



Mayor and Cabinet

Report title: Conversion of 114-116 Manor Avenue

Date: 19 May 2021

Key decision: Yes

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: Brockley

Contributors: Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration and Public Realm, Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law, Governance and HR.

Outline and recommendations

This report seeks to gain authority from Mayor and Cabinet to convert the use of 114-116 Manor Avenue from a hostel for single adults to temporary accommodation suitable for families.

It is recommended that the Mayor and Cabinet:

- Note the rationale for the conversion of the premises to provide temporary accommodation for families as set out in this report;
- Approves that 114-116 Manor Avenue is converted for use as set out in this report;
- Approves the budget for Lewisham Homes to complete the conversion as set out in the accompanying Part 2 report; and
- Delegates authority to the Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration and Public Realm in conjunction with the Director of Law, Governance & HR to submit a planning application and approve any minor changes that may be required through the planning process and for Lewisham Homes to tender and appoint contractors to complete the work.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

Regeneration and Capital Programme Delivery Board – August 2020

Mayor and Cabinet – May 2021

1. Summary

- 1.1. The property at 114-116 Manor Avenue is a Council owned building that has been leased to L&Q housing association since 1983. The building is within the Brockley Conservation Area.
- 1.2. The building currently comprises of 13 rooms for single adults with shared facilities and a 2 bedroom flat for a caretaker. The majority of placements were made directly through Brent Community Housing who were managing the building.
- 1.3. The lease on the property expired in October 2018 but L&Q have been unable to return the property as there has been an outstanding subsidence claim which needs to be resolved before the Council recovers possession. The property has continued to accommodate single adults in the meantime. The Covid 19 context has had an impact on the property being returned. All residents have been assisted with alternative accommodation.
- 1.4. The current configuration of the building is not efficient and is no longer fit for purpose. Feasibility work has found that 10 self-contained homes can be provided comprising of 2x 1 bed, 6x 2 bed and 2x 3 bed homes. These homes can be used as in-borough temporary housing.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Note the rationale for the conversion of the premises to provide temporary accommodation for families as set out in this report;
- 2.2. Approves that 114-116 Manor Avenue is converted for use as set out in this report;
- 2.3. Approves the budget for Lewisham Homes to complete the conversion to provide 10 self-contained temporary housing units as set out in the accompanying Part 2 report;
- 2.4. Delegates authority to the Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration and Public Realm in conjunction with the Director of Law, Governance & HR to submit a planning application and approve any minor changes that may be required through the planning process and for Lewisham Homes to tender and appoint contractors to complete the work.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1. The Council's Corporate Strategy (2018-2022)^[1] outlines the Council's vision to deliver
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for residents over the next four years. Building on Lewisham's historic values of fairness, equality and putting our community at the heart of everything we do, the Council will create deliverable policies underpinned by a desire to promote vibrant communities, champion local diversity and promote social, economic and environmental sustainability. Delivering this strategy includes the following priority outcomes that relate to the provision of new affordable homes:

- Tackling the Housing Crisis – Providing a decent and secure home for everyone.
- Building an Inclusive Economy – Ensuring every resident can access high-quality job opportunities, with decent pay and security in our thriving and inclusive local economy.
- Building Safer Communities – Ensuring every resident feels safe and secure living here as we work together towards a borough free from the fear of crime.

3.2. Lewisham's Housing Strategy (2020-2026), includes the following themes that relate to the provision of new affordable homes:

1. delivering the homes that Lewisham needs
2. preventing homelessness and meeting housing need
3. improving the quality, standard and safety of housing
4. supporting our residents to live safe, independent and active lives
5. strengthening communities and embracing diversity.

4. Background

4.1. The demand for housing assistance in Lewisham has increased in recent years and remains substantial. This is being driven by:

- A lack of genuinely affordable homes and a decline in the available social homes for let;
- A severe shortage of available properties at LHA where the landlord is willing to let to homeless, largely benefit dependent, claimants;
- The increasing cost of the private rented sector (PRS) and an increasing reliance on the PRS;
- Welfare reforms;
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has also led to an increase in demand.

4.2. As a result of these pressures, the council has rapidly expanded the amount of temporary accommodation it has sourced to meet the needs of homeless households. As at the end of January 2021, almost 2,500 households were in temporary accommodation (TA) arranged by Lewisham, of which over 800 households were having to be accommodated outside of the borough.

4.3. The council has spent £109m on temporary accommodation between 2016/17 and 2019/20, of which £9.7m was net expenditure. These unrecoverable costs are largely driven by the use of nightly paid accommodation.

4.4. To tackle the increase in demand, improve quality and drive down costs the council has embarked on a number of work programmes. These include:

- An expanded homelessness prevention service delivering an increased rate of

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successful preventions;

- The acquisition of homes for use as temporary accommodation by the council and by our partners;
- The continued procurement of properties for use as temporary accommodation or to permanently resettle households; and
- The development of new social homes and temporary accommodation through our Building for Lewisham programme;

4.5. However, the structural drivers of homelessness remain in place and as such demand remains substantial. This opportunity allows the Council to expand the provision of much needed, high quality, in-borough temporary accommodation that better meets the needs of our residents.

5. Rationale for the project

- 5.1. The building has been used to provide rooms for up to 13 single adults as well as a caretakers flat since at least 1983.
- 5.2. With the current configuration, residents are required to share kitchens and bathroom facilities are also shared. Providers are now moving away from shared facilities where possible.
- 5.3. The building is no longer fit for purpose. It does not maximise the use of the space and requires modernisation.
- 5.4. Whilst there is need for providing temporary accommodation for single people, there is other more suitable provision available.
- 5.5. The greatest demand is for family sized accommodation that is within the borough and close to schools and support networks. The proposal outlined in Section 6 would benefit households that might otherwise have to be accommodated out of borough.

6. Proposal

- 6.1. Faithorn Farrell Timms (FFT) were appointed in late 2019 to carry out an initial feasibility study and were tasked with maximising the use of the space at Manor Avenue which is considered to be inefficient. FFT assessed the condition of the building and provided cost estimates for conversion.
- 6.2. The Council's Strategic Development Team have reviewed and amended the initial FFT work and have produced an appraisal for the Manor Avenue site that better meets the Council's need for in-borough temporary accommodation.
- 6.3. The proposal is:
 - 10 individual homes, 2 laundry rooms and garden access.
 - 2x 1 bed homes
 - 6x 2 bed homes
 - 2x 3 bed homes
- 6.4. This proposal, which is subject to planning permission, would be able to accommodate up to 35 people, substantially more than the 13 currently housed in the scheme.
- 6.5. Officers have been working closely with L&Q to assist with the relocation of existing residents. All residents are being offered self-contained homes either through Lewisham Homesearch or from L&Q if they wish to move outside of the borough. Work

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on the scheme can commence whilst the last remaining residents are assisted into new homes.

- 6.6. The building is in the Brockley Conservation Area and will require a planning application. The proposal will be tested through the planning process which may result in changes to the final configuration of the building. A planning application will be submitted following more detailed design work.
- 6.7. Lewisham Homes will lead on delivering the conversion on behalf of the Council, this will include design, planning, tendering the work and managing contractors.
- 6.8. Once vacant possession is obtained and the building returned to the Council, it is estimated that it will take 10 months for the project to complete. This may be impacted through continuing/future restrictions as a result of Covid 19.
- 6.9. The Council will be the landlord of the new units with the day to day management carried out by Lewisham Homes' temporary housing team.

7. Proposed sources of funding

- 7.1. The scheme has been modelled on the funding being provided through Right to Buy receipts at 40% with the remaining 60% from prudential borrowing. Full details of the financial position are contained within the accompanying Part 2 report.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1. The financial implications are noted in the accompanying Part 2 report.

9. Legal implications

- 9.1. There are no specific legal implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.

10. Equalities implications

- 10.1. There are no equalities implications arising directly from the recommendations set out in this report. However, the proposal will increase the number of family sized social rent homes in the borough to enable more households on low incomes to access secure and safe accommodation, which will have positive equalities implications.
- 10.2. It should be noted that the Council is committed to ensuring our developments will be inclusive and feature accessible and adaptable homes that will meet the needs of our residents throughout their life.

11. Climate change and environmental implications

- 11.1. It is considered that refurbishment and reuse of the existing building will outweigh the negative climate change impacts resulting from unnecessary carbon outlays of new build construction. Additionally, the Council will endeavour to source building materials from local suppliers to reduce the travel distance and seek materials that do not contain animal products – where possible. This will help Lewisham achieve its carbon reduction goals.

12. Crime and disorder implications

- 12.1. There are no crime and disorder issues arising specifically from this report.

13. Health and wellbeing implications

- 13.1. There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from this report although

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the provision of new social homes in the borough will have a positive impact on health and wellbeing of people who require temporary accommodation.

14. Social Value implications

- 14.1. Social value implications will be set out during the procurement of the refurbishment works.

15. Report author and contact

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16. I approve the recommendations in this report

Signed:



Kevin Sheehan

Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration and Public Realm

10th May 2021

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