Golden Lane Estate – Crescent House Residents' Liaison Group (RLG) Meeting

Date: **Thursday 28 November 2024, 6-7pm**

Venue: **Golden Lane Community Centre**

Attendees:

Greg Wade	CoL Head of Major Works Department
Peta Caine	CoL Assistant Director Housing
Bunmi Ali	CoL Project Manager
Jacqueline Swanson	CoL Comms/Leaseholder
Nick Condon	Project Manager
Lillian Serunkuma	CCUK
Tamsin Hartin	CCUK
Steve Goodman	CoL member, Chair of Housing sub-committee
Dawn Frampton	Cripplegate Ward Cllr/resident
Ceri Wilkins	Cripplegate Ward Cllr/resident

6 residents from Crescent House

Apologies: 2 residents

This is the twenty second official meeting of the Crescent House RLG.

Agenda:

1. Introductions to new Project Team members
2. Project update
    a. Programme update
    b. Tender update
    c. Reports update (electric capacity, gas compliancy, over-heating)
    d. Fire doors
3. Decanting Policy update
4. Comms update
5. AOB and next meeting

Meeting Notes

1. Introductions

The new attendees introduced themselves, including Cllr Steve Goodman who attended in his capacity as Chair of Housing sub-committee.

Bunmi Ali explained she had previously worked on the lighting, signage and accessibility projects for CoL at Golden Lane Estate and in previous roles looked after fire safety. She is aware of resident concerns and will work closely with the Project Manager Nick.

Tamsin Hartin and Lillian Serunkuma from Comm Comm UK will be taking over resident comms from Jacqueline.

2. Project Update, Nick Condon (NC)

Tender process & programme update

At the last meeting NC had explained the stage of the tender process and that 7 contractors' tenders had been analysed and reduced to 5. We have now carried out further work on the contract. Following review and discussion with legal, we will proceed with a JCT Standard Contract 2016 with Approximate Quantities.

We have also been looking at the scope of works and our intention is now to incorporate fire protection works into the windows refurbishment project. There had been a separate package of fire protection works planned and these were going to be run separately, but the new plan is to incorporate them into the contract. If we are decanting, it makes sense to do this as will cause less disruption to residents.

We have therefore carried out a reassessment of the scope of works and it means we will withdraw the tender and proceed with a single stage tender. This will mean prelims, designs etc will all need to be changed to incorporate these works.

It was asked if the fire protection works require planning permission and listed building consent (LBC). This is being reviewed with our planning consultants and we think that some will and some wont. We will raise this with the planning officers at the next pre-app meeting.

Residents would like to see what is planned for the for the front doors. This will be shared, we need the architects to start the design, and there's lots we have to look at.

Because of LBC they will need to stay the same. The list of fire protection works will be shared when possible.

It was confirmed that the fire protection works would be no additional cost to leaseholders.

The impact on the programme is difficult to quantify at this stage. We need to understand the works and what will need planning & LBC. There will be a delay, but we can't say how long yet.

Power Supply

We have been trying to ascertain the capacity of the electrical supply and to understand how many flats it can heat. Load tests have been carried out and we now understand there is spare capacity. There is not enough to feed all the flats, so we will go back to UKPN to ask, if we need to, how we can increase the capacity.

Residents expressed concern that this could take a long time, and referred to Northern example, NC - UKPN have been amenable, are talking to us. The RLG would like to see the risk register – once this has been updated, we can share this.

The other blocks on GLE won't affect the capacity as they use a different sub-station.

Gas

We have completed a full survey of gas installations in each flat. We've asked which flues comply or not, and were hoping for a yes/no, but it's not a simple answer and depends on other things, i.e. type of boiler etc. However we do now have a detailed report, and enough information to let us know where we might have problems with flues.

Overheating

Inkling has carried out desktop studies to assess potential for overheating. These have been reviewed by architects and will be issued shortly.

108 & 202

We have now started works on the refurbishment of these flats for temporary relocations. The glazing is due to arrive in January, and the scaffold will go up then.

3. Decanting Policy

An overall decanting policy for the City of London Corporation and one specifically for Crescent House were approved today at the housing subcommittee. These can be viewed online – link here.

It is an overarching policy of principles and legal framework, to sign off costs, including extra housing management staff. The policy is tenure blind and there will be no costs to leaseholders. The policy applies to tenants, leaseholders and registered tenants of leaseholders.

In terms of where residents will be decanted to – this will be done on a case-by-case basis and we will look at each individual's needs. Our aim is to temporarily relocate on the estate where possible, or in the vicinity if not possible.

We have previously talked about having a meeting with residents about decanting, and now that this policy has been approved, we can move this forward in the new year.

Residents expressed concern about trusting contractors in your home. NC explained that an inventory will be carried out by an independent clerk and signed off by each resident. Typically, we'd look at 3 areas of storage – safe area for valuables which will be insured by the contractors, personal items you would take with you, then furniture which can't be moved will be moved and covered and protected. Flexibility is built in – each home will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis i.e. If a vulnerable resident needs to take their favourite armchair, bed, then this will be moved with them.

The contractor will want the works to run smoothly, and we need to make sure the resident experience is the best it can be. We will have a Senior Decant officer who will be the point of contact for residents. They will work closely with the dedicated decanting RLO from the contractor, who must have the authority to make things happen. This will be in their contract, and we have made sure they understand this during the tender process.

We want to make sure these are the right people (will need compassion) – and we will ask the contractors to bring their proposed site manager and RLO to tender briefing meetings – that's who we want to see rather than the senior team. PC suggested that 2 residents could be involved in the briefing sessions with contractors as much more impactful when the resident tell them that this is their home.
Discussion over what happens if this goes over budget. PC – we will make sure that we build costs and a contingency into it. We won't take money out of something else to cover.

Further to internal discussion within the project team, our feeling is that it will be necessary to secure more than six empty flats to ensure that the decant programme for Crescent House Residents is continuous and fluid. We are still working to the principle that only 6 households will be decanted at a time, but we need to also make an allowance for unforeseen circumstances. This approach will be dependent on more flats becoming available and when they do, we will be able to confirm the number that we will have access to for decanting. We currently estimate that we may need a total of 8-9 flats to ensure the rolling decant programme continues uninterrupted - but this is still very much theoretical.

It was asked if the recent decision by the City Corporation to withdraw from Smithfield market relocation would mean there is more money available? SG – We want to help the Corporation re-focus. We have neglected social housing for too long and this is a priority for us.

Housing Needs Surveys

Liam Gillespie is assembling a new team to work on this, and they will speak one-to-one with residents.

CCUK will arrange workshops with residents once LG has the new team on board. We are aware that there are a lot of vulnerable people who will need extra support.

It was suggested that surveys should start as soon as possible, an initial simple survey could be sent out, and then followed up with more thorough one. Agreed this would be a good idea. It will be a process as circumstances could change.

4. AOB

It was agreed to move the next monthly meeting to the SRPC from 6.30-7.30pm - note slightly later start time.

There will be no meeting next month (Boxing Day!), so the next meeting will be Thursday 23 January 2025.

An update will go out from CoL in December to all residents.

END