

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: July 2024	Decision maker: Strategic Director of Housing
Report title:		Local Lettings Plan - Manor Cross Apartments	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		Newington	
From:		Karen Shaw - Head of Housing Solutions	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Strategic Director of Housing approve the local lettings plan for thirty new homes at Manor Cross Apartments, where initially up to 50% of the properties will be allocated to existing tenants within the local area. The next 25% of properties will be allocated to homeless households owed the main housing duty by the London Borough of Southwark with all remaining properties to be advertised via the housing register.
2. That the Strategic Director of Housing note the further criteria that will be applied to residents of the local lettings scheme as follows:
 - i. Residents of the local lettings scheme will be drawn from the local area detailed in paragraph 39.
 - 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 cessation of 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 arrears 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 housing needs (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 the council's published allocations scheme.

- vi. 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
- vii. 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 three or more bedroomed properties.
- viii. 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.
- ix. Households on the general register who do not live in the defined local lettings area or who are not 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 Manor Cross Apartments.
- 4. The development at Manor Cross Apartments includes thirty new homes scheduled for completion in Summer 2024.
- 5. This development has a total of thirty homes comprising different property sizes and has been made in consultation with the local residents within the Estate.
- 6. All thirty 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 permits the implementation of local lettings schemes by the London Borough of Southwark, 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 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 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 to remain within their communities and not to have to re-locate outside of the area in order to find suitable accommodation.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

10. All lettings for the new build schemes located at Manor Cross Apartments 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 in the local area detailed in paragraph 39.
12. These lettings will be delivered to maximise housing solutions for the local community and to deliver the Fairer Future promise of homes for all.
13. Following the initial lettings, and in line with the Council's annual lettings plan targets for 2024/25, secondary lettings of up to 25% of the homes will be allocated to homeless households owed the main housing duty by Southwark Council, through direct offers.
14. These lettings are in response to the escalating pressure around homelessness, rising numbers in temporary accommodation, difficulties meeting statutory duties because 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. Following the first round of lettings to the local area and direct offers to homeless households, a second round of lettings for all remaining homes will be advertised to the housing register as a whole.
16. The Council has also 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.
17. Percentages of allocated properties will be rounded up to the nearest whole number. For example, 25% of thirty properties will be rounded up to eight properties.

Neighbourhoods

18. The local lettings approach contributes to one of the council's key priorities, namely 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

19. The letting of new social homes, at affordable rent levels, supports the efforts of residents on lower incomes to obtain access to genuinely affordable housing, improves their housing conditions and helps to narrow the gap in life chances for themselves and their families.

People powered

20. In the longer term it supports residents trying 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

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

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

Community impact statement

22. 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.
23. The groups that are affected, and deemed able to apply for the homes as “local” tenants are the tenants within the immediate vicinity where the property has been developed.
24. 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

25. An equalities Impact assessment was carried out on 13th June 2024. No adverse findings were found as part of the findings from the assessment.
26. By investing in high quality and well-designed buildings and estates the council aims to achieve positive impacts which will benefit the environment and increase the stock of environmentally friendly buildings within the borough. Durkan have confirmed in their design proposal that they intend to provide a high quality environment through a considered and detailed landscaping strategy. The amenity and play space provision all meet and exceed the standard set out in the London Plan.
27. Delivery of the Social Regeneration Partnership Programme (SRPP) will benefit the environment through contributing to the following:

- a. Increasing the quality of the housing being delivered in the borough
 - b. Endorsing flood risk management policy
28. This scheme has also provided 14 apprenticeship places in both trades and administration/ professional roles through a combination of direct employer through Durkan or sub-contractors or through Durkan's preferred training partner.
29. Establishing a robust and effective Development Partnership will enable the council to maximise the utility, value and quality of buildings being delivered, which will impact greatly on improved social environments for current and future generations, while minimising the long term revenue costs to the council.
30. The new social rent homes will be retained by the council and let on the same basis as existing council homes.
31. 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

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

Climate change implications

33. Manor Cross Apartments was submitted to planning and no Climate change implications statement was produced.

Resource Implications

34. None.

Legal Implications

35. The concurrent provided by the Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance is set out at paragraphs 50 to 56 below.

Financial implications

36. None.

Consultation

37. The Communities service team, Resident Services team, Southwark Construction 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 scheme for Manor Cross Apartments.

38. An extensive community involvement strategy was set out for the SRPP, this consisted of community and online consultations and a public exhibition presenting the final design proposal and were relevant highlighted changes that were made to the scheme during the consultation process.

The following consultations were held:

- a. The First consultation was held on 28 January 2016 – 33 residents attended.
- b. A Second consultation (online) was held from 31 May – 31 June 2016 - 40 residents visited
- c. A Third consultation (final exhibition) 15 September 2016 - 45 residents attended

As part of the planning processes further opportunities were offered to residents and local businesses to comment on the development proposal. In addition to these key events the SRPP design team met with the following stakeholders and individuals most impacted by the proposed development:

The Royal British Legion
Doddington TRA
Keyworth Primary School
Chapel Nursey
Party Wall residents
Local businesses and Charities
Friends of Pasley Park
Walworth Society
Shop Owners
Local Doctors Surgery

39. The local lettings area covers the following properties/buildings:

Doddington Estate
Chapter Road
Manor Place
Marsland Close
Pasley Close
Delverton House
Alberta Estate
Stopford Road
Braganza Street
Runacres Court
Pasley Close
Ray Gunter House
Pasley Estate

Tarver Road

40. The new homes sit on the Doddington Estate and will consist of the following social rented properties:

Property size	Number of units
1 bed flat	8 (2 wheelchair access unit)
2 bed flat	11 (0 wheelchair access unit)
3 bed flat	11 (1 wheelchair access unit)
Total	30

41. Therefore, it is anticipated ten properties will be allocated to existing tenants of Southwark Council living within the area identified within section 39 of this report and eight will be allocated to homeless households by direct offer.
42. As at the 26th June 2024, fifty nine households located within the local lettings area were registered on our Homeseach Bidding Scheme. Twenty nine of those households have been assessed as having a housing need and are listed in a priority band 1-3. The priority listed households are broken up below:

Priority category	1 bed need	2 bed need	3 bed need	Total count
Under occupiers	1	0	0	1
Management transfers	1	1	2	4
Overcrowded households	0	3	13	16
Statutory overcrowded households	0	0	2	2
Medical needs	0	0	3	3
Accessible housing requirement	1	1	1	3
Sheltered housing	0	0	0	0
Total	3	5	21	29

43. The above table shows a mixture of household compositions including 1, 2, and 3 bedroom households. Therefore it is anticipated these households will benefit from the new development within the local area. This includes the ability to provide sufficient accessible properties for the local residents in housing need.

44. There are no sub households listed on the housing register within the identified twenty 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.
45. It is therefore envisaged 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.
46. Letters will also 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, qualification criteria listed above and dates the properties will be available on the Homesearch bidding website.
47. 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 Homesearch bidding scheme. Such cases will be expedited to permit them to bid on the new homes.
48. The homes will be advertised in advance of the completion of the homes on Manor Cross Apartments. The first 50% 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.
49. 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 KM 26/6/24

50. 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.
51. 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.

52. 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.
53. Paragraph 7.10.1 of the council's main allocation scheme provides that the London Borough of Southwark 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.
54. 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'.
55. 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 to 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.
56. The report confirms that the proposed scheme is in line with the the main allocation scheme.

Strategic Director of Finance

57. No comments sought.

Public Sector Equality duty (PSED)

58. 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.
59. 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.

60. 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
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	10 th July 2024		
Key Decision?	No		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title		Comments Sought	Comments included
Director of Legal Services		Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services		No	No
Cabinet Member		No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team			