

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: March 2024	Decision maker: Strategic Director of Housing
Report title:		17-19 Wood Vale – Local Lettings Plan	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		Dulwich Wood	
From:		Karen Shaw, Head of Housing Solutions	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Strategic Director of Housing is asked to approve the local lettings plan for the six homes at 17-19 Wood Vale where up to 33.33% of the properties will first be allocated to existing tenants within the local area and the next 25% of properties allocated to homeless households owed the main housing duty by Southwark.
2. That the Strategic Director note the further criteria applied to residents of the local lettings scheme:
 - i. The local area is defined as Southwark Council tenants within 250 metres of where the development is located:
 - a. Sydenham Hill Estate
 - b. Underhill Road (Part of, and undisclosed)
 - c. Lordship Lane (Part of, and undisclosed)
 - ii. 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.
 - iii. 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.
 - iv. Southwark transfer applicants can only move upon successful completion of pre-tenancy inspection and interview as per section 5.26 of the council's published allocation scheme.
 - v. Only households assessed in a housing need (bands 1-3) will be allocated a property through the local lettings scheme. Households will be prioritised in existing priority bands and priority stars in accordance with our published allocations scheme.

- vi. Requests for additional bedrooms above the assessed need will not be considered unless on medical grounds confirmed by a Housing Solutions medical assessment
- vii. All households will be permitted to move into new homes which are one room less than their assessed bed need for three or more bedroomed properties.
- viii. All households will not be permitted to move into new one or two bedroomed homes if the property is below their assessed bed need.
- ix. Households on the general register not in the defined local lettings area or owed the main housing duty 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 17-19 Wood Vale.
- 4. The development at 17-19 Wood Vale includes six new homes scheduled for completion in Spring 2024.
- 5. This development has a total of six homes comprising of different property sizes and has been made in consultation with the local residents within the Estate.
- 6. All six properties will be advertised as social housing tenancies.
- 7. Southwark's Housing Allocations Scheme sets out the criteria in which properties will be allocated. The scheme also permits Southwark the ability to implement local lettings plans in order to meet the housing needs of tenants within the area.
- 8. Demand of social housing within the borough continues to outstrip supply where there are 17,786 households registered on the housing register. Recent figures from 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023 the council received and processed over 6,979 applications while only able to allocate 1,341 homes through either a nomination to a housing association or Southwark council property.
- 9. One of the aims of the housing allocations scheme is to enable local tenants in housing need the ability to continue 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 17-19 Wood Vale will comply fully with Southwark Council's Housing Allocations scheme.
11. It is proposed that 33.33% of the initial lettings of the new homes will be allocated to Southwark Council tenants currently living 250 metres from the development site, being Sydenham Hill Estate, part of Underhill Road and part of Lordship Lane.
12. These lettings will be delivered to maximise the housing solutions to the local community and to deliver the Fairer Future promises, homes for all.
13. Following the initial lettings, and in line with the Council's annual lettings plan targets for 2024/25, secondary lettings up to 25% of homes will be allocated to homeless households owed the main housing duty by Southwark Council through direct offer.
14. 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.
15. The Council also 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.
16. Percentages of allocated properties will be rounded up to the nearest whole number. For example, 25% of 6 properties will be rounded up to 2 properties.

Neighbourhoods

17. 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.

Narrowing the gap

18. 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.

People powered

19. In the longer term it supports residents to put down roots and contribute to local, community powered decision making in their area. Choice Based Lettings and the local lettings process enables residents to make choices about where they want to live, enabling them to select a homes in the local community.

Policy implications

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

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

Community impact statement

21. Awarding priority to existing tenants within the local area recognises the fact that the development of new homes may cause disruption and on some occasions lack of amenities.
22. The groups that are affected, and deemed able to apply for the homes as “local” tenants are the tenants within the immediate vicinity of where the property has been developed.
23. 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

24. An equalities Impact assessment was carried out on 18th March 2024. However, the proposals to increase the supply of affordable, good quality homes will benefits households in need from all Southwark communities.
25. This scheme follows the successful local lettings of new developments such as Pelier Street, East Dulwich Estate, Nunhead, Clifton estate, Masterman and Willow Walk.

Health impact statement

26. There are no health impact implications as a result of this policy.

Climate change implications

27. The development will comply with Building Regulations Part L that addresses the conservation of fuel and power, and guarantees eco-friendly efficient properties and minimise carbon emissions, as part of a drive towards a greener future. The project will be fuelled via air source heat pumps for more

eco-friendly living and lower cost of bills for our residents.

28. The scheme will also incorporate landscape improvements, providing a new place space. The new homes will have mechanical and heat recovery ventilation systems. The cumulative CO2 savings on site are estimated at 60.9% against a Part L 2013 compliant scheme.

Resource implications

29. None.

Legal implications

30. See the concurrent provided by the Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance at paragraphs 44 to 50 below.

Financial implications

31. None.

Consultation

32. It is recognised that there are residents within the local vicinity of 17-19 Wood Vale that may have been affected by the development and will be considered part of the local defined area, stated in paragraph 32.

33. The local lettings area covers 250 metres from the development site including:

Sydenham Hill Estate:

Attleborough Court

Bromleigh Court

Dunton Court

Lapsewood Walk

North Crofts

Parfew Court

Sydenham Hill

Thetford Court

Underhill Road (full addresses undisclosed)

Lordship Lane (full addresses undisclosed)

34. Local residents will be notified of the development prior to advertising for bidding on the Southwark choice based lettings website.
35. The new homes sit next to Sydenham Hill Estate and will consist of the following social rented properties:

Property size	Number of units
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1 bed flat	0
2 bed flat	3
3 bed flat	3
Total	6

36. Therefore, it is anticipated that two properties will be allocated to existing tenants of Southwark Council living within the area identified within section 32 of this report, and, two properties will be allocated to homeless households.
37. As at 2nd April 2024, fourteen households located within the local lettings area were on the Housing Register. Nine of those households have been assessed as having a housing need and are listed in a priority band. The priority listed households are broken up below:

Priority category	1 bed need	2 bed need	3 bed need	Total count
Under occupiers	0	0	0	0
Management transfers	0	0	0	0
Overcrowded households	0	0	3	3
Statutory overcrowded households	0	0	0	0
Medical needs	2	1	0	3
Accessible housing requirement	0	0	2	2
Sheltered housing	1	0	0	1
Total	3	1	5	9

38. The above table shows a mixture of households compositions including 1, 2, and 3 bedroom households. Therefore it is anticipated these households will benefit from the new development within the local area.
39. There are no sub households listed on the housing register within the identified nine households on the Estates. Therefore it is expected they will free up properties that will be available to other residents on the housing list.
40. It is therefore envisaged there is sufficient demand to warrant priority given to tenants within the defined local area. An increase in the local lettings area for the new homes will generate unnecessary demand and likely to raise expectations above what can be delivered as part of this local lettings scheme.

41. Letters will be sent to the qualifying tenants in the defined local area in advance to inform them of the upcoming development being advertised. This will include details of the available homes, qualification criteria listed under paragraph 2 above and dates the properties will be available on the Homesearch bidding website.
42. The local Resident Services Officer will work with the Housing Solutions service to help identify additional households within the local lettings area whom are in a housing need but not registered on the Homesearch bidding scheme. Such cases will be expedited to permit the ability to bid on the new homes.
43. The homes will be advertised in advance of the completion of the homes on 17-19 Wood Vale. The first 33.33% of homes will be advertised to the local tenants, the next 25% will be directly offered to homeless households while the remaining properties will be advertised once we have given the full opportunity for the local tenants to register their interest.
44. 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 Homesearch bidding scheme.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance

45. 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.
46. 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.
47. 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.
48. 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'.

49. 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'.
50. 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 Strategic Director is required take into account the outcome of the consultation when making a decision on the recommendations of this report.
51. The report confirms that the proposed scheme is in line with the local lettings policy incorporated in the main allocation scheme.

Public Sector Equality duty (PSED)

49. 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.
50. 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.
51. 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

52. 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	Final		
Dated	1 st 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			