged to continue to use STREETLINK to connect people sleeping rough with local services that can support them. The outreach team also carry out frequent patrols to provide drug and alcohol support where needed.**

Anti-social behaviour

SASBU are involved in a number of cases which are litigation matters.

One resident has been found in breach of an injunction obtained by the unit with a number of breaches upheld. SASBU are now working with partners to address the tenancy and will the council is considering the next steps to address community concerns.

SASBU led on an initiative within the community of large groups coming together during and after lockdown. The project was based on a community led approach and a large number of persons were engaged with who were flouting COVID regulations and causing concerns for the community. The work enabled partners to increase further engagement in respect of warnings, premises visits and possible fines. Reports significantly decreased in this area and the project was

Grounds Maintenance

- **In March the grounds maintenance (gm) teams will have resumed grass cutting operations across all estates**
- **The gm service has an on-going programme in place for replacing all its petrol driven equipment e.g. mowers, strimmers, hedge cutters etc. with electric items which will significantly reduce the amount CO2 emissions that the service produces on our estates. It is perhaps worth noting that we will only be replacing the petrol driven equipment when it becomes defective or obsolete so residents will not see these items disappear overnight but more a gradual phasing out.**
- **The gm service is working with Great Estates residents gardening groups on individual maintenance agreements for the adoption of areas/plots for specific gardening projects, the GM service has committed to supporting these gardening groups through a variety of means such as technical advice, altering the frequency of some gm activities, green waste disposal etc.**

Exchequer Services - Homeowners

- **Estimated service charges for 2021/22 are due to be issued in the middle of February, with payment due to start on 1st April. Homeowners are encouraged to contact their Homeowner Accounts Officer if they need to discuss payments. Any homeowner who is having difficulties due to Covid should fill out our Covid e-form if they have not already done so.**
- **We are in the process of refreshing our service charge loans policy, which is due to go to Cabinet in March. We recently carried out consultation with leaseholders on this via the Residents On-Line panel, and have incorporated the results into the report.**
- **We are in the process of creating a Contact Us page on the website, which will provide a direct link to all of our e-forms for ease of use.**
- **We have just completed the full refurbishment of Sedgmoor underground garages, and will be opening these shortly.**

Exchequer Services - Rents

- Rent increase letters for the financial year 2021/22 will be posted in February for the 1st April 2021 rent increase.
- If tenants are having difficulty paying their rent and are affected by COVID -19 and need further help visit our website: www.southwark.gov.uk/coronavirus, where you will find further information about how we can help you.
- Tenants can also contact their Income officer to discuss their rent payments or can visit our website www.southwark.gov.uk/housing/rent where you can access all our on line services:
 - ✓ Set up payments by Direct debit (and be included in our DD prize draw)
 - ✓ If you are struggling to pay rent you can complete an online income and expenditure form to help manage your finances and agree an affordable repayment plan by clicking link below
<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/housing/rent/problems-paying-your-rent>
- If you need help to claim Universal credit the Citizen Advice help to claim service can support you with your claim Online: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/helptoclaim

Modernise

Connectivity/digital infrastructure

All wards

- **Approximately, 38,000 homes have been given access to a fibre broadband connection by Community Fibre and Hyperoptic.**
- **60 free lifetime broadband connections given to TRAs and libraries.**
- **To support home schooling during lockdown, we are working to provided a free broadband connection to the homes of students in need.**