

# Golden Lane Estate Residents' Meeting

## Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2015

**Facilitator: David Walker MBE Southwark Mediation Centre [SMC]  
Assisted by Kezia Herzog & Michael Kiely Youth Mediation Team SMC**

David Walker opened the meeting explaining that SMC is one of the oldest mediation centres in the UK: it is an independent organisation with charitable status. SMC had been invited by a member of the GLERA committee to facilitate a discussion with residents of the Golden Lane Estate so together they have an opportunity to express their views and opinions on the proposed changes to the Golden Lane Community centre. David explained he had informed the City of London [COL] about this meeting and was assured by COL that any points that come out of the meeting would be included in the consultation process and that further consultation would take place with residents

### **Outcome points, views and questions raised by the residents attending this meeting which was attended by 35 residents including council tenants and leaseholders**

***Residents feel that the City of London has a responsibility to work with the residents to respect the architecture, integrity and founding ethos of The Golden Lane Estate***

***Residents want City of London to match their enthusiasm, creativity and passion for this estate, amongst the residents there is a wealth of historical knowledge and professional expertise. It was strongly expressed by residents that the City of London could utilise this process***

***'We need to work together to make something happen'....***

#### **Questions for City of London:**

***What does the original contract/lease for the community Centre state about the status, location and use of the community centre?***

***What were the original requirements for governance of the Community Centre?***

***What are the current requirements for governance?***

***Residents want to know if the City of London has plans to operate a business model for the centre.***

***Is there an opportunity to negotiate with COL based on their current plans?***

***How are the current proposals going to be funded? How will the refurbishment be funded?***

Residents have concerns that the Golden Lane Community centre is /has been treated as a "cash cow" i.e. a means to make profit and not a centre to promote the health and well-being of the residents.

Residents would like to look at options for funding/social enterprise.

Residents feel it is vital the needs of various established groups on the estate are fully involved in this consultation process and their current and future needs are taken into consideration as these needs are not currently being met. These current groups could form the basis of future governance of the Community Centre.

Residents argued that there needs to be a safe place for young people.

This is a Community centre: it is to the City of London's advantage that its residents' wellbeing and mental health needs are met. Looking on this facility only in immediate financial terms would be short-sighted and counterproductive in the long term. The residents would like to see an integrated approach to this project involving health, education and social care.

Based on mental health and wellbeing is there an opportunity to be working with statutory services with regards to partnership and funding?

**Proposal to move Estate Office to Community Centre:**

Majority of residents at the meeting do not agree with Estate staff occupying space in the community centre.

The current position of the Estate office was designed for a reason: it is an integral part of the estate and is well positioned to actively monitor all comings and goings by foot and vehicle.

The current Estate office is accessible and visible to residents although the mirrored film put up in the window is looked on as a visual barrier between residents and staff. Residents question why this was implemented and do not believe it was what residents wanted – take down the mirrored film please!

Residents were originally told Estate staff would not be in the basement and now it is part of the proposed plans

Proposal to move estate staff to the basement of the community centre would distance staff from the community, people need human visual contact in order for estate office - to see and be seen, this is essential and an integral part of keeping the estate safe and crime free.

This proposal would pose mobility issues for residents – elderly people and people with physical disabilities who need quick access to the Estate Office.

### **Questions to City of London:**

***Based on the current Estate office why is there a need in the plans for 13 work stations and 2 meeting rooms?***

***Who will occupy these work stations? Why do estate staff who are not essentially office based workers need individual work stations?***

### **Consultation:**

Residents do not feel there has been appropriate consultation so far and dispute the content of the recent letter outlining the results of the consultation.

Do the residents want the community centre used as an education facility for the general public? Residents need to be asked this question...

Do COLCEC want to occupy space at the Community centre?

The residents stated strongly that more agreed forms of consultation involving residents is essential (and best practice) before proposals are put forward for planning approval.

The City of London needs to make significantly more effort to capture as many views as possible taking into consideration the special needs of some residents, for example, physical mobility and mental health which could be a barrier to them contributing to this process. The meeting felt strongly that the COL should commission and pay for a professional consultation carried out by a professional practice with expertise in urban and community planning/engagement.

Residents feel it is vital the Conservation Officer from the COL planning is involved in the next meeting and in the planning process.

Residents feel this consultation process needs the involvement of professionals with a high level of technical knowledge which they don't believe COL Housing Management possess. It was argued that this is a Community Centre project not a Housing development project.

It was suggested that we invite the manager from the local Saint Luke's Community Centre on Central St. to outline their model of operation and development: this centre has funding streams from health, social care and Cripplegate (charity).

Residents would look at other community centres that are successful they could learn from.

As this is a Community Centre it should be treated as a special non-residential project and this should be a similar process to that which was used for the Golden lane leisure centre and which proved very successful in terms of purpose and design.

**Residents request the following to take this forward:**

***The residents request that the questions in this document are answered by the end of December 2015 and that the answers are sent to GLERA.***

***The meeting request that we have another meeting with Housing Committee Chair & Deputy and officers who have a vision for the estate in terms of design and community development: this would be an opportunity to talk about all points raised at our meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> November where we can agree future consultation with an agreed timeline.***

***Residents feel strongly that they want the City of London to carry out a full and proper consultation about the future of the Community Centre and NOT make plans to move the Estate office into what is now the Community Centre.***