

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date:	Decision maker: Strategic Director of Housing
Report title:		Local lettings plan - Canada Water (Plot K)	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		Surrey Docks	
From:		Karen Shaw, Head of Housing Solutions	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Strategic Director of Housing approve the local lettings plan for seventy nine (sixty Social Rent and nineteen Shared Ownership) homes at 7 Roberts Close, where 33% of the homes will initially be allocated as follows: to residents of Marie Curie, Heversham House, Kentmere House and Manor Grove of the Tustin Estate; thereafter, 25% of properties will be allocated to homeless households owed the main housing duty through Direct Offer.
2. That the Strategic Director note further criteria that will be applied to future residents of the local lettings plan:
 - i. Direct Offers will be made to homeless households owed the main housing duty. This will be a final offer of accommodation where refusal of a suitable offer will result in ending the main housing duty and discharge of Southwark's statutory functions in relation to homelessness.
 - ii. Households can only move upon successful completion of pre-tenancy inspection and interview as per section 5.26 of the council's published allocation scheme.
 - iii. Only households assessed as being 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 the council's published allocations scheme.
 - iv. 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
 - v. Homeless households will be permitted as an exception to move into new homes that have one room less than their assessed bed need for three or more bedroomed properties and any refusal of an offer matching this exception will not result in ending the main housing duty owed to that household.

- vi. Homeless households will not be permitted to move into new one or two bedroomed homes if the property is below their assessed bed need.
- vii. 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 7 Roberts Close.
- 4. The development at 7 Roberts Close includes seventy nine new homes (sixty Social Rent and nineteen Shared Ownership) that were scheduled for completion in Spring 2024.
- 5. Sixty properties will be advertised as social housing tenancies.
- 6. Southwark Council'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.
- 7. Demand for social housing within the borough continues to outstrip supply. There are 17,926 households registered on the housing register. Recent figures from 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024 show that the council received 3,935 applications but was only able to allocate 1,464 homes through either nomination to a housing association or by an offer of a Southwark council property.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 8. All lettings for the new build schemes located at 7 Roberts Close will comply fully with Southwark Council's Housing Allocations scheme.
- 9. The Canada Water development is located in an area of Southwark that does not have any local Southwark tenants that have been consulted at the planning stage or considered to be affected by the works carried out, therefore no local defined area has been implemented for this local lettings plan.
- 10. The Council has considered whether there are any residents borough wide that have been affected by developments of shared ownership homes where council tenants have not had or will not have the opportunity to benefit from local lettings. There are currently no past or active shared ownership developments this applies to and therefore no additional residents have been identified to be part of the local lettings plan.

11. We have also considered any other challenges that should be considered as part of this plan. There are five residents who need to move on from Marie Curie to facilitate its demolition. There are also targets to move on residents on the Tustin estate by June 2025 to ensure the handover of blocks at Heversham House, Kentmere House and Manor Grove in order to facilitate their demolition as well. It is therefore proposed to provide an opportunity to residents from these two schemes to bid for up to 33% of the homes on Canada Water, as part of the local lettings plan. Whilst this scheme is not local to those estates there may be a number of residents interested in these homes which are not within a pre-defined local area as this is not a scheme on an existing estate. This proposal is supported by Southwark Construction and the Director of Resident Services.
12. In line with the Council's annual lettings plan targets for 2024/25 it is proposed that up to 25% of homes will be allocated to homeless households owed the main housing duty by Southwark Council through direct offers.
13. These lettings are in response to the escalating pressure around homelessness, rising numbers in temporary accommodation, difficulties meeting statutory duties as a result of scarcity of supply, poor conditions in available supply and spiralling costs to the council's general fund as the cost of every unit increases substantially, including increases in rates for existing provision.

Neighbourhoods

14. The local lettings approach contributes to one of the council's key priorities namely, creating and supporting neighbourhoods. It enables those already living and contributing within local communities and those wishing to join local communities to benefit from the development of homes in their area.

Narrowing the gap

15. 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; narrow the gap in life chances for themselves and their families.

People powered

16. In the longer term it supports residents by helping them put down roots and contribute to local, community powered decision making in their area. The local lettings process enables future residents to live in the local community.

Policy implications

17. There are no key policy implications or amendments required.

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

Community impact statement

18. 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.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

19. An equalities Impact assessment was carried out on 1st May 2024. The proposals to increase the supply of affordable, good quality homes will benefit households in need from all Southwark communities. It will also increase the housing options available for older people and people with disabilities.
20. This scheme follows successful local lettings of new developments such as Pelier Street, East Dulwich Estate, Nunhead, Clifton estate, Masterman and Willow Walk.

Health impact statement

21. There are no health impact implications arising from this policy.

Climate change implications

22. The building complies with Building Regulations Part L for New Builds that addresses the conservation of fuel and power, to guarantee eco-friendly and efficient homes that also minimises carbon emissions, as part of a drive towards a greener future. The building is powered via air source heat pumps for more eco-friendly living and lower cost of bills for our residents. There roof incorporates PV panels which will provide power to the grid.
23. The finished building incorporates a courtyard with soft and hard landscape, including integrated play equipment and cycle storage. The new homes will have mechanical and heat recovery ventilation systems. The cumulative CO2 savings on site are estimated at 35.5% against New-Build Part L1A 2013.

Resource Implications

24. None.

Legal Implications

25. See the concurrent provided by the Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance at paragraphs 34 to 43 below.

Financial implications

26. None.

Consultation

27. Affected Local residents will be consulted at each stage of the development proposals as outlined in the charter of principles agreed by cabinet in November 2014. The council will ensure that any residents affected by works will be notified prior to works commencing.
28. Residents of Marie curie and Heversham House, Kentmere House and Manor Grove of the Tustin Estate will be notified of the available homes prior to advertisement.
29. The new homes will consist of the following social rented properties:

Property size	Number of units
1 bed (2 person)	11
2 bed (3 person)	4
2 bed (4 person)	13
3 bed (4 person)	22
3 bed (5 person)	10
Total	60

30. It is anticipated twenty properties will be allocated to residents of Marie Curie and Heversham House, Kentmere House and Manor Grove, and fifteen properties will be allocated to homeless households.
31. There are 3,347 homeless households owed the main housing duty by Southwark Council. There is sufficient demand to warrant the priority given to this group.
32. 25% of the homes will be directly offered to homeless households while the remaining properties will be advertised to the general register on the Council's choice based lettings website.
33. 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.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance – KM 9/5/24

34. 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.

35. 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.
36. However, 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.
37. Paragraph 7.10.1 of the council's current main allocation scheme provides that the council may decide to operate one or more Local Letting policies within Southwark. The need for such schemes will be clearly defined and relate to specific areas or types of property that will benefit from this type of proactive initiative.
38. 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'.
39. 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. There is a requirement to take account of the outcome of the consultation when making a decision on the recommendations set out in the report.
40. The report confirms that the proposed scheme is in line with the local lettings policy incorporated in the main allocation scheme, and reviewed accordingly.

Public Sector Equality duty (PSED)

41. 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

42. 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.
43. 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.

Strategic Director of Finance

44. No comments sought, however the allocation of 25% of homes in this phase to homeless households in temporary as a permanent home in discharge of our housing duties will help the achievement of targets in the annual lettings plan. This will in turn support the achievement of savings on the general fund as it contains the numbers in expensive temporary accommodation.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS.

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Karen Shaw, Head of Housing Solutions		
Report Author	Alex Herd, Housing Choice and Supply Manager		
Version	1 st Draft		
Dated	9 th May 2024		
Key Decision?	No		
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		No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team			