

Housing Select Committee		
Report title	Housing Matters	
Key decision	No	Item No. 3
Ward	All	
Contributors	Executive Director for Customer Services, Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration, Head of Law	
Class	Part 1	Date: 16 May 2013

1. Overview

1.1. This report provides Housing Select Committee with an update in relation to a number of aspects of the Housing Matters programme. It presents:

- a report on new build housing that will be considered by Mayor & Cabinet on 22 May, in order that Housing Select Committee may pre-scrutinise that report;
- a summary of the resident consultation process that has been undertaken to date. In addition, a representative of SOLON – the new Independent Tenant Advisor to the Housing Matters programme – will attend the meeting to provide Housing Select Committee with a short presentation;
- an overview of the bid that officers will make to the GLA “Building the Pipeline” fund to support new build and other measures to increase housing supply in the borough.

2. Recommendations

2.1. Housing Select Committee is recommended to:

2.2. review the report for Mayor & Cabinet on 22 May and provide comments for consideration as it considers appropriate.

2.3. note the summary of the resident consultation process and the presentation from SOLON which will be given at the meeting

2.4. note the summary of the proposed bid to the GLA “Building the Pipeline” fund

3. Housing Matters Update

3.1. This update for Housing Select Committee is made up of three substantive items, which are dealt with in turn in the pages that follow:

1. Item 1: Mayor and Cabinet Report on new build housing, 22 May.
2. Item 2: summary of the resident consultation process that has been undertaken to date.
3. Item 3: overview of the bid that officers will make to the GLA “Building the Pipeline” fund.

4. Further Implications

4.1. Financial, legal, equalities, environmental and crime and disorder implications, as relevant to the three items, are identified within the reports that follow

ITEM 1: DRAFT Mayor and Cabinet Report on new build housing, 22 May.

Mayor and Cabinet		
Report Title	Housing Matters	
Key Decision	No	Item No.
Ward	All	
Contributors	Executive Director for Customer Services, Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration, Head of Law	
Class	Part 1	Date: 22 May 2013

1. Summary

- 1.1. In July 2012 Mayor and Cabinet decided that officers should bring forward options for the delivery of new housing on infill development sites, with an initial target of 250 new homes over the next five years.
- 1.2. Resident consultation on the first four potential sites, which were presented to Mayor & Cabinet in January 2013, has been progressing for three months. On one of the sites both informal and statutory consultation has shown residents to be in favour of the proposed development. As such it is recommended that Lewisham Homes, on behalf of the Council, manages the delivery of new homes on this site and in so doing launches the Council's "New Homes, Better Places" project.
- 1.3. The review of the first potential sites has concluded and has found that, in principle, there is capacity for over 500 new homes on the 14 sites that have been considered. It is recommended that Lewisham Homes, as the Council's housing manager, continues to manage the development of the proposals on 11 of these sites, with Council officers continuing to deliver the planned self build scheme and two larger-scale potential regeneration projects.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. This report is to inform Mayor and Cabinet about progress in delivering against the target for the Council to build 250 new homes within five years, and about the findings of the consultation exercise that has been carried out with residents, including the comments made by residents in response to the statutory consultation pursuant to Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 in relation to the potential to develop a site at Mercator Road, Lewisham Central.

- 2.2. This report is to obtain the agreement of Mayor and Cabinet, following its consideration of the consultation findings referred to in paragraph 2.1, to prioritise the Mercator Road site for the delivery of new homes as part of the Council's "New Homes, Better Places" programme.
- 2.3. This report is to obtain the agreement of Mayor and Cabinet to an amendment to the Management Agreement with Lewisham Homes in order to enable it to share the design and development of new housing schemes with the Council and to client the construction and related works to deliver the schemes.
- 2.4. This report is to obtain the agreement of Mayor and Cabinet to delegate to the Executive Director for Customer Services the authority to negotiate with Lewisham Homes in order to implement amended Management Agreement, including the setting of a development management fee.
- 2.5. Finally, this report is to inform Mayor & Cabinet that all further procurement required to deliver the "New Homes, Better Places" programme remains subject to the necessary approvals being obtained to deliver the individual proposals forming part of the programme in accordance with the Mayoral Scheme of Delegation.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1 Addressing issues relating to the quality and quantity of housing stock in the borough relates directly to the Council's Sustainable Communities Strategy (clean, green and liveable) and to the Council's corporate priorities (decent homes for all).

4. Recommendations

- 4.1. It is recommended that the Mayor:
- 4.2. Notes the progress made in reviewing sites for their potential for new build housing;
- 4.3. Notes the comments made by secure tenants in response to the statutory consultation undertaken pursuant to Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 in relation to the proposals for the Mercator Road garage site and, having considered those comments, agrees that this site will be prioritised for delivery for the first homes in the Council's "New Homes, Better Places" programme;
- 4.4. Agrees to an amendment to the Management Agreement with Lewisham Homes as set out in Paragraph 6.5 to enable it to share the design and development of the new housing schemes with the Council and to client the construction and related works to deliver the schemes.
- 4.5. Delegates to the Executive Director for Customer Services upon the advice of the Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration the authority to

negotiate with Lewisham Homes in order to implement the changes to the Management Agreement as set out in Paragraph 6.5, including the setting of a development management fee.

- 4.6. Notes that all further procurement required to deliver the “New Homes, Better Places” programme remains subject to the necessary approvals being obtained to deliver the individual proposals forming part of the programme in accordance with the Mayoral Scheme of Delegation.

5. New Build Housing Programme: progress update

Resident consultation

- 5.1. In January Mayor and Cabinet were informed of progress in reviewing sites for their capacity for new housing. 13 sites were under review, and that time four had progressed to a sufficient point to enable the Mayor to agree that officers should consult with residents in the areas near those homes. It was noted that those four sites had the potential for up to 76 new homes.
- 5.2. Following the meeting in January, officers have continued to develop options for new housing on all of the sites, and have informally consulted with residents on the first four sites. Appendix 1 sets out the results of this consultation to date.
- 5.3. On one of the four sites, the Mercator Road garage site, consultation progressed well and residents viewed the proposals favourably. As such, officers subsequently conducted the formal, Section 105, consultation process with residents in the area. This consultation was initiated on 5 April and remained open for 28 days until 3 May. Three responses were received, and in order that Mayor and Cabinet can formally consider these as required by Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985, the table below summarises the three responses and where relevant the manner in which officers have responded to any issues or concerns that have been raised:

S105 Consultation response	Officer response
<p><u>Response 1</u> Noted that “the provision of family housing is a good and necessary thing and more important than the provision of garages. I am very much in favour of the proposals”</p>	<p>N/A</p>

S105 Consultation response	Officer response
<p><u>Response 2</u> Expressed concerns that design includes opening the alleyway to the rear of 44-61 Mercator Road, when this is currently only accessible to tenants and refuse collectors. Raised a concern that this would affect the security of the rear of properties currently facing the alleyway, and requested that security measures be included as part of the design to protect the rear of the 44-61 Mercator Road.</p>	<p>Officers will ensure that the final design of the scheme includes appropriate protection to the rear of existing properties at 44-61 Mercator Road. The development will take into consideration the latest “secure by design” requirements, and will seek to ensure that existing residents benefit from an improved environment as a result of the development process.</p>
<p><u>Response 3</u> Expressed concerns that the proposed development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will block the light of the existing flats • cause access problems in relation to the alleyway to the rear of 44-61 Mercator Road • increase pressure on parking <p>Also inquired about whether the proposal related to the neighbouring Anton Bob Community Building</p>	<p>Officers will ensure that these concerns are considered during the development of final designs. The proposal as it stands is for two story family homes with flat roofs to minimise light loss. As for response 2, officers will ensure that the final proposal meets ‘secure by design’ standards. Officers will also ensure that the final designs include additional parking alongside improved landscaping where possible.</p> <p>The Anton Bob Community building is not including within this proposal.</p>

5.4. In summary, officers consider that it is possible to continue to address the concerns that have been raised during the consultation process as part of the detailed design and planning process that will follow.

5.5. The proposed design for the site, which is attached here as Appendix 2, contains six three bed houses in place of the disused garages. It retains and improves access to the rear of the existing homes to the east of the site (which residents stated was a priority for them). Surveys of drainage, sewerage, electricity and gas connections show no issues which might cause significant delay to delivery. Furthermore these terraced houses represent a relatively simple build type, compared to some of the other options such as bookends, and the nature of the site means that the only practicable option for the new homes is for new social housing to be owned by the Council and managed by Lewisham Homes.

5.6. For all of these reasons, this site will be prioritised for delivery for the first homes in the Housing Matters new build housing programme to be known as the Council’s “New Homes, Better Places” programme.

Church Grove self build scheme

5.7. In October 2012 Mayor & Cabinet agreed that the former Watergate School site off Church Grove in Lewisham Central should be identified as a potential site for new self-build housing. Since then that site has been incorporated

into the New Homes programme and officers have worked to identify community groups and individuals with an interest in developing housing on the site.

5.8. To date seven organisations or community groups have expressed an interest, and officers have worked alongside the National Self-Build association to develop an appraisal process for the options on the site. Set out below is the timetable officers propose to take in developing a final option for the site in order that Mayor & Cabinet can give final approval.

5.9. The proposed timetable is

1. On May 4 the Council issued a press release, timed to coincide with National Self Build week, to publicise that the site was being considered for a self build scheme and to invite attendance at an information event
2. At the end of June officers and representatives of the National Self Build Association will host an information event setting out the Council's plans for the site and supporting individuals and associations to make a bid to develop the site
3. A bidding period will run from July until September, leading to the selection of a preferred organisation in October.
4. Officers will work with the successful organisation to develop a final proposal for Mayor & Cabinet approval early in 2014.

Further sites

5.10. In addition to the four sites on which consultation is currently running, and the self build site, officers and Lewisham Homes have continued to work with PTE Architects to develop options for new homes on a further 9 sites. These sites vary considerably in nature and size, from four units to 300 units. They also all vary in the issues that they present. Some have been assessed as being currently unviable for delivery, while others present more immediate opportunities to develop additional supply and in total the 14 sites offer the potential for more than 500 homes.

5.11. The Housing Select Committee received a report and a presentation on the development of these opportunities at its meeting in April. Officers will continue to develop proposals for these sites sufficient that they may be brought forward in addition to the proposals for the five sites that are currently being developed.

6. Approach to delivery

6.1. Lewisham Homes. in its role as the Council's housing manager, will manage the delivery of the majority of the "New Homes, Better Places" programme on the Council's behalf. Lewisham Homes has experience of successfully delivering large scale housing investment programmes, in particular the Decent Homes programme. It is responsible on the Council's behalf for

strategic asset management of housing stock and is therefore better placed than the Council, its client, to manage the delivery of the programme. In addition, it has the advantage of an existing tenant liaison and engagement network through which it can work with residents to develop designs which deliver new housing but which also address existing residents' concerns.

- 6.2. For the reasons set out in paragraph 5, the Mercator garage site will be prioritised for delivery. Lewisham Homes will continue to develop the other three schemes that are currently being consulted upon, working with the architect and with residents to resolve the issues with the current designs in order to recommend a design proposal for Mayor and Cabinet approval. In addition Lewisham Homes will continue to develop proposals on the small to medium sized schemes within the programme, and will structure the development of these into a long-term programme for Mayor & Cabinet approval.
- 6.3. The Council will, however, continue to lead on the development of larger development schemes, schemes that involve a partner such as a Registered Provider, and schemes like the Church Grove self build scheme that require a greater focus stakeholder and partner liaison and a lesser focus on tenant liaison at this stage. Lewisham Homes will however provide a representative to the project teams taking these sites forward.
- 6.4. To enable Lewisham Homes to work with the Council in determining the feasibility of sites for new housing and working up design proposals for the schemes, the delegation of functions set out in Annex 3 of the Management Agreement needs amending to show that "redevelopment and renewal" is to be shared between the Council and Lewisham Homes and no longer reserved to the Council. The clienting of the construction and related works for new housing schemes will be delegated to Lewisham Homes.
- 6.5. In order to facilitate this arrangement, it is recommended that the Mayor delegates to the Executive Director for Customer Services the authority to negotiate with Lewisham Homes to implement the amended Management Agreement, including the setting of a development management fee. This will include agreeing a development protocol that clarifies key decision making points and reserves to the Council the sign off for design, viability and expenditure, and quality at the appropriate points in the development process.
- 6.6. All contracts associated with the project will be entered into by the Council, not Lewisham Homes, and the necessary approvals to enter into contracts will be obtained at the appropriate time in accordance with the Mayoral Scheme of Delegation.
- 6.7. The protocols and other arrangements to be negotiated to support the New Homes Better places programme will prioritise enabling new building as soon as possible, again subject to the necessary approvals being obtained to deliver the individual proposals forming part of the programme in accordance with the Mayoral Scheme of Delegation.

7. Comments of the Housing Select Committee

- 7.1. The Housing Select Committee (HSC) received and reviewed a draft of this report in advance of the Mayor and Cabinet meeting. The scheduling of meetings and dispatch dates – Housing Select Committee met on 16 May, when this report was dispatched - means that it has not been possible to incorporate the comments of HSC into this report, and instead any comments made by the HSC will be provided as an addendum at the meeting.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1. On 1st April 2012 the government implemented a new form of financing for Local Authority Housing Revenue Accounts, known as HRA Self-financing, which will eventually replace the HRA Subsidy system.
- 8.2. Under self-financing all local authorities have had their HRA debt adjusted, based on the value of their stock, in recognition that they would keep all future rents, and would no longer need to contribute to the national HRA pool. Lewisham benefited from a debt reduction, financed by central government.
- 8.3. However, self-financing also meant that HRA rents and other charges/income would need to sustain the HRA into the future as no further subsidy would be paid by Government. Lewisham therefore developed a 30 year HRA business plan to outline the estimated 30 year financial position.
- 8.4. The business plan contained estimates of rental and other income as well as capital requirements for Decent homes and other stock improvements. The plan also contained an indicative new build program for up to 250 new homes over the first 5 years of the business plan and established borrowing requirements (up to a centrally determined cap) where necessary, to fund these requirements. A report containing the outcome of the business plan was reported to and agreed by M&C in July 2012.
- 8.5. The main budget report and strategy was agreed by Council in February 2013 which included, within the capital programme, allocations to fund the new build programme from 2013/14 for up to 250 homes at an average cost of £150k each. Allocations have been made on an indicative costing of 50 unit per year (totalling £7.5m + Inflation), whilst the exact programme is being established.
- 8.6. The Mercator project is the first to be developed and brought forward for approval. However, as this scheme involves only 6 units with an indicative average cost per unit of £147k it is likely that existing HRA reserves will be sufficient to fund this scheme, without the need for borrowing.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1. The Council has a wide general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that individuals generally may do. The existence of the general power is not limited by the existence of any other power of the Council which (to any extent) overlaps the general power. The Council can therefore rely on this power to carry out housing development, to act in an “enabling” manner with other housing partners and to provide financial assistance to housing partners for the provision of new affordable housing.
- 9.2. The proposals set out in this report are at an early stage of development. Detailed specific legal implications will be set out in subsequent reports to Mayor & Cabinet/Mayor & Cabinet (Contracts) as appropriate.
- 9.3 Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 provides that the Council must consult with all secure tenants who are likely to be substantially affected by a matter of Housing Management. Section 105 specifies that a matter of Housing Management would include a new programme of maintenance, improvement or demolition or a matter which affects services or amenities provided to secure tenants and that such consultation must inform secure tenants of the proposals and provide them with an opportunity to make their views known to the Council within a specified period. Section 105 further specifies that before making any decisions on the matter the Council must consider any representations from secure tenants arising from the consultation. Such consultation must therefore be up to date and relate to the development proposals in question. For this reason, officers have carried out formal S105 consultation on the proposals for the Mercator Garage Site and the response to that consultation is set out in this report for the Mayor to consider before authorising the prioritisation of those proposals within the programme.
- 9.4 The Memorandum of Association of Lewisham Homes Limited gives power to the Organisation under its Objects to provide, manage, maintain, improve, demolish or convert the housing stock owned or managed by the Council from time to time together with any other amenities or facilities for the benefit of residents of such housing stock either exclusively or together with persons who are not residents of such housing stock. This power is restricted to areas where the Council own or manage housing stock.
- 9.5 The Objects also provide that the Organisation can carry out any activity which contributes to the regeneration or development in the area of the Council including but not limited to;
- (a) securing that land and buildings are brought into effective use;
 - (b) contributing to or encouraging economic development;
 - (c) creating an attractive and safe environment;
 - (d) providing or improving housing or social and recreation activities for the purpose of encouraging people to live or work in the area or for the purpose of benefitting people who live there.

- 9.6 Under its Memorandum, the Organisation is also given powers to do anything that a natural or corporate person can lawfully do which is necessary or expedient in the furtherance of its Objects which includes carrying out works to land, building or other property.
- 9.7 These powers, subject to the Management Agreement entered into between the Council and Lewisham Homes on 26 June 2007, would enable the Organisation to manage any contractor appointed by the Council engaged in the construction works to provide housing.
- 9.8 The Management Agreement set out the functions which were to be delegated to Lewisham Homes which were clearly defined in the Agreement. The functions which were delegated to Lewisham Homes and amended following a Mayor and Cabinet decision on 30 April 2008 reserves housing strategy and redevelopment and renewal to the Council. It does not delegate management of new builds.
- 9.9 In order for Lewisham Homes to manage the construction works relating to the building of housing on the sites set out in the body of this Report, which is subject to the Recommendations, and in general to give Lewisham Homes the power to work with the Council in the development of any designs for sites owned by the Council in Council agreed areas an amendment to the Management Agreement as set out in paragraph 6.5 of this Report is required.
- 9.10 The Localism Act 2011 brought in new powers to enable the Secretary of State to consult local authorities on self financing council housing and following consultation to determine changes to the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy. The Lewisham settlement following the determination made under powers conferred by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 is set out in the financial implications of this Report and how this New Build Housing Programme will be financed.
- 9.11 The giving to Lewisham Homes the management of the construction works in relation to the new housing units will not be deemed to be a contract let by a public body for the purposes of the public procurement regime as Lewisham Homes' principal activities are for the Council who is the sole member and exercises strategic control over its decisions.
- 9.12 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a new public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 9.13 In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.

- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 9.14 The duty continues to be a “have regard duty”, and the weight to be attached to it is a matter for the Mayor, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations.
- 9.15 The Equality and Human Rights Commission has recently issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled “Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice”. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11 which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:
<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/equality-act/equality-act-codes-of-practice-and-technical-guidance/>
- 9.16 The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:
1. The essential guide to the public sector equality duty
 2. Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making
 3. Engagement and the equality duty
 4. Equality objectives and the equality duty
 5. Equality information and the equality duty
- 9.17 The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirements including the general equality duty, the specific duties and who they apply to. It covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty including steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The other four documents provide more detailed guidance on key areas and advice on good practice. Further information and resources are available at:
<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty/guidance-on-the-equality-duty/>

10. Equalities Implications

- 10.1. There are no equalities implications arising directly from the recommendations set out in this report. The provision of new homes will help the Council to address the general shortfall of affordable housing in the borough. There are more than 7,000 households currently on the Council’s waiting list for housing, and less than 1,500 properties become available

each year. The New Homes Better Places programme helps to address this issue by directly adding to the Council's housing stock.

11.Environmental Implications

- 11.1. There are no environmental implications arising directly from this the recommendations set out in this report. The design stages of the Mercator Road site, and the other sites under consideration under the New Homes, Better Places programme, will address environmental issues through the procurement of design partners and the planning process. The programme has a stated objective of improving places for existing residents as well as the residents who will benefit from the new homes.

12.Crime and Disorder Implications

- 12.1. The Mercator Road garage site is disused and residents have raised concerns that it is a focus for antisocial behaviour, and would favour a development that addresses that issue. The further development of the proposals for that site will include this concerns in the design process. Furthermore the designs for new homes for this site, and all subsequent sites under the New Homes, Better Places programme, will conform to the latest secure by design standards.

Appendix 1: Results of resident consultation and next steps:

Site 1: Mercator Road, Lewisham Central

Resident consultation

A leaflet containing an outline design was distributed to all households in the vicinity inviting them to attend a public consultation event on 12 February, or to respond with comments to Council officers. A total of 13 feedback forms were received, which identified:

- Concerns about how the proposal would affect the access route to the rear of existing properties
- Concerns about the current garages which were considered to be the source of anti social behaviour
- Some concerns about loss of light and the scale of the proposed development
- A general agreement that the replacement of the garages was favourable, and the provision of new affordable housing was favourable

Given the generally positive response the statutory, S105, consultation was initiated on 5 April and remained open for 28 days until 3 May. Results: to date 3 responses have been received and they state:

- 1 Provision of family housing is a good and necessary thing and more important than the provision of garages. I am very much in favour of the proposals
- 2 - Concerns regarding alleyway to rear of block and would like some security measures incorporated in the plans to offer property/rear garden a good level of protection
- 3 - As the proposed buildings is going to be two story I think it will block out the light of the existing flats behind - also the access to the flats behind would seem to be a very close call. At the present moment, we have limited parking facilities - so where will we go? And what is the plan for Anton Bob Community Building?

Next steps

This site proposed to be the first new build site under the Council's "New Homes, Better Places" programme. Officers have already launched a procurement exercise for a design team to take the proposal through the planning process. Lewisham Homes will manage that contract and will subsequently procure and manage the build contract on the site. Anticipated delivery schedule: planning approval and immediate start on site December 2013, completion December 2014.

Site 2: Longfield Crescent, Forest Hill

Resident consultation

A leaflet containing an outline design was distributed to all households in the vicinity inviting them to attend a public consultation event on 11 February, or to respond with comments to Council officers. A total of 20 feedback forms were received, which identified:

- Some concerns about the loss of green space and impact on light
- The prospect of removing run down individual garden plots and replacing with improved communal landscaping was generally well received
- The idea of bookend blocks attached to existing blocks providing lift access for existing residents appeared attractive, though the impact on service

charges would need to be carefully considered

- Concerned that the proposals would have a negative impact on the community on the estate causing overcrowding and further parking problems
- Support for new build if there was a local letting plan of some sort and scope for residents to be involved in the design of the scheme
- Would like windows to individual properties renewed
- Would like provision of good play facilities for younger children
- Would like to see better access to footpath along railway line and better access to the Albion Millennium Green conservation area
- Generally the plans were well received, with residents understanding the need for new housing and that this could be achieved with a better use of space in the area

Council Officers also carried out a door knocking exercise to speak with those residents directly affected by the potential loss of their individual garden plots which are situated away from the block where they live. Overall the response from these residents was that the gardens were little used and that providing some communal space in place of the garden plots would be welcomed.

Next steps

Investigate the impact of the proposed provision of lifts on service charges, the potential for including a local letting plan and a resolution to the gardens issue. Once complete carry out S105 consultation with a view to developing the site.

Site 3: Woodvale, Forest Hill

Resident consultation

A leaflet containing an outline design was distributed to all households in the vicinity inviting them to attend a public consultation event on 14 February, or to respond with comments to Council officers. Council Officers also carried out a door knocking exercise to speak with those residents directly affected by the potential loss of their individual garden plots.

A total of 24 feedback forms were received, which identified:

- Concerns regarding the state of repair of the garages
- Fly tipping in and around the garage area
- Concerns about loss of car parking provision
- Narrow and limited vehicle access is problematic with careless parking blocking the route in and out
- Overall the feedback was positive. Residents were keen to see a local letting scheme to provide suitable homes for older people on the estate in order to release underoccupied family sized housing which is already there
- Also suggested that this should be a shared ownership scheme as enough social housing on the estate already
- Major concerns raised regarding loss of garden plots. Vast majority of residents directly affected are leaseholders and they are not in favour of losing the garden plots, many of which are used as allotments or general

garden spaces

- Residents also wanted to improve the 'desire line' pathway through the estate to the school on Honor Oak Road

Next steps

Develop the original architects plans to incorporate the concerns raised especially regarding the loss of garden plots and carry out further informal consultation. Once complete undertake S105 consultation with a view to developing the site.

Site 4: Boone Street/Dacre Park, Blackheath

Resident consultation

A leaflet containing an outline design was distributed to all households in the vicinity inviting them to attend a public consultation event on 12 February, or to respond with comments to Council officers. A total of 11 feedback forms were received, which identified:

- Residents would like better facilities for youth, replace play area if removed
- Would like improved and more parking provision, security and better lighting
- Concerns that the proposals will reduce open space
- Better landscaping required and more storage space
- Concerns regarding loss of light
- Overall the respondents were positive about the proposals

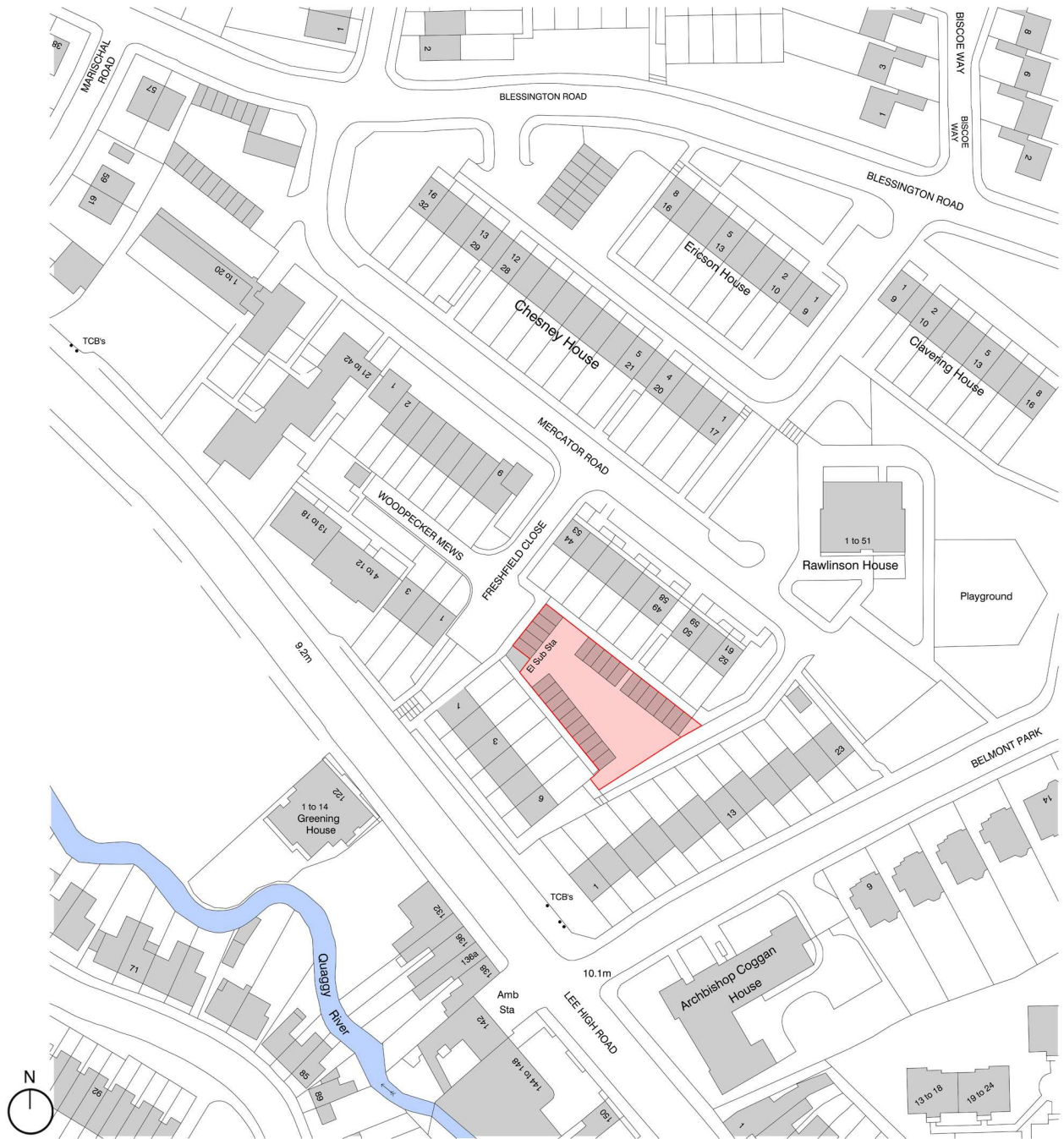
Council Officers also carried out a door knocking exercise to speak with those residents directly affected by the potential loss of their individual garden plots. There was a mixed response to this. Many are RTB leaseholders and use or would want to retain their garden plot and are concerned about loss of green space.

Next steps

Develop the original architects plans to incorporate the concerns raised especially regarding the loss of garden plots and parking facilities and carry out further informal consultation. Once complete, undertake S105 consultation with a view to developing the site.

Appendix 2: Mercator Road designs included with S105 consultation

Site Location Plan – Garages at rear of 44 - 61 Mercator Road



Outline Development Proposal – 6 Family Homes each two storeys high with private gardens



1. Demolition of empty and unused garages to provide new family homes with private gardens
2. Cobbled street with additional parking
3. Improved landscaping
4. Access routes improved and maintained with lighting, landscaping and security enhancements where necessary
5. Proposed allotments for existing homes with secure access

3D representation of the new development (view from the south east)



3D representation of the new development (view from the north west)



ITEM 2: Summary of the resident consultation process that has been undertaken to date.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Housing Select Committee at their meeting on 6th March noted that some residents had raised with them their concerns that the ongoing Housing Matters consultation process is not giving equal consideration to the two remaining options. The Committee decided to refer the concerns to Mayor and Cabinet and a response is due to be given to Mayor and Cabinet on 19th June.
- 1.2 This report is intended to provide the Housing Select Committee with a detailed explanation of how the consultation is being undertaken, outline the role Lewisham Homes is playing in facilitating the conversation with residents on the remaining options and introduce the new Independent Tenant Advisor working on the project.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 To note the summary of the resident consultation process and the presentation from SOLON which will be given at the meeting.

3. Resident Consultation Process

- 3.1 On 16th January 2013, Mayor and Cabinet decided to consult further with residents on two remaining options, both involving Lewisham Homes:
 - Lewisham Council remains the landlord and Lewisham Homes continues to manage the homes;
 - Lewisham Homes becomes a resident-led organisation, which will own and manage the homes.
- 3.2 The Council is responsible for this consultation and all decisions regarding the methodology of the current phase have been approved through the Housing Matters programme governance structure. The aims of this phase as agreed by the Housing Matters Programme Board are to :
 - raise the awareness and understanding of both options,
 - identify residents' priorities for their homes, communities and housing services
 - identify residents' concerns about the possibility of Lewisham Homes becoming a resident-led organisation
- 3.3 The agreed approach was that Lewisham Homes was to undertake an extensive door-knocking programme across their management area. The intention of the programme was to achieve a more representative sample of our resident profile and collate feedback in relation to the priorities for this stage of the consultation, as set out above.
- 3.4 In advance of this, a letter from the Mayor was sent to residents outlining his decision on the options being taken forward and this was then followed by a

Housing Matters specific newsletter sent in February, which informed residents that Lewisham Homes would be carrying out the next wave of consultation on the Council's behalf.

3.5 Door knocking methodology

- 3.5.1 A target of 2,000 completed surveys has been set with a further set of sub targets for each postcode based on the proportion of Lewisham Homes managed properties in that area. For example if a postcode has 15 per cent of all Lewisham Homes properties, the minimum number of surveys required would be 300, which is equivalent to 15 per cent of the tenanted homes. In addition to this, targets have been set for age groups of residents in each area to ensure there is a representative sample.
- 3.5.2 Lewisham Homes recruited from their existing staffing resources to carry out the door knocking programme. Staff were asked to apply for these posts and were interviewed for their suitability. Twenty-six Lewisham Homes' officers were recruited and the resulting team is diverse across gender, age and ethnicity. The team received a full day of training which covered the background to the Housing Matters consultation, an interactive Q&A session along with role playing. This session was attended by Council officers. It was made clear to the staff working on the project to provide factual information, not to give personal opinions given so as to ensure that residents receive a balanced and accurate picture on both options.
- 3.5.3 The consultation team has been carrying out their door knocking Monday to Friday between 5:00 – 7:00pm and on Saturdays from 9:30am until 1:00pm. In the first instance, they try to carry out a face-to-face interview – if the resident advises that the time of call is inconvenient, they offer to return at a later date or complete the survey over the phone with them. The team has removed from the visiting lists those tenants known to be vulnerable and for these residents, subject to the information contained on them, are telephoned to organise a suitable visiting time to enable them to have a friend, relative, carer to be present, if required or they can refuse to be involved in the consultation.
- 3.5.4 The door knocking commenced on 18th February and is due to finish on 31st May and as at 19th April, 1,065 surveys had been completed. A summary of the results of this stage of the consultation is scheduled to be received by the Housing Select Committee at its meeting on 19th June.
- 3.5.5 Phase two of the consultation with residents will be shaped by the survey findings and will enable the Council to set out how resident aspirations and priorities can be met, or not, through the two options. The aim of this phase will be to build on phase 1 and engage in a more detailed dialogue with residents regarding the implications of both options in terms of rents, rights, investment and services so residents can make an informed choice. This phase will also be supported by Lewisham Homes but, again, this will be the Council's consultation with residents and decisions regarding messaging, strategy and coverage will be taken by the Council.

4. Introducing the Independent Tenant Advisor (ITA)

- 4.1 The Resident Steering Group (RSG) decided not to re-appoint TPAS as the Independent Tenant Advisor on the project and re-tendered the contract. RSG subsequently appointed Solon Community Network (SOLON) in March.
- 4.2 The Managing Director of SOLON who is the ITA lead on this project, will attend the Housing Select Committee meeting and will provide the committee with a short presentation outlining their goals for the consultation, which are building residents understanding, providing clarity about the options and the impacts on residents, and their progress and plan for building the knowledge and skills of the Resident Steering Group.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. The consultation with residents to date has been focussed on increasing residents' understanding of the two options, identifying residents' priorities for their homes and local areas and identifying their concerns in relation to the two options.
- 5.2. The information gathered from this process, along with the financial and technical assessments that are currently on-going, will allow for a second stage of consultation which provides residents with more detailed information about how both of the options might address their priorities and their concerns as identified by the earlier phase.
- 5.3. A summary of the results of the first phase consultation, which is scheduled to close on 31st May, will be presented to Housing Select Committee at its meeting of 19th June.

ITEM 3: Bids to the GLA “Building the pipeline” fund

1. Background

- 1.1. At its meeting on 4th April, Housing Select Committee stressed that officers should seek to maximise the Council’s bid to the GLA’s “Building the pipeline” fund.
- 1.2. This short report sets out for the Committee’s information the nature and extent of the bid that officers intend to put to the fund.
- 1.3. The GLA launched the Building the Pipeline prospectus on the 8th March 2013 as part of the Mayor of London’s Housing Covenant. The prospectus makes available £100m in London for which the bidding timetable is as follows:
 - Deadline for bids – Noon 21st May 2013 (extended from the 30th April)
 - GLA Assessment of bids – May-June 2013
 - Announcement of allocations – June 2013
 - Contracting with successful organisation – from June 2013
- 1.4. In total it is expected that the Council will bid for at least £940,000 from this fund.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Housing Select Committee is recommended to note the summary of the proposed bid to the GLA “Building the Pipeline” fund.

3. Proposed Bid

- 3.1. The following sets out the nature and extent of the bid that officers expect to make under each of the elements of the programme:

Care and support

The GLA has stated that it may consider moving bids to the Care and Support fund to Building the Pipeline fund. In January officers submitted a bid to this fund for £4.5m to support the delivery of two new specialised schemes for older people in the borough. The outcome of these has not yet been decided, but given this no additional bids to this elements have been made.

Making best use of existing properties

This to enable properties that have been empty for 6 months or longer to brought back into use as affordable housing. Officers are preparing a bid for £400,000 for this purpose, which is calculated as £20,000 per unit for 20 units. The scale of the bid has been informed by the work of the Portas Pilot in Sydenham and Forest Hill which has looked at the number of such units, as well as the Council’s empty homes officer.

Redundant spaces

Bids are encouraged for innovative use of redundant space on existing affordable housing estates to create new homes from previously 'hidden' spaces. A bid is being prepared to bring back into use a community facility that was previously housing on the Honor Oak estate. This bid will be for approximately £20,000 which is the difference between the projected cost and the funding available through other sources.

Extensions

The prospectus invites expressions of interest from existing providers of affordable housing for funding to extend existing properties to provide extra bed-spaces or to de-convert properties previously divided up into smaller flats into larger properties. Lewisham Homes has delivered a programme like this previously on ten units, and that scale of activity was found to be deliverable. Officers will therefore submit a bid for 10 units, to be identified by LH as properties become void, totalling £520,000.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1. Officers expect to submit bid for at least £940,000 to the GLA's Building the Pipeline fund. This is in addition to the bid of £4.5m that has already been submitted to the GLA Care and Support fund.