How will residents influence and be involved in the process of building new permanent council owned or temporary accommodation homes

1. Introduction

The aim of this strategy is to ensure that our residents have a real voice, influence and are fully involved in the process of building new permanent and temporary council homes.

The strategy identifies the difference in the type of influence, engagement and involvement that we will have with those residents living in properties which are part of an estate where the development is taking place and those residents living in surrounding areas.

The strategy acknowledges that Housing will be the lead agency for resident engagement and consultation in this process assisted by the planning policy.

It recognises that whilst residents generally support the building of new council homes, residents have real concerns about the impact of additional homes on their home, estate, the environment and them.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that residents living in estates where the council are constructing new council homes, including those homes for temporary accommodation for a period of 15 years plus, have influence over the external environment, fabric, layout and impact of the new homes on their homes, area and lives.

It sets out how as a service, Housing will manage the process to ensure new homes are built and disruption to existing residents is minimised wherever possible.

It ensures that existing residents benefit from the opportunities new homes will bring both in the short term and long term.

3. How will we achieve this?

We will achieve this by

- ensuring local residents have a voice during the process from start to finish
• being clear about the things that residents can change, have influence over and those things that they will receive information about
• having full and open discussions with residents.
• consulting and informing residents in a variety of ways throughout the process from design to completion.
• considering the impact on leaseholders and our leases and taking the necessary action to ensure the appropriate action is taken
• managing resident expectations

4. Who will we engage with?

We will fully involve those residents living within blocks and estates where development is taking place. These residents will be able to influence decisions about the scheme including some key decisions regarding the homes themselves, the environment and impact on their homes. Our aim will be to minimise the disruption to these residents and ensure any development has a positive impact on their homes and environment.

We will engage with those residents living in the surrounding area where development is taking place to keep them informed and minimise any disruption wherever possible.

5. Aims and Objectives of the strategy

The key aims and objectives of this strategy are to:

• ensure residents understand how the proposals have been developed and why their estate has been chosen
• ensure residents living in estates where new build is taking place can influence decisions, are fully involved in the scheme from design to completion and know how the proposals will affect them and the area where they live
• ensure residents living in neighbouring properties to those where development is taking place are fully aware of the scheme
• ensure that the development work we do has a positive impact on the local environment and neighbourhood and wherever possible is in line with neighbourhood priorities
• minimise the disruption to residents by working with contractors and other agencies to ensure they consider residents first
• consider what we can do to improve the estate and what opportunities we can offer residents where new build or temporary accommodation development is taking place so that existing residents benefit from estate improvements
• seek views from key stakeholders about what is being proposed, consider their views and provide feedback within agreed timescales
• ensure that a diverse range of voices are heard which reflect the communities living in the area
• consider the responses made in reply to our proposals, take them into account in decision-making process and feedback
• maximise community engagement and encourage strong communities to grow
• agree how residents will be involved during the project and what areas they can have an influence over
• consider the impact on leaseholders and their leases
• provide information in easy to understand language
• agree key liaison officers and contact points

6. **How will we achieve this?**

To support this strategy we will:

• establish a set of policy and procedures
• establish a group to ensure the aims and objectives of this strategy are achieved
• put in place a clear process for seeking residents views, considering them, reviewing our decisions and feeding back to residents of any changes made following receipt of their views within agreed timescales
• establish a process map (see attached) which sets out the process

7. **Who will we engage with**

As part of this process we will engage with the following parties:

• council tenants
• leaseholders
• resident consultation groups including Resident Housing Panel and the Leaseholder Forum
• tenants of leaseholders
• neighbouring residents living in close proximity to any schemes
• community or local interest groups
• Registered Provider tenants living within or in close proximity of the estate
• ward councillors and Cabinet Members

The level of engagement and influence will differ. Those residents directly affected by the development will have a greater level of involvement than those living in surrounding properties.

8. **Information residents will want to know**

Our policy and procedures will ensure that we have a consistent approach to all schemes, this includes having some pre-prepared information in the form of some frequently asked questions documents which sets answers to questions that residents will have. Some of these questions may arise as part of the planning process whilst others will be raised as part of the scheme management process.
Below we have set out some of these; we expect the number to increase as schemes progress. These include:

- Why has this site been chosen?
- What is going to be the impact of building additional homes on my estate (e.g. traffic congestion, parking, disruption during the build phase, effect on amenity space)
- Can I move into the new scheme?
- Will any improvements be made to the estate after the new development has been built?
- Information about people working on the scheme including the contractor
- Reassurance that our contractors will be working to the professional standards such as the Considerate Contractor standards
- Will you organise resident meetings?
- Who can I raise my concerns with?

9. **Clarity over matters that residents will be invited to voice their views or have an influence over**

Our policies and procedures will set out those areas where residents can influence our decision making processes and those areas where they will receive information about. This will be the key to delivering a successful scheme and improving resident’s satisfaction with the process.

Residents will have influence over the following areas through this process and/or through the planning process. These include:-

- internal layout of the estate
- the proposed external appearance and access arrangements for the new or temporary accommodation homes
- timetabling and decant/rehousing policy where existing residents are being decanted
- environmental improvements
- opportunities offered by contractors for the benefit of local residents including training and skills development
- internal layout of the new or temporary homes
- Access into the estate, traffic generation onto/around the site.
10. Areas or topics that residents will not have an influence over

There will be some areas where residents will not have an influence or involvement in; for example statutory, business or financial requirements. Where this is the case we will be clear with residents and explain why they cannot have any influence.

The decision to build or erect new or temporary homes is a decision taken by the Council to meet housing need and its statutory requirements. Residents may have influence over where these may be located through this and the planning process but not over the decision to build additional homes.

The allocation of the new or temporary accommodation properties is a decision taken by the council in accordance with its statutory, legal and policy requirements. Residents will not have any influence over who will move into the new homes or where they are from. Staff will work with existing residents to ensure that new residents are welcomed into their new homes.

11. How will we engage

We are committed to consulting and engaging with local residents and believe it is one of the key ways in which the Council will involve and interact with the local community, providing residents with opportunities to:

- get a greater understanding of what is being proposed, and why
- voice their views and help shape any proposals
- have their views taken on board as part of the decision making process

We will use a range of approaches to enable people from all local communities to take part in any consultation exercises and to provide feedback. These include:-

- Resident Liaison Officers
- Focus groups
- Consultation events
- Individual meetings
- Residents' workshops
- Councillor meetings
- Stakeholder engagement
- Web page
- Newsletters
- Meet the contractor day
- Update meetings on site with resident representatives

We will ensure that at the start of the process:-

- we will agree how we are going to consult and the frequency of the consultation
• our documents are clear and concise, written in plain language
• the objectives of the consultation are clear
• consultation will normally start before a planning application is made
• the timescale for consultation is agreed on a scheme-by-scheme basis
• the information we provide about the project and contractor will be clear and will include our contact details