Golden Lane Estate Wider Estate Residents' Liaison Group (RLG) Meeting

Date: Thursday 24 April 2024, 6.30pm - 7.30pm

Venue: Sir Ralph Perring Centre

Attendees:

Greg Wade (GW)	CoL Head of Major Works Department
Nick Condon (NC)	Consultant Project Manager
Lillian Serunkuma	CCUK
Tamsin Hartin	CCUK

GLERA representatives

Resident members from Great Arthur House, Stanley Cohen House, Basterfield House, Hatfield House, Cullum Welch House and Crescent House.

Apologies: Bunmi Ali, Cllr Dawn Frampton, Cllr Ceri Wilkins

This is the ninth official meeting of the GLE Wider Estate Residents' Liaison Group.

Agenda:

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Dry run of presentation for Community Meeting on 1 May
3. Wider Estate progress update:
   a. Planning update
   b. Current work & surveys
   c. Programme update
4. AOB

Meeting Notes

Consultation event - dry run of presentation

This meeting was an opportunity for the project team to run through the presentation slides that have been prepared for the Wider Estate residents meeting which is due to take place on Thursday 1 May 2025.

GW & NC ran through the slides that have been prepared including:

- The Project team
- Background to the project
- What is a Higher Risk Building ('HRB')
- Temporary relocation of residents
- Packaging the works
- Programme – different options
- Indicative timelines

Members of the RLG gave useful feedback and comments on the proposed content of the presentation which the project team will use to update the slides.

Queries following the presentation

Temporary relocation

Q. Will decanting slow down the process?
NC explained that it's a health and safety issue – for example, scaffold will be needed for work to the guillotine windows in Bayer House, so residents in occupation wouldn't be able to use the stairs. In Crescent House there are huge panes of glass that will need to be replaced within very small flats in some cases. Also, there will be a huge amount of dust generated from the repairing of the window frames.

There are potentially some areas where residents might not need to be relocated – for example Stanley Cohen or the top-level flats of the maisonettes – but this decision can't be made until the Corporation has a contractor on board. At this stage, it's best to assume that every flat will need to be decanted. The more that can be done to lessen the need for decanting, the better it will be – residents shouldn't be relocated if there's no need.

Q. When will residents get granular detail?
NC – the project team has independently approached a large main contractor (who did not previously participate in the withdrawn tender exercise) to carry out a 'peer review' of the project team's work to date. That way the team can get a contractor's perspective on

whether the approach is sensible. The project team hopes to engage them within the next 4-6 weeks.

Residents noted that CoL should point out in the presentation that decant costs will not be passed onto Leaseholders. GW noted.

One RLG member advised that the project team should keep in mind what effect this is going to have on people and to always be mindful of how people are treated in their homes. NC acknowledged that he fully understands this are people's homes, adding that the team has learned the Corporation will need to communicate well in advance, listen to everyone's specific issues and to make sure that people understand what is going to be done and be comfortable with it.

Programme & explaining the packaging of works

It was questioned why there would be greater disruption with the 'accelerated' 10-year option (as stated on the slides) – given that there's similar levels of disruption for both options (as works would still be going on at two places at the same time) but in one case this would be for almost 20 years. GW explained that in terms of the 10-year programme, there would be two separate temporary relocation programmes taking place at the same time within different blocks. The description of increased disruption is in reference to the intensity (due to the amount of work going on at the same time), not necessarily the overall duration – but this will be reviewed and amended to make clearer in the slides.

RLG members highlighted that the difference could be made clearer between the 10 year and 20 year programmes. Also, there was discussion as to why there should be any focus on the 20 year programme at all, if the 10 year programme is clearly preferred. Residents will care about what is likely to happen, not the process that the project team has gone through to get to the options. GW responded that neither option has yet been formally ratified, given that the team is still working through the detail and trying to establish high-level costs. The 10-year programme carries significant risk in terms of management and control, which have to be adequately resourced. At least two separate project teams will be fully active over the entire 10-year duration.

It was asked as to why residents were being given two choices if it's not really a choice - nobody is going to choose 20 years over 10 years. GW explained that the slides would be amended to explain the narrative rather than presenting options for 'choice', as in effect the key decisions will have to be taken by Committee, but in his opinion, it was essential to provide the background, even if just an overview.

Residents stated that in terms of timeline slide, GW had previously given more detail in the RLG meeting which had been reassuring. When bold statements are made on the timeline slides, it could potentially shock the audience. GW advised that it's very challenging to map out 17-18 years of detail in terms of planned programme activity in a PowerPoint presentation, especially with so many potential variables. GW did acknowledge however, that the more information the Corporation can share with residents, the better.

Residents pointed out that those in the Wider Estate are not as aware of the project as those in Crescent House – 20 years will be shocking. The project team will need to explain why this is happening and why such an extended timeline. It was pointed out that at the last public meeting for the Wider Estate, it had been stated that the planning application would be submitted in January 2025. GW and NC acknowledged.

Post meeting note: the Presentation was updated in line with comments received.

Current project team & governance

It was asked "Might it help if there was a highly experienced 'Commander-in-Chief' solely dedicated to substantially defining and delivering the Project, someone who radiates with authentic ownership?

Only, with the Major Works Team, as GW admitted, also handling similarly demanding upgrades throughout the City's eleven housing estates, in 6 London boroughs, which number some 58 residential blocks, how can the under-staffed project Team apply consistent focus to, realistically, devise, cost and accelerate the Project?"

NC & GW explained that the project team is essentially a technical one and focused primarily on delivery, although they do provide information and update for various internal departments (including Homeownership Services), so that colleagues in other parts of the organisation have a better understanding of how the programme is evolving and the potential implications.

GW added that the Policy Chair Chris Hayward and the Town Clerk Ian Thomas are taking a keen interest in the programme and GW is continuing to build relationships with Legal, Procurement and Finance, based on regular engagement and communication. However, GW confirmed that other departments will not be at the meeting on 1 May.

Who has overall responsibility?
Executive Director of Community and Children's Services is Judith Finlay, the Town Clerk Ian Thomas has ultimate responsibility in respect of the Corporation.

Q: What process & procedures will be put in place to mitigate any issues with staff turnover during the Programme, to ensure continuity and prevent further delays.
GW stated that the project team is currently involved in long-term planning. Once the funding has been secured and the wheels have been set in motion, the success of the programme shouldn't depend on any one individual: the programme becomes its own entity. It's potentially a huge programme; consequently, one can't chop and change direction in terms of key decisions without ramifications. Once the necessary approvals have been received (ideally to be achieved in stages over the next 6-18 months), then the wheels are set in motion for the long-term programme. Any deviation beyond that point will only increase the potential delay.

Q: What if the Major Works Team doesn't get the necessary approvals?
GW stated that the project team would then have to consider reverting to the original scope in the first instance which was window refurbishment and roof covering replacement. The fire safety works would have to be incorporated (the funding for which has already been ringfenced), but the programme would still have the same duration because of the need for temporary relocation associated with the window works. Therefore, expenditure would be less, but communal cyclical decorations and potentially electrical compliance works would still be outstanding.

Other comments and questions

The group highlighted that this presentation shouldn't focus on Crescent House. For example, the windows are quite different from Crescent House. The project team may face questions on whether the aluminium windows should be replaced. NC responded to state that the current position is to refurbish the panes and replace the glass, but the Architect will be speaking with English Heritage and there is still a long process to go through.

It was suggested that the project team focus on pilot studies and investigative surveys in Cullum Welch, Stanley Cohen and Bayer House – these should be highlighted.

GLERA mentioned some points from their action day – lots of peeling paint, nothing has been decorated for an excessively long time. If it could be another 10 years before some areas are decorated, will the estate simply be left to decay? Could the Corporation at least make the estate look better? NC responded to state that communal decorations can only be carried out in conjunction with extensive repairs to metal, steel, render and concrete. This makes an excellent case for incorporating all of the work within a single package.

The next meeting will take place on **Thursday 24 July 2025.**