

14 July 2020

## **COLPAI Project – Response to Open Letter**

Dear Jacqueline and residents of Basterfield House and Hatfield House

Many thanks for your Open Letter to the COLPAI Project Team. We are sorry that the response has taken some time to prepare but, there was a lot of research that needed to be done and, information was required from several different teams. The full Project Team at the City of London Corporation (the Corporation) and ISG have reviewed the letter and individual accounts in detail and hope that the information below is of use.

We have brought together the following information to outline responses to the key matters and themes that have been raised throughout the letter.

### Mental health

The Corporation recognises the need to be aware of the health, safety, and welfare of its residents. It recognises that living and working in close proximity to a construction site can be challenging, particularly during the Covid19 restrictions. The Corporation has invested in a number of initiatives and charities relating to mental health and wellbeing. The Corporation has also signed the public 'Time to Change' pledge and is committed to act to reduce mental health discrimination. We remain open to further suggestions to improve the situation.

If residents feel they are struggling in any way, please reach out. There is free support available to City of London residents and staff to support mental health issues. We have included some links and resources below:

- A number of services, links, contacts and resources can be found online at - [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/releasethepressure](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/releasethepressure)
- Southbank Centre's "Art by Post" is a fantastic and free initiative bringing free poetry and visual arts activities to older adults living with dementia and other chronic health conditions, who may be most isolated by the current social distancing measures - [www.southbankcentre.co.uk/about/get-involved/arts-wellbeing/arts-by-post](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/about/get-involved/arts-wellbeing/arts-by-post)

The Corporation's Lord Mayor's Appeal Charity is supporting the global movement of kindness to end the stigma around mental health. To find out more, please visit - <http://greenribbon.thelordmayorsappeal.org/>

### Noise levels from site

We continue to monitor noise from the site, which is presented to the Environmental Heath teams at the City of London and the London Borough of Islington.

ISG continues to adhere to the agreed consented reduced impact hours as stated within its Construction Management Plan. As you will be aware, we have now completed the demolition and site clearance stage, which is generally considered to be the noisiest period of any construction project. However, as we move into the construction phase of the works, noise from the site will continue, which the team on-site continues to monitor closely.

The school buildings will be scaffolded, and elevations will be sheeted by the end of September 2020. This sheeting is used to shield the building and help to contain airborne dust. It will not however, reduce the impact of noise in any significant way. The on-site team will continue to use monitoring equipment to ensure that noise from the site does not exceed acceptable levels.

We have been carefully looking for and considering alternative respite measures that can be provided for residents, these measures include the possible use of the Golden Lane Estate guest rooms available in Crescent House. As you mentioned in your letter, the community centre was previously used for respite, but at this time it is no longer considered an appropriate venue during the current circumstances. We are continuing to explore other options that are available and that comply with current Government guidelines. If you do have any thoughts or suggestions for respite, please do let us know and we can look into these in further detail.

#### Reduced impact hours

Reduced impact hours are designed to provide temporary respite at specified times and apply both to business and residential neighbours. During reduced impact hours, works will still be carried out on-site, however, percussive machinery will not be used and, particularly noisy construction works involving heavy machinery such as, for example, the breaking up of concrete slabs will not take place. If you experience noisy works during the reduced impact hours, please do call us on 0800 772 0475 and we can immediately take this up with the site team.

As you will be aware, there was a change in terminology from 'consented quiet times' to 'consented reduced impact hours.' This change was made across all City of London construction projects. For further information, you can view the City of London's Codes of Practice for Deconstruction and Construction sites, by visiting: <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/business/environmental-health/environmental-protection/Documents/Code-of-Practice-for-Deconstruction-and-Construction-Sites-9th-Edition.pdf>. The section that directly discusses 'reduced impact hours' can be found on Page 12.

#### Noise monitoring

The noise monitor adjacent to Hatfield House was removed with the agreement of the Environmental Health Officers at both the Corporation and the London Borough of Islington. This was agreed, as both the Environmental Health Officers were satisfied that monitoring data from Hatfield House had consistently demonstrated that noise levels were satisfactory.

Following further discussions with the two Environmental Health Officers, it was agreed that, due to the concerns of residents, the noise monitor adjacent to Hatfield House would be reinstated. ISG reinstated this on 20 May 2020. ISG's external acoustic consultant will continue to review the data and present it to the Environmental Health Officers in a regular and timely manner. Noise, dust and vibration monitoring is also in place at Basterfield House.

All monitoring results and data will continue to be uploaded on a monthly basis to our project website, <https://www.colpai-project.co.uk/monitoring-data>, where you can view the results and more information on how the results are measured. ISG will also be posting the results on the site noticeboards. Should you require monitoring data on a weekly basis we will arrange for the data to be made available.

### Compensation

We understand residents' concerns with noise from the site. There is no provision for compensation for residents who choose to make alternative arrangements to avoid the noise and disruption from the COLPAI site. However, we do appreciate that residents may want to leave their homes during the day and, as stated above, we are keen to explore options for an area of respite that residents can use throughout the day. We are aiming to update residents on this situation once an appropriate space can be identified.

### Dust and fumes from site

We have previously committed to undertaking bi-monthly window cleaning at Hatfield and Basterfield House for as long as the dust from the site is significant. However, in light of COVID-19 and the Government guidelines, we are carefully considering and discussing with our contractors the best way to move forward. Window cleaning has not been possible during the recent 'lockdown' period as the window cleaning contractor had furloughed its staff. The contractor is now back working on the estate. Window cleaning in the foyers and entrances has resumed as part of the usual three-month cleaning cycle. The contractors have provided a COVID-19 risk assessment and action plan and operatives will be working in-line with all of the appropriate guidance.

As the windows and balconies are private spaces, we must ensure that we meet all current guidance to undertake window cleaning activities safely. As lockdown restrictions ease, arrangements will be made for additional window cleaning to recommence. At present we are unable to be more specific regarding a commencement date, however we have given this matter high priority and are working with our contractor to provide this service as soon as possible. We will keep residents updated on the timings and next steps for the window cleaning when we have more information.

### Equipment on-site

All of the plant on-site is classified as Non-Road Mobile Machinery. As such this plant is registered with the Mayor of London's office and established on its database. The plant is subject to regular testing to ensure it complies with Stage 111B emission criteria of Directive 97/68/EC. Regular inspections are made throughout the project.

### Construction practices

The works at the COLPAI Project site recommenced in strict accordance with guidelines issued by the Government and Public Health England relating to COVID-19. Unfortunately, construction works are

noisy and dusty. However, ISG is constantly reviewing all practices on-site to ensure that any disturbance is mitigated as far as possible.

ISG has recently identified two operations that were specifically noisy. The first was the use of the static concrete pump and the second was the use of the compressed air lance. With regard to the concrete pump, ISG has only used this once since work restarted on 14 April 2020 and, will apply acoustic blankets to cover the unit when it is used again. The noise from the air lance is more difficult to suppress. However, ISG will minimise the use of the air lance when working adjacent to Hatfield House and Basterfield House and will only use it in the permitted 'noisy working' hours.

ISG has also moved some of the formwork striking into the noisy works periods. Whilst this activity is not considered particularly noisy, ISG assessed that it would impact on residents and therefore chose to specifically monitor and control the process.

In relation to the noise from the site operatives, the team on-site are extensively using radio communications. There will, however, always be a need to communicate verbally on occasion and, sometimes this will need to be done at a level above the noise of the plant and equipment. ISG is aware that verbal communications, on occasions, have caused disturbance to residents and they are monitoring this closely and are acting where appropriate.

#### Extended hours application

We understand residents' concerns of the impact of the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Robert Jenrick's, statement advising local planning authorities to review applications from contractors for an extension to site working hours. The Corporation has robust procedures in place for considering any request and can see that, in the current circumstances, any extension of working hours for noisy activities at construction sites in residential areas would have an impact on residents in their homes.

ISG applied for the extended hours following the Government directive to assist construction companies and to help with social distancing. Officers in the Corporation assessed the application alongside the London Borough of Islington colleagues and agreed that the site is densely populated and that the proposal would have an adverse impact on the community. The application was refused.

#### Communications

Please note that general enquiries should be directed to the COLPAI Project email address ([info@colpai-project.co.uk](mailto:info@colpai-project.co.uk)), which is monitored and managed Monday-Friday 9.30am-5.30pm. The [info@colpai-project.co.uk](mailto:info@colpai-project.co.uk) email address is received directly by the Corporation, ISG, Environmental Health at Islington Council and the Corporation. Each party forwards on enquiries received as necessary to concerned parties. Responses are agreed by officers of the Corporation and the COLPAI Project Team to ensure that all communications are dealt with through one agreed channel. Our aim is to respond to general enquiries as soon as possible, however, sometimes we do need more time to respond to more technical queries as we seek further information from different members of the team.



For any site emergencies, please contact Steve McCarthy (ISG) directly on 07825 719496.

The COLPAI Project Team strives to ensure that information circulated to the local community is accurate and up to date. There are several communications platforms in place and, we will continue to work with the team on-site to ensure that all correspondence is as clear as possible.

The Corporation and ISG are working together to ensure that all communication is issued in a timely and appropriate manner. There is a clear communications protocol in place to ensure that all communication is recorded and all feedback, comments and suggestions from the local community are reviewed by the whole team. We are keen to ensure that communication is accessible for all. If you have any suggestions on additional ways that we can keep you informed, please do let us know.

While we cannot hold face-to-face meetings at this time, we are considering the possibility of setting-up digital platforms to host virtual meetings. We are currently reviewing the feasibility of this option and the infrastructure to support it. We will keep the local community updated on this as well as possible dates and times for the virtual meetings to take place.

We would like to thank you again for taking the time to share your experiences with us and would like to assure you that the Project Team is working to mitigate and minimise the impact of the construction works on the local community.

Best wishes

The COLPAI Project Team