

Commissioning Group, Growth and Development  
London Borough of Barnet  
North London Business Park  
Oakleigh Road South, London  
N11 1NP

Sadiq Khan  
Mayor of London  
GLA City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London SE1 2AA

contact: Susan Curran  
tel: 020 8359 3608  
e-mail: susan.curran@barnet.gov.uk  
date: 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Dear Mayor Khan

### **Barnet's Response to Homes for Londoners – Draft Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration**

I am writing in response to the draft 'Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration' which was published in December 2016. The council welcomes the approach to engagement and consultation set out in the guide as well as the opportunity to share some examples of how the council have already adopted many of the principles set out in the guidance.

#### **Introduction to regeneration and housing development in Barnet**

Barnet's approach to growth and regeneration is based around five clear priorities:

- To enhance Barnet as a successful London suburb through the delivery of quality new homes and neighbourhoods in the areas of the borough in greatest need of investment and renewal
- To deliver sustainable housing growth and infrastructure, and improve the condition and sustainability of the existing housing stock
- To ensure residents in all areas of the borough can share in Barnet's success while taking responsibility for the well-being of their families and their communities
- To promote economic growth by encouraging new business growth while supporting local businesses and town centres
- To help residents to access the right skills to meet employer needs and take advantage of new job opportunities

There are currently five estate regeneration schemes underway in Barnet - Grahame Park, West Hendon, Stonegrove Spur Road, Dollis Valley and Granville Road. Dilapidated, poor quality housing is being replaced with modern, high-quality mixed-tenure accommodation. In

addition the council is about to commence procurement of a master-planner to work with the local community to explore the provision of housing on the Upper and Lower Fosters Estate in Hendon.

The council in partnership with Argent and Hammerson and Standard Life is also in the process of delivering Brent Cross Cricklewood; one of the capital's major regeneration schemes and among the most significant planned new developments in Europe. The scheme will deliver a new town centre for Barnet and North West London, creating up to 27,000 jobs and acting as a catalyst for future economic growth. Brent Cross Cricklewood will be a great place for existing and new communities with 7,500 new homes delivered (217 of which to replace the Whitefield Estate) as well as new buildings for three local schools, new health facilities, and high quality parks and open spaces. It will provide all the elements of a thriving town centre with a transformed Brent Cross Shopping Centre forming the heart of a new retail and leisure district. More than £400m will be invested in transport infrastructure including new roads, increased capacity at key junctions and the creation of a new station on the Midland Mainline and Thameslink lines.

The council also has an ambition to build new affordable homes on council housing land. This programme is already underway, with the first new council houses in Barnet for over 20 years being completed in March 2014 and a further 40 completing in 2016.

Furthermore the council is progressing plans to provide hundreds of new mixed tenure homes on its own non- housing land and other public sector sites, which will be funded through the sale of market housing.

## **Our response to the principles set out in the Draft Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration**

### ***Setting out aims and objectives***

Pledges / residents charters have been used successfully across the schemes, including Grahame Park and Stonegrove Spur Road, to establish the aims of the regeneration. The pledges have helped to set shared expectations and we've learned that is important to work with the community to revise and update the pledges as the scheme changes.

### ***Re-provision of affordable housing***

Estate regeneration is a complex process which must take account of the specific circumstances of each site, including local infrastructure needs, local housing need (tenure mix, affordability and unit size), other local development opportunities, placemaking, viability and the nature of the surrounding area. The council therefore believes that a blanket approach to re-provision of affordable rented housing is too simplistic, and should be a matter for local policies and decision making.

Our schemes have all endeavoured to ensure that there has not been a loss of affordable housing. However this requirement has had to be balanced with the need to make the schemes viable and the importance of creating a mixed tenure community. On some estates the council has purposely chosen to reduce the number of social rented units in order to promote a more diverse housing stock.

For example, on the Grahame Park estate it is likely that there will be a net loss of social housing of around 250 homes. However, there is a preponderance of two bedroom dwellings on the estate that has led to significant overcrowding. The new dwelling mix proposes more

large homes and actually leads to an improved balance of "bed spaces" on the estate. The development of a mixed tenure community is likely to result in a more sustainable and balanced community. In addition significant development of social housing is already planned on the nearby Adastral (South) site which will improve the balance of rented homes/owner occupation as well as meet the deficit of rented homes on Grahame Park.

Additional affordable housing is being delivered in Colindale, Millbrook Park and on infill sites across the Borough.

### ***Integration with surrounding environment and improvements to public realm***

All our schemes aim to ensure that new housing development is properly integrated into the surrounding environment. This is being achieved through improved public realm, better transport links and improved linkages to surrounding areas. The West Hendon regeneration scheme, for example, will create improved transport infrastructure and link the estate to the neighbouring Welsh Harp Reservoir and a new town centre/commercial hub. Extensive work has been undertaken to ensure that the redevelopment fully recognises the environmental and nature conservation importance of the Welsh Harp. As part of the Brent Cross South project there is an explicit aim to tackle the 'island' nature of the site, including through improved links between the Whitefield Estate, neighbouring parks and a new town centre, as well as to the improved shopping centre on the north side of the North Circular.

### ***Monitoring and review***

The council recognises the importance of establishing the expected benefits of regeneration schemes. For all new projects, including Upper and Lower Fosters, work will be undertaken with local communities to establish what is important to them and so define the project benefits which will then be baselined and monitored throughout the lifetime of the scheme and beyond.

### ***Community Engagement***

The council ensures meaningful consultation with residents and other stakeholders is carried out. Some of the ways in which the council has engaged with residents to date has included holding surgeries, open days and by having a Partnership Board chaired by a local resident. On Grahame Park, Barnet Homes have established a local office so that residents can drop in and obtain regular updates. Feedback from residents has suggested that this is a better way of engagement, rather than holding more formal meetings.

Following completion of the first compulsory purchase order (CPO) process at West Hendon a lessons learned review has taken place and has recommended a number of ways in which resident engagement can be improved ahead of the next phase of development. These include:

- Provide short accessible information packs for residents across all tenures.
- Ensure all offers are clear and understood from the start by sending informative and concise letters.
- Identify vulnerable residents early into order to provide them with extra support throughout the CPO/regeneration process.

- Ensure there is significant consultation with stakeholders and the wider community.
- Local presence by partners.
- Relocate showroom / provide 'mini-show room' for leaseholders (shared equity) and secure tenants.
- Plan and prepare a schedule of Partnership Board activities for the year ahead to assist with information management.
- Endeavour to incorporate West Hendon's history within the regeneration.
- Identify issues early and work with key stakeholders (and the partnership board where appropriate) to resolve e.g. Electrical Riser Works.

All schemes utilise an Independent Resident Advisor to support residents throughout the regeneration process.

### ***Fair deal for tenants and leaseholders***

We recognise that regeneration can be a disruptive process for residents, particularly those that are living in non-secure accommodation, and will seek to minimise this disruption at the point that tenants are required to move by making use of flexibilities within our allocations scheme and providing advice and support. We will also consider buying out leaseholders in financial hardship when this will assist in the regeneration process.

The council support the principle of offering full rights to return for displaced secure tenants and a fair deal for leaseholders. Throughout all the schemes secure tenants have been offered a new home on the estate. As a basic principle all secure tenants are offered the right to return and where possible made an enhanced offer. For example, at Stonegrove Spur Road secure tenants were offered an additional bedroom above their housing requirement. The aim is always to only decant tenants once to minimise disruption to their lives.

Where properties due for demolition become vacant they have been used as temporary accommodation. It is extremely important given the pressure on housing in London that we can continue to do this, and do not leave homes empty. The council is unable to guarantee non-secure tenants a right to return on the regeneration estate, though we have a good track record of rehousing non-secure tenants in alternative local accommodation. For the 86 non-secure tenants within phase 3b at West Hendon, 39 were provided with secure tenancies elsewhere, and all but 4 households were rehoused within the London Borough of Barnet, with 2 of the 4 having requested to move outside of the Borough.

Leaseholders are being offered a range of options depending on the scheme. We always meet CPO compensation regulations by providing market value and appropriate home loss and disturbance payments. At Grahame Park there is a retained property exchange scheme where owners can buy a retained property of a similar value.

All resident leaseholders have been offered generous shared equity and shared ownership products on regeneration schemes. As part of West Hendon CPO 1 the market value of the properties were held down to ensure that all qualifying leaseholders could afford one if they chose to exercise the shared equity option. In CPO1 take-up was moderate due to

leaseholders being uncertain about the shared equity product. With residents now more knowledgeable about the product, all remaining shared equity units have been filled with leaseholders coming forward from later phases of the scheme. It is anticipated that there will be very high take-up levels in the next phase. The take-up has also been positive for phase 1 and 2 for Dollis Valley.

Surgeries/drop in sessions are regularly held on the estates, attended by the Independent Tenant Advisor and Barnet Homes (our ALMO), to maximise access to support services.

### ***Extra support and assistance for vulnerable groups***

A housing needs assessment is always carried out to identify vulnerable residents across our schemes and to ensure additional services are provided for these residents. Specialist decant officers also assist with their move.

In West Hendon a comprehensive support programme has been established which builds on the lessons learned from earlier phases of the scheme. One recent example of note is our enhanced assessment regime for residents requiring property adaptations. Usually schemes undertake an assessment prior to the design stage and any adaptations are made thereafter. To address situations where peoples illnesses worsen or new properties throw up new challenges for residents, we now have two further assessment points – one a few months prior to the move, and a third full post-move visit with an Occupational Therapist.

### **Final thoughts**

Our ambition through our regeneration programme is to replace run-down estates and transform them into thriving new mixed developments like the Stonegrove Estate in Edgware, which is now a successful new community; home to long-standing social tenants, young families and commuters. Together with the growth at Brent Cross Cricklewood, Colindale and Mill Hill East these schemes will deliver over 27,000 new homes and new infrastructure by 2025.

We trust that this response provides a positive contribution to the Mayor's emerging policy thinking with respect to estate regeneration, and look forward to working constructively with the Mayor / GLA; commenting further later in the year on the emergent draft London Plan and Housing Strategy.

Yours sincerely



Cath Shaw  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Commissioning Director, Growth and Development

