

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 22 May 2023	Decision maker: Cabinet Member for Council Homes
Report title:		East Dulwich Homes – Local lettings Henslowe Road & Underhill Road and Bassano Street, SE22	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		Dulwich Hill and Goose Green Wards	
From:		Karen Shaw - Head of Housing Solutions	

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Lead Member for Council Homes is asked to approve the local lettings scheme for the 10 new homes at the two defined local area sites of Underhill Road & Henslowe Road and Bassano Street where 50% of the properties will be allocated to existing tenants within the local area.
2. To note the further criteria applied to residents of the local lettings scheme:
 - i. The local area is defined as tenants on the immediate estate and street properties where the development is located:
 - Friern Road Estate and street properties that are in close vicinity to Henslowe Road & Underhill Road and Bassano Street.
 - ii. Prospective tenants will be required to have less than four weeks' worth of rent arrears, or £50 if claiming housing benefit, at point of application and point of offer.
 - iii. Households can only move upon successful completion of pre-tenancy inspection and interview as per section 5.26 of the councils published allocation scheme.
 - iv. Only households assessed in housing need (bands 1-3) will be allocated a property through the local lettings scheme. Households will be prioritised in existing priority bands and awarded priority stars in accordance with our published allocations scheme.
 - v. Requests for additional bedrooms above the assessed need will not be considered unless on medical grounds that are confirmed by a Housing Solutions medical assessment
 - vi. Households within the defined local lettings area will be permitted to move into new homes which are one room less than their assessed bed need for properties of three bedrooms or more bedroomed.

- vii. Households within the defined local lettings area will not be permitted to move into new one or two bedroomed homes if the property is below their assessed bed need.
- viii. Households on the general register not in the defined local lettings area will not be permitted to move into any of the new homes if the property is below their assessed bed need.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3. In line with the council's target to produce 11,000 new homes by 2043, planning permission was granted to proceed with the development of new council homes located at Henslowe Road & Underhill Road and Bassano Street.
- 4. The developments at Henslowe Road, Underhill Road and Bassano Street include 10 new homes scheduled for completion in 2023. Bassano Street and Underhill Road are scheduled to be completed in June 2023 and Henslowe Road in November 2023.
- 5. The developments have a total of 10 homes of different sizes and have been made in consultation with the local residents within the Estate.
- 6. All 10 properties will be listed as social housing tenancies.
- 7. Southwark's Housing Allocations Scheme sets out the criteria according to which properties will be allocated. The scheme also provides for the use of local lettings schemes in order to meet the housing needs of tenants within the area.
- 8. Demand for social housing within the borough continues to outstrip supply. There are over 17,500 households on the housing register. Recent figures from 1 April 2021 – 31 Mar 2022 show that the council received and processed over 6,000 applications but was only able to allocate 810 homes through either nominations to housing associations or the allocation of Southwark council properties.
- 9. One of the aims of the housing allocations scheme is to enable local tenants in housing need, to continue to remain within their communities and not have to re-locate outside of the area to find suitable accommodation.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 10. All lettings for the new build schemes located at Henslowe Road & Underhill Road and Bassano Street will comply fully with Southwark Council's Housing Allocations scheme.

11. It is proposed that 50% of the initial lettings of the new homes will be allocated to Southwark Council tenants currently living on Henslowe Road & Underhill Road and Bassano Street and the immediate vicinity as set out in paragraph 14 below.
12. These lettings will be delivered to maximise the housing solutions for the local community and in order to deliver the Fairer Future promises, homes for all.
13. The Communities service team, Residential Services team, New Homes Delivery team and the Housing Solutions service have been working in partnership with the local tenants, to design a Local Lettings scheme for the initial allocation of the new build schemes located on Henslowe Road, Bassano Street and Underhill Road.
14. These meetings have been conducted over a number of months and an agreement has been reached with the residents, tenants, and local elected members of the council for the geographical area for the Local Lettings area. The local lettings area covers Henslowe Road, Bassano Street and Underhill Road including the following properties/buildings:

Henslowe Road & Underhill Road:

Friern Road Estate
Barry Road
Friern Road
Halliwell Court
Henslowe Road
Underhill Road
Upland Road

Bassano Street

Lordship Lane
Bassano Street
Blackwater Street
Melbourne Grove
Hansler Road
Bawdale Road
Whateley Road
Silvester Road
Playfield Crescent
Lycott Grove,
Shawbury Road
Chesterfield Grove
Pellat road

15. The new homes sit near to East Dulwich Road and Lordship Lane Estate, and will consist of the following social rented properties:

Property size	Number of units	Location
3 Bed - 5 Person House	4 (0 wheelchair access unit)	Bassano Street
3 Bed - 5 Person House	3 (0 wheelchair access unit)	Henslowe Road
4 Bed - 6 person House	3 (0 wheelchair access unit)	Underhill Road
Total	10	

16. Therefore, it is anticipated 5 properties will be allocated to existing tenants of Southwark Council living within the area identified within section 14 of this report.

17. As at the 20 February 2023, 30 households located within the local lettings area for Henslowe Road & Underhill Road were registered on our Homeseach Bidding Scheme. 16 of those households have been assessed as having a housing need and are listed in a priority band. The priority listed households are broken down below:

Henslowe and Underhill Road Local area:

Priority category	1 bed need	2 bed need	3 bed need	Total count
Under occupiers	2	2	0	4
Management transfers	0	0	0	0
Overcrowded households	0	1	8	9
Statutory overcrowded households	0	0	0	0
Medical needs	0	0	1	1
Accessible housing requirement	0	0	1	1
Sheltered housing	1	0	0	1
Total	3	3	10	16

18. As at the 20 February 2023, 34 households located within the local lettings area for Bassano Street were registered on our Homeseach Bidding Scheme. 19 of those households have been assessed as having a housing need and are listed in a priority band. The priority listed households are broken down below:

Bassano Street Local area:

Priority category	1 bed need	2 bed need	3 bed need	Total count
Under occupiers	5	0	0	5
Management transfers	0	0	0	0

Overcrowded households	0	1	6	7
Statutory overcrowded households	0	0	1	1
Medical needs	1	2	1	4
Accessible housing requirement	1	1	0	2
Sheltered housing	0	0	0	0
Total	7	4	8	19

19. Tables 1 and 2 shows a mixture of household compositions including 1, 2, and 3 bedroom households. It is anticipated 3+ bed households will benefit from the new development within the local area. All houses let will abide by 8.2.1 of the Southwark Allocations policy where applicants with children who are aged 16 and under will be considered eligible for a house. Applicants with children over this age are only considered for flats or maisonettes and are not eligible for houses.
20. There are no sub households listed on the housing register within the identified households on the Estates. Therefore, it is expected they will free up properties that will be available to other residents on the housing list.
21. It is envisaged that there is sufficient demand to warrant priority being given to tenants within the defined local area. An increase in the local lettings area for the new homes will generate unnecessary demand and is likely to raise expectations above what can be delivered as part of this local lettings scheme.
22. Letters will be sent to qualifying tenants on the register in advance to inform them of the upcoming development. This will include details of the available homes, the qualification criteria listed under section 2 above and the dates when the properties will be available on the Homeseach bidding website.
23. The local Resident Services Officer will work with the Housing Solutions service to help identify additional households within the local lettings estates that are in housing need but not registered on the Homeseach bidding scheme. Such cases will be expedited to provide them with the ability to bid on the new homes.
24. The homes will be advertised in advance of the completion of the homes on Henslowe Road, Bassano Street and Underhill Road. The first 50% of homes will be advertised to the local tenants, while the remaining 50% will be advertised once we have given a full opportunity for the local tenants to register their interest.
25. The information listed on the website will promote the features of the new build homes and ensure the full listing of the local lettings scheme is available for the households listed on the Homeseach bidding scheme.

26. We have considered the impact that allocating 50% of new homes to tenants in the locality of the defined area has on the cost of temporary accommodation. A proportion of Homeless households on the register who cannot bid for these properties will stay in temporary accommodation for a longer period. This represents a continuing cost for the authority as well as the impact on families of long stays in temporary accommodation. Some households will move into properties vacated by participants in the scheme. The homes freed up by moving social tenant transfers are generally smaller bed sizes and this means larger households, generally in the most expensive temporary accommodation, are most likely to be impacted. This scheme and schemes overall are kept under review to ensure local lettings policies do not dominate the allocations scheme as a whole.
27. The local lettings approach contributes to the council's key priorities to create and support neighbourhoods. It enables those already living and contributing within local communities to benefit from the development of homes in their area.
28. The letting of new social homes, at affordable rent levels supports residents on lower incomes to access genuinely affordable housing, improve their housing conditions and support them to narrow the gap in life chances for themselves and their families. In the longer term it supports residents to put down roots and contribute to local, community powered decision making in their area.

Policy implications

29. There are no Key policy implications or amendments required.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

30. Awarding priority to existing tenants within the estate recognises the fact that the development of new homes may cause disruption and on some occasions lack of amenities.
31. The groups that are affected, and deemed able to apply for the homes as "local" tenants are the tenants within the immediate estate where the property has been developed.
32. The allocation of these homes will be conducted in accordance with the councils published allocation scheme, which is already subject to its own community impact assessment.
33. An equalities Impact assessment was carried out on the 20th February 2023. No adverse findings were made during the assessment.
34. This scheme follows the successful local lettings of new developments such as Pelier Street, East Dulwich Estate, Nunhead, Clifton Estate, Masterman and Willow Walk.

Climate change implications

35. Henslowe Road & Underhill Road and Bassano Street were submitted to planning on 24th June 2019. A Sustainability and Energy strategy was included in the Design and Access Statement.
36. The surface area of the three existing sites comprises large areas of non-permeable surfaces (tarmac). The new landscaping provides permeable areas of new surfacing both within the hard and soft landscaped areas.
37. Rainwater butts will be provided within the private gardens for the houses to harvest rainwater from the roofs and store it for use for garden irrigation.
38. A 'Fabric First' approach has been adopted with U-values of 0.14W/m²k for external walls, 0.1W/m²k for floors and 0.11W/m²k for the roofs, 1.3W/m²k for windows and 1.4W/m²k for external doors. Air permeability has been set at 4m³/h.m² @ 50Pa for the whole development.
39. District heating and CHP units were assessed for their viability on this site. However, the site location and size makes these options non-viable. Therefore, no CO₂ energy demand savings can be made at this stage.
40. In terms of on-site renewables / low carbon technology, the small scale of the proposal means that no on-site energy will be generated. High efficiency gas-fired combination boilers will provide heating and hot water to each dwelling. Mechanical Extract Ventilation (MEV) systems will be fitted in each dwelling and high efficiency LED lighting will be used throughout.

Consultation

41. During the individual consultation events held for the Henslowe Road, Bassano Street and Underhill Road NAME OF DEVELOPMENT Development, prior to the submission of planning, residents were advised of a local letting policy devised to meet the local demand.
42. The contents of this report have been shared with the Ward Councillors who have confirmed that they are in support of the local lettings scheme and the defined area.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Governance

43. In accordance with the requirement under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 to have a scheme for determining priorities and procedures in the allocation of its housing, the council has in place a main housing allocations scheme. The scheme gives effect to the statutory requirement to give reasonable preference to certain groups of housing applicants.
44. Generally, the council must not allocate council housing (or nominate an applicant to a housing provider with whom it has a nominations agreement) except in accordance with its main allocation scheme.

45. Under s166A(6) of the 1996 Housing Act, the council may depart from its main allocation scheme where it puts in place a local lettings policy which prioritises particular groups of applicants for particular properties, provided the cumulative effect of such schemes does not displace the system of reasonable preference set out in the main allocation scheme.
46. Paragraph 7.10.2 of the council's current main allocation scheme incorporates a local lettings policy which provides for 50% of all allocations for 'the new London Borough of Southwark 1000 properties initiative (to be) allocated to existing tenants local to the redevelopment/new build scheme'.
47. The report confirms that the proposed scheme is in line with the local lettings policy incorporated in the main allocation scheme.

Consultation

48. Paragraph 7.10.4 of the Council's main scheme further provides that 'Local Lettings policies will be reviewed on a regular basis and equality impact assessments undertaken with consultation undertaken with customers and communities before a Local Lettings Plan is agreed'.
49. The law requires that consultation must be undertaken when proposals are at a formative stage and include sufficient reasons for the proposal and time for interested parties to respond. The Cabinet member is required take into account the outcome of the consultation when making a decision on the recommendations and is referred to the consultation section of this report.

Public Sector Equality duty (PSED)

50. The Equality Act 2010 requires the council, when taking decisions, to have due regard to the need to:
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between those who share a relevant characteristic and those that do not share it.
51. The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. The duty also applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in relation to (a) above.
52. When taking decisions on the exercise of council functions conscious thought must be given to the PSED, including having regard to any equality impact assessment carried out, in particular, where any possible disproportionate effects on groups sharing protected characteristics are identified, the mitigation proposed. The cabinet member is referred to the community impact section of this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS.

Background Papers	Held At	Contact

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Cllr Darren Merrill – Cabinet member for council homes	
Lead Officer	Karen Shaw – Head of Housing Solutions	
Report Author	Alex Herd – Housing Choice and Supply Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	22/05/2023	
Key Decision?	Non Key	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance	No	No
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included