

<b>Housing Select Committee</b>			
Title	Housing matters		
Contributor	Executive Director for Customer Services, Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration, Head of Law	Item	7
Class	Part 1 (Open)	Date	11 September 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 summary of the findings of the door-knocking exercise carried out by Lewisham Homes with the full report appended;
- The suggested approach of Phase 2 consultation
- The latest position on the Council's new build programme
- The latest position on the Council's Older People's Housing Project

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1. Housing Select Committee is recommended to:

- To note the results of the Phase 1 consultation:
  - 2,144 residents participated in the door-knocking exercise;
  - 90% of respondents had some understanding of each of the options;
  - The survey found that 33% thought it was a good idea to evolve Lewisham Homes into a new organisation, 31% were not sure, and 35% did not think it was a good idea;
  - The survey produced consistent residents' priorities across all areas of the borough, with security and safety, improvements to communal areas and the completion of the Decent Homes programme most commonly mentioned by respondents
- To note the approach for Phase 2 consultation.
- To note the progress made to date in delivering the Council's new build programme.
- To note the progress made to date in the delivering the Council's Older People's Housing Project.

## **3. Housing Matters – Phase 1 Consultation findings**

3.1 This section summarises the main findings of the Phase 1 consultation with residents. The full report is attached at Appendix 1.

3.2 Lewisham Homes carried out a planned programme of door-knocking and telephone contact with residents across its management area from February until the end of May 2013 with the aim to complete 2,000 surveys.

3.3 The purpose of the consultation was to:

- Continue to raise awareness of the Council's Housing Matters consultation;
- Increase residents' understanding of the options being considered;
- Gain a better understanding of resident priorities for improvements to services, their homes and community; and
- Understand the way the options being considered might address residents priorities and concerns.

3.4 Lewisham Homes consultation team captured the views of 2,144 residents (about 14%) across a representative range of age groups and areas of the borough. It is likely that through this exercise the team would have spoken to more than 6,000 residents about the consultation, helping to raise awareness of the issues for housing in Lewisham.

### 3.5 Understanding of the options

3.5.1 The conversation with residents has been at a high level and has focused as much on increasing residents' understanding of the issues and options as on testing their views about them. The survey achieved its target of increasing understanding to 60% with more than 90% of respondents having some understanding of each of the options.

3.5.2 It is positive that awareness and understanding of the options has increased markedly since the previous survey in December 2012. However, there is still work to be done to explain both options in more detail. The feedback captured needs to be considered alongside an appreciation of the level of understanding that residents were able to reach with the information available to them.

### 3.6 Residents' priorities

3.6.1 The survey has provided insight and detail into what residents' priorities are for their homes and communities, which provides evidence to inform decision making in later stages of the programme.

3.6.2 Residents were asked what their three main priorities were for improving where they lived, including their home, services, block and external areas. The survey produced consistent residents' priorities across all areas of the borough, with security and safety, improvements to communal areas and the completion of the Decent Homes programme most commonly mentioned by respondents.

3.6.3 The most common priorities in terms of service improvement were response repairs, better enforcement of tenancy conditions and tackling anti-social behaviour.

### 3.7 Residents' views on evolving Lewisham Home into a new organisation

- 3.7.1 The survey found that 33% thought it was a good idea to evolve Lewisham Homes into a new organisation, 31% were not sure, and 35% did not think it was a good idea. It is reasonable at this stage of the Housing Matters programme, that many residents who were 'not sure' said they did not have enough information to make an informed view on the options being considered. This feedback could therefore be summarised as a general open-mindedness for the option to be further developed and explained to residents.
- 3.7.2 The findings of the survey are being validated by a small door-knocking exercise, which is being carried out by Independent Tenant Advisor (Solon Community Network) during August and these results will be available at the meeting of the Housing Select Committee.
- 3.7.3 The background, methodology and full findings of the survey are outlined in the main report, which is attached at Appendix 1.

## **4. Phase 2 Consultation with residents**

- 5.1 The next phase of the consultation will report back to residents the findings of the door-knocking exercise that Lewisham Homes carried out.
- 5.2 It is anticipated that this will be carried out in a localised fashion by splitting Lewisham Homes management area into 10 key areas as this will enable the feedback to be targeted and tailored to those areas. The Council is working with Lewisham Homes to develop the timetable for this but would expect this activity to be completed by mid December. The current split is as follows:
- Pepys
  - Evelyn
  - Tanners Hill
  - Kender
  - Honor Oak
  - Lower Sydenham
  - Upper Sydenham
  - Forest Hill
  - Central – Catford & Lewisham
  - Blackheath
- 5.3 The events will be used as an opportunity to:
- continue to address residents concerns;
  - continue the conversation with residents about their priorities and aspirations and;
  - gain a better insight about their needs and expectations of the services they currently receive from Lewisham Homes.
- 5.4 This activity will be complemented by attendance at Area Panel meetings, Tenant & Resident Associations, Lewisham Homes Improvement Groups and other resident groups as well as attending other stakeholder meetings such as Lewisham Tenants Fund.

- 5.5 The suggested approach will also be taken to the Resident Steering Group on 18 September for their consideration and input.

## **5. Council's new build programme**

- 5.1. Mayor and Cabinet agreed in May that the Mercator Road garage site be prioritised for delivery of for the first homes in the Council's "New Homes, Better Places" programme. The programme set out at that time, including to Housing Select Committee, included a planning application in July 2013 with an aspiration to start on site in the spring of 2014.
- 5.2. A planning application for two two-bed houses and four three-bed houses was submitted by PTE Architects on behalf of the Council on August 2nd. The design and access statement that forms the main body of that application is attached alongside this report for the Committee's information. Please see appendix 2.
- 5.3. The standard timeframe for a planning decision on an application of this nature is 10 weeks. During this time officers will commence the appointment process for a build contractor. Officers consider that the relatively small scale of the build means that it is feasible for smaller and potentially local contractors to deliver. As such, a shortlist of six suitably experienced contractors has been drawn up, and this includes three Lewisham-based firms.
- 5.4. As this project has progressed well to date, and having reviewed the development timetable, officers now consider that it is feasible, subject to the planning and procurement processes, for work to start on site this calendar year. The target start on site date for the project is currently 2nd December 2013.
- 5.5. In addition officers have started to review and update the work that has been undertaken on other sites, which Housing Select Committee has previously been briefed on. The next meeting of the Committee will receive an update on how the longer term development pipeline and the target start dates for the next phase of the build programme after Mercator Road.

## **6. Council's older people's housing project**

- 6.1 The Older People's Housing Project responds to the priority set out by the Mayor at the launch of the Housing Matters to review the Council's approach to housing for older people and bring the existing stock of specialised housing for older people up to the required standard.
- 6.2 The project includes:
- the development of an Older People's Housing Strategy;
  - further analysis of Lewisham's older people's housing stock;
  - all activity to deliver the Chiddingstone scheme;
  - all activity required to support Phoenix Community Housing Trust to deliver the Hazlehurst court extra care scheme.
- 6.3 Strategic Housing and Adult Social Care jointly commissioned Martin Cheeseman from Campbell Tickell as an expert adviser for the Older People's Housing Strategy in July 2013. The strategy is being developed closely with Strategic

Housing and Adult Social Care and will incorporate analysis of data from across existing services and projections of need across all tenures. It will also describe existing services and how we can build upon them to reach the new vision for older people's specialist housing and services which help people to maintain independence in their own homes. Appropriate consultation will be carried out for the final draft strategy and the details of this are being finalised.

#### 6.4 Key milestones:

<b>Older People's Housing Strategy:</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>
Draft strategy produced	July 2013	30 <sup>th</sup> August 2013
Strategy taken to Healthier Communities Select Committee		23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2013
Strategy taken to Housing Select Committee		30 <sup>th</sup> October 2013
Strategy taken to Mayor and Cabinet for approval		13 <sup>th</sup> November 2013

6.5 Part of the work around the strategy will be to develop an aspirational standard for our older people's housing and then to use this agreed standard to reassess and evaluate the Council's older people's stock in order to identify a set of proposals for how they should be taken forward. The current focus for officers is to bring forward the Chiddingstone and Hazelhurst Court extra care schemes and further details of both these schemes can be found in the Key Housing Issues report.

## 7. Conclusion

- 7.1. The Council will continue to shape the consultation plan for Phase 2 and will do this by continuing to work in partnership with Lewisham Homes and the Resident Steering Group.
- 7.2. Housing Select Committee will continue to receive regular updates on this programme, including further progress reports on the new build and older peoples housing aspects of the programme.

## 8. Financial implications

- 8.1. The purpose of this report is to update member on the progression of the Housing Matters Programme and to seek there views. As such, there are no financial implications arising from this report.
- 8.2. The financial implications in respect of the New Build Programme and the Older People's Housing Project are covered in reports specific to those activities as they arise.
- 8.3. The cost of Phase 2 consultation will need to be contained within the budget allocated for the Housing Matters Programme.

## 9. Legal implications

- 9.1. There are no specific legal implications to insert for this report, save for noting the obligations pursuant to the Equality Act 2010.
- 9.2 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, belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 9.3 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.
- 9.4 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.
- 9.5 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/>
- 9.6 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
- 9.7 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. An EAA has been undertaken as part of the Housing Matters consultation exercise with tenants and leaseholders managed by Lewisham Homes. Both options carry positive benefits for the community including the commitment to build as a minimum 250 new homes. The Council has a large waiting list and this will contribute to resolving some of these households needs, particularly those that are overcrowded as the Council is aiming to deliver more family sized accommodation.
- 10.2. In terms of the consultation exercise, the Council and Lewisham Homes has developed a consultation and communications strategy for the overall project and this is monitored on a regularly basis and will be reviewed for Phase 2.

## **11. Environmental implications**

- 11.1. Bringing homes up to the Decent Homes standard will lead to greater energy efficiency, reduced maintenance costs and lower fuel bills for residents. It will also reduce the level of harmful gases being released into the atmosphere. Any new housing that is delivered will be energy efficient and as part of any further design assessment on new build schemes, officers will investigate the potential for creating new homes that are more efficient in terms of both construction and their use.

## **12. Crime and disorder implications**

- 12.1. One of the top priority for residents was about feeling safe and secure in their homes and neighbourhoods. A key focus of the Phase 2 consultation will be to have more detailed discussions with residents on this issue and to see how services could be delivered differently and how additional investment might be available to tackle this more effectively.