

# North East Local Housing Forum

March 2021 Highlights Report



 @lb\_southwark

 facebook.com/southwarkcouncil

*Southwark*  
Council  
southwark.gov.uk

# New Homes



- Rennie Estate Scheme is being procured to secure a contractor. This scheme will provide 49 new council homes comprising of a 5 storey and a 12 storey blocks with associated amenity and new landscaping to Rennie Estate.
- 345 Southwark Park SE16 and Cherry Gardens School have both secured planning and will provide new council and private homes.
- Rotherhithe New Road 213-219 has secured 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 2020, this will provide 14 Flats for social rent and improved landscaping
- Welsford Street : on site and will provide 10 houses for council rent.
- Other on site schemes include Tenda Road, Maydew House and Chilton Grove.

# Asset Management



- QHIP major works schemes are now complete at Harbord House and Kirby Estate. The scheme at Parkers Row is due to complete in March and work on Coopers Road Estate in August. Around 10 schemes are now in design and looking to start early in the next financial year.
- Plant room renewals at Four Squares and Rouel Rd are due to complete this year.
- Bouygues UK have been appointed to carry out the pre-construction services for Maydew House and will commence this work on 15 February 2021. Construction works are due to start in September 2021.

# Asset Management



- Roof top homes to Chilton House, Damory & Thaxted Court are imminent following sign off of the structural submissions by Building control.
- Lift refurbishments at Blick House and Addy House:
- Blick House completed on the 28/12/20.
- Addy House. 5144 has been returned to service after extensive fire, Also returned L5143 just before Christmas.

# Asset Management



Due to further 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 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.

# Resident Services

- 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.





# Resident Services



- 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.

# Resident Services



- 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.
- There is a proposal to build new council homes on the Alscot Street car park. Preliminary surveys of the site are now being conducted.
- We have seen an increase in ASB complaints since the lockdown. We are aware of the concerns regarding specific areas i.e. Astley Cooper Pitch, Hawkstone Football Cages and are working proactively with Sasbu and the police to manage these issues.

# 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.

# Communities



- 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



- 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.

# Anti social behaviour, grounds maintenance

- In October and November we saw an increase rise in firework disorder in the Canada Water area. SASBU and Police worked closely on this and identified a number of perpetrators of this behaviour. Acceptable behaviour contracts were served by SASBU and patrols increased from Police, SASBU and Wardens. ASB did decrease and the community responded well to the partnership work. This is an area we will focus on again this year for the same period.



# Anti social behaviour, grounds maintenance



- Two times resident premises closed due to drugs related matter and once tenancy terminated as a result. The other premises is managed by a housing provider who are currently in court proceedings to recover the property.
- Two x injunctions obtained and SASBU continues with litigation on these matters.
- SASBU are currently working on court applications for injunctions and one possible premises closure. SASBU are also working with Police on reports of drug activity in the South Bermondsey area and are supporting colleagues with complex case work in relation to neighbour disputes.

# Anti social behaviour, grounds maintenance



- In March the ground maintenance teams will have resumed grass cutting operations across all estates
- The ground maintenance service has an on-going programme in place for replacing all its petrol driven equipment e.g. mowers, strimmer's, 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.



# Anti social behaviour, grounds maintenance



- The ground maintenance 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



- 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.

# Exchequer Services



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.

# 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.

# Modernise



## Bermondsey and Rotherhithe

- Openreach have started work to improve connectivity in Rotherhithe. They are currently updating the two exchanges that cover the area and have started installing their fibre connections which will allow them to start upgrading their infrastructure around the borough.

# Customer Experience



## **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.

# Customer Experience



## 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.

# Customer Experience



## Specialist Services (cont)

- 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 Experience



## Specialist Services (cont)

- 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.