

# Central West Local Housing Forum

June 2021 Highlights Report

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# New Homes



Pelier Street (William Cuffay House, 120 Dartford Street) has completed, providing a seven-storey residential development containing 17 council homes.

Ivy Church Lane Garages (Kinglake Street), Adrian & Dennis (39-44 Rutley Close), Lakanal New Build (Cezanne), and Goschen Estate are all on site.

Contract have been signed for Aylesbury Estate Package A which is on site and providing 229 new homes.

Starting on site in 2021:

Shops & Council Offices, Manor Place /Stopford Road SE17. The construction of a 6 storey building comprising 56 flats above a health centre/office space / retail with associated landscaping and public realm works.

Workshops, 42 Braganza Street SE17. The proposal is for a total of 33 residential units made up of 5 blocks of building and a commercial building for offices

Sedgemoor Place (TA). Provision of 13 new council homes in a part two, part four storey building with associated landscaping, bicycle parking and refuse stores.

# New Homes



Other schemes at earlier stages in the programme include: 1-27 Rodney Place, Lomond Grove, Salisbury Est Car Park (Balfour Street), Sceaux Gardens (Florian and Racine inc some garages), Vestry Road (Lettsom T&RA Hall), Kingston Estate (Nelson, Portland & Kingston), 21/23 Parkhouse Street, Brandon Baptist Centre & Land Redcar Street, Southampton Way (Rooftop Homes), 76-78 Camberwell Road (hostels), 75-77 Southampton Way Hostel (hostels), 93 Grove Lane (hostels).

# Asset Management



In line with government guidance, the Repairs Services is moving towards the resumption of a full service in a phased manner and hopes to be fully operational again from 21 June, subject to the progress of the pandemic and available resources.

Communal / Emergency Lighting Installations are now complete at Wilson Rd, Dowson Close, Hull Ct, Horsman House, Widecombe House, Baldock House, Grove Ct, Day House, Gilesmead, Arnould Avenue, Wanley Rd, Harford House and Elmington Rd.

Communal / Emergency Lighting Installations are progressing at Havil St and Sedgmoor Place.

Lift refurbishments at Olney Road L4121 and Trafalgar 4065&6:

Olney Road: commencement on site 30<sup>th</sup> August – 15 October 21.

Trafalgar 4065-6: 30<sup>th</sup> August 21 to 20<sup>th</sup> October 21.

# Asset Management



QHIP major works scheme now on site at Rodney Estate and are due to complete end of May 2021. Work on Elizabeth Estate is now complete with remaining items postponed due to Covid 19 to be addressed at a later date. Schemes at Havil St, Crawford Estate, Wyndham, Lindley, Forsyth Gardens. Lorrimore Road and Olney Road on the Brandon Estate, Dartford & Empress Street, Congreve Estate, Alvey Estate and Kinglake Estate are due to be tendered in the coming weeks.

Marie Curie QHIP & FRA works – This block has been taken out of the Sceaux Gardens scheme and will be delivered as a stand alone scheme.

Elmington Estate QHIP Phase 1 – Started on site in November and due to complete late summer 2021

Elmington Estate QHIP Phase 2 – Works are still in detailed design

# Asset Management



Works have commenced on site to a number of estate houses on the Alberta Estate. Concrete repairs are now complete to a number of blocks on the Aylesbury Estate and painting to the pilasters on Amelia Street.

Riser replacement at Brandon Tower Blocks and mains replacement on the Wyndham Estate (Phase 2) are due to begin later in the year. Wyndham Phase 1 is in contract and due to finish by the end of the financial year.

The Masterman Heating Replacement Project is due to complete soon as is the Salisbury Estate boiler replacement and renewal of underground mains.

# 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.

Although the government has started easing lockdown, most of our residents still spend more time at home and this is generating increased low-level nuisance and antisocial behaviour complaints on some of our 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.

# Resident Services



Officers are working with partners including social services, Police, surrounding Schools, Antisocial 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 - The cleaning team have resumed normal cleaning service on our estates and managers are monitoring the effect of this on their staff. 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 accordingly.

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.



# Communities



Work continues implementing the new Resident Participation structure. Since March, this has included: developing the forward plan for resident participation (the business to be addressed by residents and the council); refining the new strategic bodies (Tenant Forum, Homeowner Forum and Joint Tenant and Homeowner Forum); and consulting with residents and other stakeholders in respect of independent advice contracts for residents (currently provided by the Southwark Group of Tenants organisations and the Citizens' Advice Bureau).

Approval has been given for a project to commence looking at the council's support offer to residents, in the light of financial challenges imposed by the Covi-19 pandemic. The council will be convening a working party of residents who – supported by officers from Exchequer Services, and serviced by the Smith Institute – will produce a report later in the year on ways in which the council can best support residents in relation to council income recovery measures.

# Communities



Following successful completion of a Digital Innovation Fund project on the use of digital tools to engage younger and harder-to-reach residents, the council has consented to the Tenant and Homeowner Involvement team commissioning a project in the current financial year aimed at developing some specific tools in this regard. The aim of the project is to ensure that those residents who want to utilise digital technology for the purposes of making their voices heard can do so.

# Anti social behaviour, grounds maintenance



In March the gm teams will have resumed grass cutting operations across all estates, also attending to shrubs according to type and time of year, dead heading roses on each visit when needed.

The teams have also been working with the Great Estate Programmes for residents at Brandon 3 and Elmington Estates, giving advice and supporting these groups where possible, storing plants and Mulch and delivering to the gardening groups. green waste disposal when needed.

Also working with TRA gardening residents on Lindley Estate and Scueax Gardens Estates, advice and supporting the groups.

We are replacing all petrol driven equipment e.g. mowers, strimmers, hedge cutters etc. with electric items which will significantly reduce the amount CO2 emissions. This will take time as we will only be replacing when defective or broken, and more of a gradual phasing out.

# Anti social behaviour, grounds maintenance



## ASB:

We saw significant demands on our service from the year of April 2020 to the end of March 2021. COVID was a main factor of this especially in relation to lockdowns during the year.

SASBU continued to manage increased levels of legal cases and across the borough we obtained, closure orders, injunctions, served Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and warning letters. We also issued Notices of Possession for the most serious of tenancy breaches when the law allowed us to do so given changes in legislation, again in respect of COVID.

# Anti social behaviour, grounds maintenance



ASB cont:

We also saw an increase in Community Trigger requests. The Trigger is an application within the Anti-social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 which enables an applicant to call a review on their reports to the partnership over a six month period.

Another key area for us was the Halloween and Bonfire period of which we saw an increase in disorder within the SE16 area. Working with communities and partners, we were able to identify those who were committing ASB with regards to firework misuse and all those identified were visited at their homes and appropriate actions and interventions were taken by the unit.

# Anti social behaviour, grounds maintenance



ASB cont:

14 Notices of Possession

21 Injunctions

3 Court Undertakings against persons

19 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts

30 Community Triggers

31 Premises closed due to significant and serious behaviour

# Exchequer Services



## Homeowners

**Leasehold building insurance contract** – the council has extended the current contract with Zurich for a further twelve months from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. After assessing current insurance market conditions and a benchmarking exercise carried out with other local authorities, the Council decided to recommend a twelve-month extension with Zurich rather than procuring a new contract. Zurich offered to fix premiums at their 2021/22 rates and only apply the normal 4% uplift relating to building cost inflation (not including any changes to Insurance Premium Tax currently 12%). We think this is good news for homeowners. The proposal was put to the Leasehold Task and Finish group who supported the council's recommendation.

**New Homeowner Loans Policy** – the council has changed its discretionary loans policy for homeowners to bring it up-to-date with advances in technology and to allow more flexibility in the range of products available. It also allows for a regular review of the interest rates charged. The new policy also includes a new loan product for non-resident homeowners. The full report and decision can be found here

<https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=7301>

# Exchequer Services



## Homeowners continued

**Improving Section 20 Notices** - Many day-to-day repairs requiring section 20 consultation cannot be properly costed until the scaffolding is erected and an inspection carried out. This often leads to leaseholders receiving multiple section 20 notices for the same job. Homeownership Services will shortly begin trial issuing *a single notice* describing the work that is believed to be necessary with a budget estimate. The actual costs will be billed as part of the actual service charge as usual. We are interested to hear from homeowners participating in the trial about what they think about this change



# Exchequer Services



## Tenants

**Paying Rent During COVID** Although rent collection remained challenging during the pandemic, tenants had paid 97.58% of rent due for 2020/21 by the end of the year. We thank all those who paid their rent in what we know were difficult circumstances for many. But despite the efforts of tenants and the teams who collect rent, total council tenant rent arrears increased, rising by £3.8m to £16.8m by the end of the year.

**Help to Claim Universal Credit** Many more tenants claimed *Universal Credit* to help pay their rent during the pandemic. If you need to claim *Universal Credit* but face difficulties in doing so for whatever reason the Citizen Advice *Help to Claim* service can support you with your claim.

[www.citizenadviceSouthwark.org.uk/helptoclaim](http://www.citizenadviceSouthwark.org.uk/helptoclaim)

# Exchequer Services



## Tenants continued

**New Rent Payment Options** One positive change in a very difficult year was that many more tenants paid their rent by direct debit. About six thousand more tenants switched to direct debit - the easiest, least costly, and, during the pandemic, *safest* way to pay. From April we've added bar codes to rent letters – offering another simple and convenient option to pay rent.

**A Supportive Landlord** If you're a tenant and need help with paying your rent or are affected by COVID-19 please visit our website: [www.southwark.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/coronavirus) where you will find further information about how we can help you.

# Modernise



Digital inclusion is about making sure our residents and community can take advantage of the opportunities the internet affords and we are working to ensure that “Nobody Is Left Offline”. As part of this programme, we are recruiting volunteer digital champions to support residents with their digital skills. Digital Champions will receive accredited training, support and more as part of this programme and can apply for the opportunity below:

[https://forms.southwark.gov.uk/ShowForm.asp?fm\\_fid=1864](https://forms.southwark.gov.uk/ShowForm.asp?fm_fid=1864)

For any further queries please contact  
[Digital.Inclusion@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:Digital.Inclusion@southwark.gov.uk)

# Customer Experience



## MySouthwark Homeowners Service

Residents told us they wanted more information on how your estates are managed so we have set up a new webpage on how we manage your estates which gives you a range of information from our cleaning schedules to how to join an estate inspection. You will find it at <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/home-owners-services/how-we-look-after-your-blocks-and-estates>

Our office at the Blue in Market Place still remains closed but we are now providing face to face verification meetings with tenants going through the right to buy process at our Service Point in Peckham.

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