

## Deptford Southern Housing sites

### Frequently Asked Questions – July 2013

#### **BACKGROUND**

The borough of Lewisham has targets (set by the Mayor of London) to provide around 1,000 new homes per year, to help meet London's growing housing need. Many of these new homes will be built in areas that have good public transport links, which helps to protect existing green space and encourages less reliance on cars because of the ease of access to buses, trains and amenities like shops and leisure facilities.

The Council has been developing proposals to build a new housing development on the land in between Giffin Street and Reginald Road which, it has been calculated, would enable us to provide an additional 200+ properties as well as meeting various housing needs of existing residents (improving accessibility, easing overcrowding etc).

A previous proposal incorporated the demolition and rebuilding of two blocks on Giffin Street (no's 22-80 and 82-150), one block on Reginald Road (no's 2-30a) and the conversion of the old Tidemill School buildings. However, the Council has had to re-evaluate this scheme after further investigation over the past year including in-depth technical surveys of all the above buildings. We have also received new information about Lewisham Homes' planned programme of works and the housing market conditions in the area. As a result, we are now looking at a revised scheme which incorporates the following:

- Demolishing 2-30a Reginald Road
- Converting the old Tidemill School buildings into residential properties

Under the current proposals, 22-80 and 82-150 Giffin Street and Frankham Street parking boulevard would be retained.

PTEa, the architects who have been involved in the design of the scheme previously, have developed new design options about which the Council is currently consulting secure tenants.

This is a general proposal at present and the detail of where different types of housing would be located will be agreed as part of the detailed design process with a developer. But in general it is currently proposed that the new blocks have the following housing types:

A/B, C/D, E/F, K/L, Q – units for sale or private rent  
J, G/H – units for affordable rented or shared ownership

A significant number of new homes within the development will need to be for private sale or rent in order to fund new affordable homes, improvements to streets and open spaces in and around the site.

#### **DENSITY AND DESIGN**

##### **How many units does the Council plan to build as part of this new scheme?**

The current scheme proposes to build 208 new homes across the site, although this could change as result of planning requirements and the detailed assessment of the scheme. This figure includes the conversion of the old Tidemill School buildings and the re-provision of

housing for residents living within the existing housing on Reginald Road which will need to be demolished to allow the scheme to be built.

**How high will the new blocks be?**

The current proposals range from three to seven storeys.

**What influence will residents have over the finalised plans?**

We would really like residents to be involved in all aspects of the scheme. First and foremost, we are proposing to set up a Stakeholders Steering Group to help us pick the right RSL/development partner to develop these proposals. Tasks will include interviewing the shortlisted candidates and evaluating how they will involve and inform residents throughout the process.

We will support Stakeholder Steering Group members to attend meetings by reimbursing you reasonable expenses and offering training on how to evaluate proposals. If you are interested in getting involved in the resident steering group please let us know via email or telephone.

We will be asking developers to tell us how they plan to consult with residents about their plans and the development process during the selection of the developer. We would expect there to be drop in sessions, newsletters and exhibitions for residents. If there are other ways you think would be useful, please let us know.

**Will there be a safe play area for children?**

Yes. It is a planning requirement to provide safe places for children to play near their homes. We will be consulting residents on the detailed design of play areas.

**Even though the Giffin Street blocks are no longer part of the proposals, will they receive any refurbishment works?**

The Giffin Street blocks would receive further works, including external decoration, as part of the Lewisham Homes' programme of Major Works. Further information on this is available at; [http://www.lewishamhomes.org.uk/major\\_works/our\\_future\\_mw\\_programme](http://www.lewishamhomes.org.uk/major_works/our_future_mw_programme)

**Will properties in the new development have smaller rooms?**

No. The room sizes will be required to follow the London Housing Design Guide. These are typically similar to, or larger than, rooms in the existing flats.

**I live alone. Will I have to move into a studio apartment?**

No. The Council does not support the inclusion of new studios or bedsits in new developments for social rent, and as a decant tenant you would be entitled to a 1-bed. However studio apartments are available through Homesearch (the Council's choice based lettings scheme) should residents choose it.

**Will I have the same neighbours?**

If residents choose to stay in the development, we plan to re-house them at the same time as their neighbours, which means you would continue living in the same area. The location of each household will be based on individual housing needs and the layout of the new build homes.

**Will all tenants be offered 'like for like' and given the same size property as they currently have?**

All residents will be offered a house or apartment based on their current housing needs, including numbers of bedrooms and any medical requirements. This may mean that some families will be offered larger sized properties and some residents offered smaller properties than they currently have. We will work with you to ensure your household needs are taken into account when re-housing you.

**If I'm not entitled to a garden will I get a balcony the same size as I have now?**

All new properties will have a private balcony or garden. The last time we asked residents about the plans they told us they wanted more gardens included and this has been incorporated into the proposals. Meanwhile, the balconies will be a size as required by the new London Housing Design Guide. They will provide enough space for a meal around a small table, clothes drying or for a family to sit outside.

**Will the new homes have soundproofing?**

The new homes will have to comply with the latest Building Regulations, which include strict requirements for sound insulation in walls and floors separating flats. These are likely to be far superior standards to the existing flats.

**How will the scheme ensure privacy for existing and new residents?**

The detailed planning permission that will be required will consider issues of overlooking and privacy and ensure that the buildings meet design standards.

**Will the room layouts take religious requirements into consideration? For example, some religions do not accept open plan kitchens.**

We will try to take this into consideration. The recent housing needs assessment collected information about religious needs, but if you want to provide additional information in this regard please contact us.

**THE LOCAL AREA**

**What is happening to Deptford High Street and how long will the work go on for?**

The High Street is being completely regenerated; there will be a new road layout, improved parking and new lighting. The works are scheduled to be completed in December 2013.

**What green space will the new development provide?**

The new development will have 2 main green spaces; a landscaped communal garden in the south east corner and a communal play garden between the converted Old Tidemill School buildings and the proposed new blocks. Maintaining the bio-diversity currently found on the site will be something that the developers are expected to address in their open space designs. They will also be encouraged to work with existing residents and green space users to develop their proposals.

**Will Reginald Road block residents lose their communal garden and off-street parking?**

In the proposed scheme, the Reginald Road block will be demolished, so the communal garden space will be re-provided in an appropriate location in the development. Any current resident who has an existing parking permit will still be eligible to apply for a permit.

## **DECANTING AND REHOUSING**

### **If tenants do not want to be rehoused in the new development, will they be given priority to be rehoused elsewhere within Lewisham?**

Tenants currently living in 2-30a Reginald Road will be given Band 1 priority status on Homesearch during the decant period, the highest priority that can be awarded.

### **Do tenants have the choice to be re-housed outside Lewisham?**

It is the Council's duty to re-house tenants as part of any decant scheme; however the Council only has the ability to let properties within the borough. When the decant starts, it may be that there are opportunities to move across London although these may be limited depending on the level of housing demand and housing policies present in the desired area.

### **What Compensation is available for tenants?**

When moving due to being decanted, the current compensation payment offered to tenants, called a 'home loss payment', is £4,700. This is a national compensation payment set by Central Government. This is reviewed by Government each September and has been capped at this amount for sometime. The Council has no power to offer any alternative amount than that set by Central Government. In addition to Home Loss, tenants' reasonable moving costs (including re-direction of mail, removals and re-connections) are met and the Council can pay for the second hand value of some fixtures and fittings. An officer will come to your home and discuss this with you in detail when you are preparing to move. If you would like further information please let us know.

### **Other tenants on Reginald Road and Frankham Street will have long-term noise nuisance during the new build. Will they be compensated for this?**

The new housing will start to be built before tenants are re-housed, therefore the sound caused by building works cannot be avoided. A Considerate Constructors Scheme will be in place, and we will work with the builders to minimise the noise impact, for example restricting the times when noisy work such as demolition is carried out.

### **What are the planned timescales?**

We are currently starting to talk to developers, and expect to appoint one in spring/summer 2014. Construction is expected to commence late 2014/early 2015, and to take between 3-5 years in total. The Reginald Road properties would be demolished in a later phase of the development, to allow the opportunity for residents in those properties to move into the first phase or elsewhere in the borough as they wish.

### **How can I keep up to date as the plans progress?**

We will be keeping in touch with residents through email, post, newsletters drop in sessions and notices. You can register to be on our e-mailing list by emailing us at [deptfordtowncentre@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:deptfordtowncentre@lewisham.gov.uk)

## **LEASEHOLDERS OPTIONS**

### **What is the Buy back process?**

The Council is experienced at buying back leaseholder's homes in regeneration schemes. The process is one of negotiation between the Council's valuer and the leaseholder who can select their own independent surveyor at the Council's cost.

**What compensation is available for leaseholders?**

In regeneration schemes, leaseholders are bought back at market value plus a Home Loss payment. This is 10% of the property value if you live in your home and 7.5% of the value of your home if you have another property elsewhere. The Council will also pay for costs associated with moving such as removals.

**What re-housing options would Leaseholders have?**

The Council is experienced at working with Housing Associations to develop affordable home ownership options for resident leaseholders that are bought back as part of re-development schemes. The Council will be working to provide housing options for resident leaseholders including shared ownership within the development. Should leaseholders be interested in this, the choice of property will depend on individual circumstances and what is built.

Leaseholders who live elsewhere will be bought back at market value and are not entitled to being re-housed.

**PARKING****What will the parking situation be?**

For existing residents parking should remain the same; residents will be entitled to apply for an on-street parking permit under Deptford East Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) in the same way they do now.

**What about parking for people who need to use a wheelchair?**

Residents who use a wheelchair (Blue Badge holders) will be allocated with a parking space close to where they live.

**CRIME AND SAFETY****I am concerned about anti-social behaviour and crime. What will be done to make our area safer?**

The Council's Community Safety Services works with the local Police to tackle anti-social behaviour. If you would like to learn more about what they do you can call them on 020 8314 6688 or email [communitysafety@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:communitysafety@lewisham.gov.uk).

New Cross Safer Neighbourhoods Team's current priorities, as identified by residents, are to tackle anti-social behaviour, burglary and motor vehicle crime. Drop in surgeries are held weekly. For more information contact the team on 020 8284 8578.

**Will the new homes be safer?**

Yes. We will be working closely with the Police and other experts when designing the new scheme, with the aims of improving levels of security in the home and reducing the risk of crime outside the home through well tested principles of natural surveillance and defensible space.

**TENANCY, RENT AND FINANCE****Is the Council selling off the land to a private developer?**

The Council is inviting housing developers/RSL (Registered Social Landlord) partnerships to submit proposals on how they would jointly deliver the finalised scheme. Registered Social

Landlords are semi Government organisations that have to operate under Government guidelines for affordable housing. The law changed very recently and Local Authorities are now able to build new homes however the established way of providing new homes and regenerating neighbourhoods has been in partnership with RSL's and developers.

**Will Lewisham Council still be my landlord?**

No, if you wish to move into the new development your new landlord will become the appointed RSL. The RSL will then become responsible for all matters relating to your tenancy.

Residents in the Giffin Street blocks will remain the tenants of Lewisham Homes.

**What will my new tenancy agreement be?**

Your tenancy agreement will remain broadly the same as the one you have now.

**Will tenants retain their right to buy in the new development?**

Yes, however it will be called a 'right to acquire'

**Will I be able to keep my pets?**

During the selection process we will be seeking agreement from the RSL that if you have a pet, it will be able to move home with you. This is something that can be discussed further as we progress within the steering group and at wider consultations.

**Will my rent increase?**

We cannot confirm what the new rents would be for each size property type until we have appointed a housing provider. However it may be that as this is a new scheme, there is some increase in rents to reflect the increased quality of the homes. Having said that, as the properties will be managed by a social housing provider, rents for decanting tenants will still be capped by the Government's housing regulator at social (target) rent levels.

We will work with the appointed housing provider to ensure that all tenants are given up to date advice and information about their rents, service charges and entitlement to benefits.

**How will my rent be managed?**

If your service charges and rent are covered by Housing Benefit entitlement, as long as your circumstances have not changed, this entitlement will remain.

**How will my energy bills compare to my existing ones?**

The new homes will be insulated to a high standard and will have much more energy-efficient heating systems. It is often the case that energy bills in new build properties are lower than in current homes.