

Housing Select Committee			
Report Title	New Homes Programme	Item No	8
Contributors	Head of Strategic Housing		
Class	Part 1	Date	31 October 2018

1. Purpose of paper:

- 1.1. This report provides an update on progress of the delivery of the 500 new homes in the New Homes, Better Places programme and the broad strategy for the delivery of a further 1,000 new social homes.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1. It is recommended that Housing Select Committee review and note the report.

3. Background:

- 3.1. The Lewisham Housing Strategy 2015-2020 contains four priorities:

- Helping residents at times of severe and urgent housing need
- Building the homes our residents need
- Greater security and quality for private renters
- Supporting our residents to be safe, healthy and independent in their home

- 3.2. London faces one of the most significant housing shortages since the end of the Second World War. In line with our strategy priorities, Lewisham Council acknowledges the challenges faced by our residents and is committed to tackling those with the greatest housing need.

- 3.3. In July 2012 the Council embarked on a programme to build 500 new social homes in response to a series of on-going housing policy and delivery challenges, most notably an enduring under-supply of new affordable homes available to the Council to meet housing demand.

- 3.4. A series of update reports has subsequently been considered by both Mayor and Cabinet, and Housing Select Committee, outlining progress in meeting the target of starting 500 new Council homes for social rent in 2018.

- 3.5. The Council has set a target of a further 1000 social homes by 2022.

4. New Homes update

Achilles Street

- 4.1. A report titled “Achilles Street Redevelopment Proposals” is due to be considered by Mayor and Cabinet on the 21st November 2018.
- 4.2. The report will set out a summary of the work completed so far on the options and proposals for building new homes in the Achilles Street area, including a summary of the extensive resident consultation that has taken place over a period of three years. The report will present the strategic rationale for redeveloping the estate but will make clear that no proposal for redevelopment will take place unless it is supported by residents in a ballot.
- 4.3. This ballot will come forward in line with the draft Residents Charter that was considered by Committee at the previous meeting and will be Lewisham’s first – and potentially London’s first – estate regeneration ballot in line with new GLA guidance and the Council’s new policy.
- 4.4. If this report is agreed, officers will begin establishing a Resident Offer for Achilles Street residents that can be used to hold a ballot on whether or not the redevelopment proposals go ahead. It is anticipated that this will take 6-9 months of work, after which a report will present the Resident Offer back to Mayor and Cabinet for approval and to announce the ballot date. Committee will be kept fully apprised of progress in this regard.

Hillcrest

- 4.5. Following detailed discussions with the community, councillors, Lewisham Homes and their design team, the decision was taken to withdraw the planning application for 22 homes at Hillcrest pending more detailed examination on the status of the land.
- 4.6. After extensive public consultation and concerns about existing green space at the proposed site, Lewisham Homes and Lewisham Council commissioned further research, which was undertaken by an independent ecological expert. These findings were inconclusive and consequently, the decision to pause the application was considered the most logical approach.
- 4.7. Bringing forward small numbers of new homes in tight “in-fill” locations, can be complex, and issues can arise as the projects develop. Smaller sites are not necessarily easier than larger sites, and they do not necessarily require less resource either. In shaping the programme to deliver 1,000 homes over the coming four years, officers and Lewisham Homes will be judging the optimal balance of both types of site.

Developing a 1,000 home programme

- 4.8. Excellent progress continues in the collaboration between the Council and Lewisham Homes to create an approach, structure, resource and programme that will deliver 1,000 social homes by 2022. As noted at committee before, much of this work is back-office technical work, to create for instance the correct governance and oversight approaches, technical and quality assurance structures, as well as site identification.
- 4.9. Nonetheless in the past month design work has commenced on the first three sites in the programme. Avanti Architects have been appointed to look at three sites for temporary accommodation in the borough, totalling between around 30 units. Initial consultation with councillors and the local community is likely to take place before the end of the year, subject to the technical appraisals that will be happening in the coming weeks.
- 4.10. These proposals also form part of the Housing division's approach to managing the budget cuts, which is referenced separately on this agenda.

5. Financial implications:

- 5.1 The Council's current 30 year financial model for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) includes provision for up to 500 new units, for social rent purposes, at an average cost of £190k each (adjusted annually for inflation) over the first 10 years of the model.
- 5.2 The delivery of the HRA Social Units from the New Homes Better Places programme will be funded from this provision.
- 5.3 The delivery of the Temporary Accommodation schemes will be funded through the use of RTB 1-4-1 receipts and General Fund Prudential Borrowing.
- 5.4 Work continues on the identification and financial impacts of the individual sites associated to the delivery of the new 1,000 additional homes target, which will be supported by a funding application submitted to the GLA at the end of September 2018.
- 5.5 The final funding application was for a total of £57.5m in grant support and £51.4m for additional HRA headroom borrowing approval. The announcement of the successful applications, together with the funding award, are expected in November 2018. The financial implications of the schemes associated with this programme will be reported on individually as and when they are sufficiently developed and brought forward for approval by Mayor and Cabinet.

6. Legal implications:

- 6.1 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. In accordance with General Consent A3.1.1 of The General Housing Consents 2013 the Council may dispose of dwelling houses on the open market at market value.

- 6.2 Some of 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. 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.
- 6.3 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 6.4 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.
- 6.5 It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct, or to promote equality of opportunity or foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. It is a duty to have due regard to the need to achieve the goals listed at 9.3 above.
- 6.6 The weight to be attached to the duty will be dependent on the nature of the decision and the circumstances in which it is made. This is a matter for the Mayor, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. The Mayor must understand the impact or likely impact of the decision on those with protected characteristics who are potentially affected by the decision. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations. The extent of the duty will necessarily

vary from case to case and due regard is such regard as is appropriate in all the circumstances.

- 6.7 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:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-codes-practice>

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-technical-guidance>

7. Equalities implications

- 7.5. The provision of new social housing in the borough has a positive equalities impact. Households on the Council’s Housing Register are more likely to have a protected characteristic than the wider population as access to the register is limited to those most in housing need.

8. Crime and Disorder implications

- 8.5. There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report.

9. Environmental implications

- 9.5. Any environmental implications from the delivery of new homes are considered and addressed on a scheme by scheme basis through the design and planning process. There are therefore no additional environmental implications arising directly from this report.

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