

Housing Needs & Strategy

New Build Team

Estate improvement and new build feasibility study

Update to Hathersage Tenants & Residents Association

6th October 2015

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This note is an update on a document that was prepared for but not presented to the Hathersage TRA meeting held on 9th July 2015. This update will repeat some of the information provided in the update of 9.7.15 as the work currently underway to consider the potential for new build development at Besant and Hathersage Courts remain in the feasibility stage even though we are able to report that progress has been made.
- 1.2 The objectives of the feasibility are to assess:
- a) the risks involved in constructing new homes for rent on the two estates
 - b) the financial cost of doing so for the council
 - c) the general improvements that can be made in and around the existing blocks.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 Whilst there have been previous efforts by the council to progress the feasibility work to determine the potential for new build housing on these conjoined estates, those efforts were cut short on at least 3 occasions by the departure of officers who were responsible for taking a leading role in progressing the design work.
- 2.2 In April 2015 the project was allocated to a new Project Manager (Rosemarie Jenkins) who held the first meeting of the project team, made up of a range of external consultants on 16th June 2015.
- 2.2 Since that date the following surveys have been commissioned and undertaken:
- Utility searches
 - Ground condition to determine the nature and geotechnical properties of the underlying soils
 - A ground contamination survey
 - A measured survey of the individual blocks
 - An arboricultural (tree survey)
 - Daylight/sunlight surveys of the existing blocks

These surveys are presently being evaluated to determine where the most suitable locations to build on the two estates are and the type of improvements which can be carried out to the individual blocks. Once this exercise is complete the council's cost

consultants will assess whether the financial feasibility of the proposals merit further development.

- 3.2 However, at this stage overlaying the survey information with the design work remains inconclusive as there are discussions which remain outstanding with UK Power Network (UKPN) regarding the two sub-stations which are situated at Hathersage and Besant Courts. There is a network of power lines connected to properties on and off the two estates and until feedback from UKPN is available no assumptions can be made with regards to impact any proposed development will have on these two major items of infrastructure.
- 3.3 Furthermore, a meeting is due to be held with London Borough Islington Planners on 6th October to obtain advice on where potential new development could occur, heights, scale and massing of any properties built. The outcome of the discussion with the Planners which provide a “sense check” on the options which can be explored in more depth. If it is possible to give a verbal update on the outcome of the meeting with the planners on the evening of 6th October then this will be provided.
- 3.4 The New Build Team has a consistent and reliable approach to communicating the outcome of any feasibility work it undertakes. Once it is clear from the information gathered and the financial assessment undertaken that new build development and the attendant improvements to the estate can be made and are affordable, residents will be invited to comment and provide feedback on the most promising designs.
- 3.5 If the feasibility shows that new housing cannot be developed within the two estates then the council will focus its efforts on the existing buildings and the open space around them to find financially viable and socially improving solutions.
- 3.6 As the freeholder and landlord of the two blocks, the council will develop a communications strategy which will aim to ensure that individual residents, their representative organisations and ward councillors are kept informed of the decisions the council takes to make any changes to the area around the blocks.
- 3.7 Tenants will be sent individually addressed letters asking them to attend a consultation event and /or to provide feedback on the proposed designs.
- 3.8 As the designs will also seek to include estate wide improvements, any impact on leaseholders will also be communicated via Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.
- 3.9 We expect, subject to further discussions with UKPN, the outcome of the financial feasibility and a clear steer from Planners, to have the initial design work ready for presentation to residents by mid-November 2015. If we are able to bring this forward we will.
- 3.10 Subject to the above, officers expect to hold the first consultation event with residents to discuss and share the outcome of the feasibility work by early December 2015.