

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 20 May 2020	Meeting Name: Cabinet member for Social Regeneration, Great Estates and New Council Homes
Report title:		Charter for influencing and benefiting from new council homes development (Charter of Principles)	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All wards	
From:		Director of New Homes	

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the cabinet member for social regeneration, great estates and new council homes:

1. Approves the amended wording to the Charter for influencing and benefiting from new council homes development (Charter of Principles) including the following modifications:
 - Where there is a demand or the scheme is of a sensitive nature we will give an opportunity for residents to be involved in the procurement and appointment of architects
 - Providing consultation links to the new council homes webpage
 - New homes will be pre-allocated and residents will be able to decide on some of the internal finishes.
2. Approves the interim modifications to the council's engagement process whilst government restrictions on social distancing are applied including:
 - Using our Consultation Hub to involve you in considering the options and opportunities for development in your area.
 - Broadening the range of consultation and engagement tools we use.
3. Notes that the council will continue to make sure that consultation reflects our engagement principles; built on trust, inclusive, collaborative, reflective, timely, proportionate, evidence based, simple & accessible, clear & informative and responsive.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. In November 2014 the cabinet agreed the Charter of Principles. These set out the framework for consulting with residents of Southwark on the ongoing delivery of 11,000 new council homes, following consultation on a draft of these principles.

5. The principles built on the outcomes of the Housing Commission, the council's approach to community engagement and the way council officers have been working with residents in the ongoing major works programme 'putting residents first' and on projects such as the refurbishment of Lakanal House.
6. Over 2,000 people responded to the consultation on the Charter of Principles in 2014 and they were overwhelmingly people who lived in council homes, and this gave the council a high level of confidence that the results reflected the views of the wider population of residents in council homes.
7. The consultation took place with both the formal consultation structures of Tenant and Homeowners Council, Area Housing Forums, tenants and residents associations and more broadly with those not engaged in these formal structures. Officers have continued to consult through the formal tenant and homeowner structures and in other ways to ensure that those who are not engaged in the formal structures are able and encouraged to get involved.
8. The Charter of Principles made six key pledges:
 - How we will work with you on developing the principles for housing investment and renewal of our estates
 - How we will work with you on the development of the new homes on your estate
 - How we will involve you in ensuring that the new homes are delivered to a high standard
 - Giving you a real say in how the new homes are managed
 - We will demand high standards for the quality and affordability of new homes
 - Your housing options if you are affected by redevelopment of your estate.
9. On September 2017, the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing received a report reviewing the Charter of Principles. The report noted the success of the council's engagement on building new homes with a high level of engagement from tenants and homeowners. The report also suggested changes to the way the council delivers community engagement on the direct delivery of new council homes; ensuring tenant and resident associations will be at the heart of the decision making and recognises that on some occasions the council may wish to modify the way it works. Amongst other approvals council officers have been preparing engagement plans based on gathering local intelligence and there has also been wide use of the consultation hub to enable residents to keep informed about how proposals are developing and about the project groups allowing the opportunity for further feed back.
10. On 29 November 2019 the cabinet member for housing management and modernisation agreed the inclusion in the council's allocation scheme of the proposed pre-allocation lettings process for new build affordable homes with the process takes effect from 1 January 2020.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Charter for influencing and benefiting from new council homes development (Charter of Principles)

11. The charter for influencing and benefiting from new council homes development (Charter of Principles) sets out our commitment to how the council and our partners will work with residents on our programme of investment and renewal. It contains key pledges to give people who live and work in Southwark a real say in the programme to build 11,000 new council homes.
12. The council remain committed to working with residents on our programme during this period of uncertainty and will follow the advice issued by Central Government as to the precautionary measures and action to take to ensure that residents, staff, and partners are protected from the coronavirus through face to face and public gatherings.
13. Our long term commitment to building 11,000 new council homes means that the programme for delivery of these homes must continue so that there are new homes that will continue to meet the increasing housing need in our borough.
14. When things return to normal we will provide information on all the projects where interim measures were in place and give you the opportunity, via a drop in and questionnaires to provide any feedback you may have but for now we will adapt the way we engage with you whilst seeking to give you every opportunity to work with us in the development of new homes. We acknowledge that we will have to be creative to ensure genuine engagement with you and other residents. We are committed to exploring new methods, and welcome good suggestions from the public on how to do this.
15. With this in mind we have provided some updated and interim measures of how we can continue to involve residents in the development of new homes.

Pledge 1

16. How we will work with you on developing the principles for housing investment and renewal of our estates
 - We will work with you to identify what factors make an estate a success and worth investing in for the future, where appropriate, developing an Estate Improvement Plan.
 - We will involve the community area by area as we work with you to consider the options and opportunities for development in each part of the borough.

Interim measures

17. Interim measures on how we will work with you on developing the principles for housing investment and renewal of our estates
 - We will use our Consultation Hub to involve you in considering the options and opportunities for development in your area.

- The council will also assess where some residents, for example vulnerable residents, may need a more tailored approach to consultation and adapt processes to be inclusive.
- Where we hold email addresses we will send information via email and ask for feedback to be provided to us via the Consultation Hub and provide links to the webpage (www.southwark.gov.uk/11000homes). We will continue to use the postal service for those who do not have an email address.

Pledge 2

18. How we will work with you on the development of the new homes on your estate

- We will work with you on the design of each scheme and keep you informed every step of the way as the programme progresses.
- Consultation and engagement will continue throughout the design and delivery of the programme rather than being a one off exercise at the beginning without further opportunities to give us feedback. We will keep you informed as to how your views have been taken into account.
- Each scheme will have a named lead officer so that residents know who to contact.
- Consultation will be led by local project groups of residents and local councillors in each area.
- We will hold one to one meetings for any resident that wants one.
- We will only proceed with submitting a planning application for proposals for this programme where there has been thorough dialogue and consultation with residents.

Interim measures

19. Interim measures on how we will work with you on the development of the new homes on your estate

- We will use our Consultation Hub to present the designs for the schemes, display exhibition board, and ask for your feedback your comments. We may ask you specific questions depending on where we are in the designing of the new homes. We will also be available to talk to you by telephone.
- We will where requested hold one to one meetings via Telephone, Facetime, Whatsapp or other digital systems that all parties that do not have a charge.
- We will continue to consult with your project group representatives on any key decisions that need to be made and hold at least three meetings with them.
- We will broaden the range of consultation and engagement tools we use.
- We will continue to issue newsletters, flyers and information via the post or email.

Pledge 3

20. How we will involve you in ensuring that the new homes are delivered to a high standard

- For each scheme we will set up a residents' project team of interested residents to regularly meet with us on the delivery of the new homes.
- We will involve representatives from the wider community affected by the development of new homes.
- We will hold monthly site meetings with resident representatives from the residents' project team.
- We will walk around the site with resident representatives and ward councillors a week before the handover.
- We will carry out a satisfaction survey to find out how satisfied you are with how the projects are delivered, and what we can learn for the future.
- We will work with you to ensure we get value for money for every pound spent on the programme.

Interim measures

21. Interim measures on we will involve you in ensuring that the new homes are delivered to a high standard

- We remain committed to setting up a project group and involving the community either via the Consultation Hub, video, email or post.
- We will continue to hold monthly site meetings where possible with the contractors via digital methods and will invite resident representatives from the residents' project team.
- We will ensure that adequate measures for handover of sites are agreed with residents and councillors.

Pledge 4

22. Giving you a real say in how the new homes are managed

- We will work with you on an area basis on options for involving you in the longer term management and upkeep of your home.

Interim measures

23. Interim measures on giving you a real say in how the new homes are managed

- There will be no changes at this time to how we carry out this pledge.

Pledge 5

24. We will demand high standards for the quality and affordability of new homes

- The 11,000 homes that we develop for rent will be let at formula or target rent i.e. true council rent levels.
- We aim to develop new homes that meet high standards of construction, design and environmental sustainability.
- The programme will include homes that fully meet the needs of vulnerable people and people with disabilities. We will make sure that our new homes help people to live independent lives.
- We will work with you not just to build new homes but to create great neighbourhoods with a strong sense of community. We will work with you to plan how our investment can create opportunities for improvements to the whole neighbourhood, building communities of which we can all be proud.
- We will ensure that the programme supports local employment and skills, sourcing local labour and involving local businesses.
- In some cases, where there is a demand or the scheme is of a sensitive nature and a stand alone scheme, we will give an opportunity to influence the selection of architect (from a pre-qualified framework) This needs to be balanced against the benefits of packaging a number of schemes together to ensure value for money and to expedite the programme.

Interim measures

25. Interim measures on demanding high standards for the quality and affordability of new homes

- There will be no changes at this time to how we carry out this pledge.

Pledge 6

- Your housing options if you are affected by redevelopment of your estate.
- We will ensure that leaseholders and homeowners affected by redevelopment get access to dedicated advice, support and information on their options for the future. This will include, where it is necessary, offering a full range of options for rehousing including shared ownership and shared equity, and any loss, compensation or disturbance payments residents may be entitled to.
- We will carry out an assessment of the housing needs of any block affected by redevelopment with one to one visits to all those directly impact by the redevelopment.
- The programme aims to benefit local people and any tenant or leaseholder wanting to stay in an area where development takes place will be offered options to do so.

- We want to make most effective use of the new stock to make sure it is let fairly and in a way that deals with any specific local issues and concerns, and contributes to sustainable and mixed communities. We will work with residents to give them a say on lettings so that, for example, we make provision for those freeing up underoccupied properties, and to ensure that lettings take account of local circumstances. This will involve, in most cases, agreeing a local letting plans in line with guidance from the overall allocations policy.
- Where tenants of the new homes want to move they will have the same rights to transfer and exchange their homes as any other Southwark tenant.
- At least half of the homes we develop will be available to tenants in housing need on the estate at the first letting to make sure that local residents affected by redevelopment get a fair deal.
- New homes will be pre-allocated and residents will be able to decide on some of the internal finishes.*

Interim measures

26. Interim measures on your housing options if you are affected by redevelopment of your estate

- There will be no changes at this time to how we carry out this pledge.

*This will only apply to schemes that have been approved and started in design from 01/01/2020.

Pledge 7

27. We demand the best from our contractors

- We will ensure our constructors' are signed up to considerate constructor schemes (it's a requirement).
- Each site will have a named site manager and contact details displayed.
- Where residents are going to be affected by works we will ensure that contractors keep residents informed on progress and any disruption that may impact on them.

Interim measures

28. Interim measures on demanding the best from our contractors

- There will be no changes at this time to how we carry out this pledge.

Policy implications

Housing Strategy to 2043

29. The new long-term housing strategy for the borough was agreed by Cabinet on 27 January 2014. It contains a vision for the future of housing in the borough, which consists of four principles.
- Principle 1: We will use every tool at our disposal to increase the supply of all kinds of homes across Southwark.
 - Principle 2: We will demand the highest standards of quality, making Southwark a place where you will not know whether you are visiting homes in private, housing association or council ownership.
 - Principle 3: We will support and encourage all residents to take pride and responsibility in their homes and local area.
 - Principle 4: We will help vulnerable individuals and families to meet their housing needs and live as independently as possible.
30. A refresh of the Housing Strategy is underway.

Community impact assessment

31. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work, in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.
32. This amendment to the commitments will continue to place residents at the heart of our decision making has made recommendations on how we can improve our processes to ensure that residents are included in the design process and adapt that process taking into account the equality of all individuals during the consultation.
33. Our approach to engagement remains one that seeks to widen participation while ensuring that the process is able to adapt to local needs and circumstances, as well as the circumstances.
34. With a likely greater need for social housing the commitment to deliver new council to support those in need of affordable housing will be increasingly important and hence the need to continue to deliver our engagement in new homes in an inclusive way.

Resource considerations

35. The recommended changes do not impact on resource allocation.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance (H&M 20/017)

36. This report seeks approval from the cabinet member for social regeneration, great estates and new council homes for the proposed amended wording to the Charter of Principles for influencing and benefiting from new council homes development. It also seeks approval for interim modifications to the council's engagement process while social distancing measures are in place during the COVID 19 pandemic. Any changes to procedures as consequence of these amendments and interim modifications are expected to be managed within existing budgets.

Director of Law and Democracy

37. The report asks the cabinet member to approve amended wording to the charter of principals, agreed in 2014, for new homes development and interim modifications to the council's engagement process to comply with government guidance during the Covid 19 emergency.
38. The exercise of the council's functions and the consultation it undertakes remain, in the current situation, capable of being challenged and to oversight in the courts. The cabinet member is reminded that any consultation carried out by the council must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements for fair and proper consultation which should be applied at all stages of the consultation process. This involves; when proposals are still at a formative stage, including sufficient reasons for the proposals to allow interested parties the opportunity to consider the proposal and formulate a response, allowing adequate time for interested parties to consider proposals and formulate their response and conscientiously taking into account the outcome of consultation when the ultimate decision is taken.
39. The community impact statement section of the report refers to the Public Sector Equality Duty. The cabinet member is reminded that this is duty, set out in section 149 Equality Act 2010, requires the council, in the exercise of its functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct; advance of equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and foster good relations between those who share a relevant characteristic and those that do not share it. The duty is a continuing one and should be kept under review as projects develop. It is of relevance in this context that the duty to advance equality of opportunity entails having regard to the need to take steps to meet the different needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic, and encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic participate in public life or any other activity in which they are underrepresented. It is recommended that these issues should be considered when taking a decision on the recommendations in this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Charter of Principles Review	Housing and Modernisation 160 Toolet Street London SE1 2QH	Richard George 020 7525 3293
Link (please copy and paste into your browser): http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s71045/Report%20Review%20of%20Charter%20of%20Principles.pdf		
Pre-allocation of all new build accommodation policy	Housing and Modernisation 160 Toolet Street London SE1 2QH	Richard George 020 7525 3293
Link (please copy and paste into your browser): http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s86061/Report%20Pre-allocation%20of%20all%20new%20build%20accommodation%20policy.pdf		
Pre-allocation of all new build accommodation policy	Housing and Modernisation 160 Toolet Street London SE1 2QH	Richard George 020 7525 3293
Link (please copy and paste into your browser): http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s86061/Report%20Pre-allocation%20of%20all%20new%20build%20accommodation%20policy.pdf		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Stuart Davis, Director of New Homes	
Report Author	Richard George, Strategic Programme Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	20 May 2020	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		20 May 2020