



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: TENANTS**

### **WEST KENTISH TOWN ESTATE REDEVELOPMENT**

The following questions were raised by residents since the July 2022 Cabinet approval. The full report and slides can be viewed here: [www.Camden.gov.uk/wkt](http://www.Camden.gov.uk/wkt)

#### **PHASING / TIMESCALES**

**The scheme was to be delivered in 4-5 phases, why has this now increased to 8?**

The Council, like most public sector organisations, is under a significant amount of financial pressure. There is a limit to the amount the Council can borrow and can spend each year. Stretching out the programme means we decrease any financial pressure on the Council in any one year.

**How long will the entire scheme take?**

20 years, by our current estimates.

**How confident are you with these new timelines?**

The proposals have been developed with input and scrutiny by numerous colleagues and consultants. However, we are living in uncertain financial times and can't predict the political or economic changes in the coming years and the impact this may have on public sector spending. As part of the proposals, a risk assessment has been undertaken and mitigations to any obstacles will be explored if timelines may be impacted. Any revisions to timelines will be communicated to residents.

**Could the scheme be stopped?**

The Council has made a commitment to this scheme. No one knows what might happen in the wider economy in the years to come. The Council cannot bankrupt itself, but will look at other ways to continue to build new homes and find solutions should any issues arise that could risk blocking or delaying progress.

**Is the phasing order known?**

Yes – but it may change, all information is indicative based on information currently available.

**What will happen to residents during construction of new blocks directly next to them?**

A Construction Management Plan (CMP) will form part of the Planning Application. The CMP addresses site set-up, access routes to and around the construction sites, traffic management, health and safety measures, working hours / days, sets out strict noise and dust control / monitoring requirements and any additional measures that might need to be implemented where necessary to address disruption caused by construction, as much as possible. We will provide respite spaces during the day



and identify any particularly vulnerable residents. All construction activities will take place within hoarding set up to ensure residents and members of the public are kept safe. The Council will endeavour to keep construction activities as far from habitable rooms, but some disruption due to construction is inevitable.

### **Will we get a copy of all phasing and plans?**

These will be available online on the WKTE website, and hard copies at 104a Queen's Crescent.

### **SCHEME**

#### **The plans appear to show proposed new blocks segregated between private sale and affordable homes.**

For operational / housing management purposes including service charge calculations, private for sale units will be maintained and managed by a separate contract, so while there will be blocks that comprise both private and social homes, the lobby areas / cores and some of the internal communal spaces will remain separate.

#### **The current phasing plans show no social homes in the south-eastern corner, I've lived in this location for years and want to remain.**

The development of the masterplan is partly reliant on the phasing strategy. For example, first phase sites were selected on parts of the estate that would require the minimum number of residents to be rehoused prior to starting demolition work on that phase – we must build in the locations that are cleared and provide the properties of the required tenure.

Certain factors were considered when assessing the location of the different tenures, for example the suitability of a significant number of family homes near the railway, proximity to the main amenity space in the centre of the estate, proximity to shops and services on Queen's Crescent and advice from the Sales and Marketing team. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that every resident will be moved to the same part of the estate they currently live.

### **Will internal finishes across all phases be the same?**

While the building design and flat layouts may differ between blocks, all buildings will be finished to good quality standards and be energy efficient. We have organised visits to Maitland Park Estate, and other CIP schemes so residents can see the standard and sizes that Camden build.

### **Will all the flats have electric hobs?**

Yes, there will be no gas cookers in the new development. We will 'gift' electric hobs and ovens, which will be installed in the new homes for all residents who move into a new home on the estate.



### **Will we have underfloor heating?**

Decisions on the energy and heating strategy are currently being developed and will be agreed in the detailed design stage.

### **Will there be individual water meters?**

Yes, all new build properties have water meters installed.

### **Will there be car parking?**

Residents of the estate who had a garage / parking space in the current estate or street parking permit would be allowed to apply for resident permits for on-street parking. Blue badge holders will also be given appropriate permits for on-street parking. For all other new residents, this is a car-free development.

### **What is happening with Hawkridge House? (the tall building next to the games pitch)**

The building is owned by UCL (University College London), they need to decide what they are going to do with the building which had been used as student accommodation.

### **Will there be commercial units under our blocks?**

Only the blocks along the Queen's Crescent frontage have non-residential spaces on the ground floor which could be used for commercial or retail purposes. The occupiers or uses of these spaces have yet to be finalised.

### **Will there be a TRA or community hall?**

Not at this point. There is a huge cost and question about who manages the space. There are lots of spaces in the local area and many of the halls that exist are underused. We have written into the conditions of use for the new Community Space at Maitland Park, the opportunity to let WKTE residents enjoy the same benefits as those from Maitland Park.

### **Why did the Council knock down Bacton and not rebuild? Could that happen at WKTE?**

A report has now been approved by Council's Cabinet with a solution. Bacton has nothing to do with this site, each project is dealt with on its own merit. At Cabinet in July 2022, the Council committed to redeveloping WKTE. At WKTE we will be building homes in phases. Before demolition and preparing the site for construction, detailed planning consent for that portion of the site must be obtained. Furthermore, the required funding must be secured in order to appoint a contractor to carry out the works for that phase.

### **Will my Council Tax Increase?**

The amount of Council Tax you pay is based on the value of the home. Camden does not set the amount for this and has no control of the prices set as they are defined through a national grading system set by the Valuation Office.





**Will I already be rehoused in a new flat on the estate, or elsewhere in Camden before my block is due to be demolished?**

Yes. Demolition of each block will not start until all residents of that block have moved out and the block is completely vacated. For the majority of tenants, your new home will be built and completed before you have to move out of your home. There may be a small proportion of households who will have to move to a council home off the estate temporarily until a suitable new home is built. Some tenants may move off the estate and choose not to return. All tenants who move off the estate will be given the option to return.

**The Cabinet Paper indicates that only 58 social units will be built in the 1<sup>st</sup> phase, will this be enough?**

Actual numbers of new homes per phase are still subject to change. The Council is aiming to build enough new council homes to house tenants in the buildings being demolished in the early phases. The information that has been gathered from the Housing Needs Surveys carried out has been plotted against what is being built to ensure suitable homes are built for tenants.

**How will the first homes be allocated?**

We will be working closely with our colleagues in allocations to check households' bed need and make offers. Residents will have the chance to see inside a few properties to enable you to choose the right home. All homes will be allocated in accordance with the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme and Local Lettings Plan for the Estate.

**Will the quality of social properties be different?**

The scheme is 'tenure blind' which means the external appearance of all new blocks will be built to the same high standard and all will be well-insulated and energy efficient. There will be some differences in the internal specifications of certain items e.g. kitchen cabinets/appliances, flooring materials, sanitary ware. It is in Camden's interest to have high quality council homes as we will be maintaining these buildings for years to come.

**How tall is this 1<sup>st</sup> social block, what if I don't want to live high up?**

Heights are still being decided. Everyone will get a choice of properties, and no-one will be forced to move somewhere they don't want to live.

**Will tenants still get regeneration points to enable moving?**

Yes, but not all at once, extra points will be given in the order of phasing, whoever is impacted earliest will be awarded first. If there are not enough properties, or nothing suitable for your household, then you may have to move away to a council home elsewhere in the borough but will be able to return at a later phase. Please speak to a member of the team if you would like to discuss your specific circumstances / concerns.





### **Will my tenancy remain secure?**

Yes, your tenancy will remain secure with the only changes being a new address and rents in line with the London Borough of Camden's rent setting policy. If you are on an introductory tenancy, your introductory tenancy will move with you to the new home before transferring to a secure tenancy with a date agreed by your Neighbourhood Housing Officer.

### **Can tenants still exercise their 'Right to Buy'?**

Cabinet has approved suspending RTB on existing homes via the serving of 'Initial Demolition Notices' on certain blocks (Wedmore, Ashington, Beckington and Milverton – as of September 2022). The serving of these notices is phased, based on order of demolition. The RTB status of tenants in the new buildings remains, and council tenants will be able to RTB their new social rent properties (subject to existing conditions).

### **Will I be compensated for having to move home?**

Yes, the main tenant of the household will receive a statutory home loss payment which is currently £8,100 (as of October 2023) and normally increased annually. If you are downsizing you will receive an additional payment per bedroom that you surrender from the Tenants Option Fund. The final payment will be dependent on the number of bedrooms being released.

### **Do I have to pay my removal costs?**

No, Camden's Regeneration team will help, assist, arrange and pay for the removals for the main tenant. We will arrange for a removal company to deliver boxes to you at your convenience and move packed boxes to your new home. Officers will be on hand for any residents who need additional help. We will also pay costs to disconnect and reconnect items such as washing machines, dishwashers, telephone, redirection of mail and costs for carpets / curtains in certain instances.

### **What happens if there is someone in my household who is disabled or has a medical need?**

The new homes will be allocated according to the needs of residents in accordance with the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme. For example, some tenants may need a wheelchair accessible home due to a medical condition, so if tenant or a household member of a tenant has this assessed need, we would allocate a wheelchair accessible home.

A number of wheelchair properties will be built to meet planning requirements. If there are more wheelchair properties built than existing West Kentish Town Estate residents need, the properties will be made available via Choice-based lettings to other wheelchair users on Camden's Housing Register. All homes will be built to Lifetime Homes standard so that they can be easily adapted should a tenant or a member of their household become disabled at a point in the future.





If someone in your household has a medical need, then this will be assessed as part of the allocations process. Adaptations such as a level access shower or handrails will be made to your new home to meet the medical needs of your household.

**Can my adult child / children be rehoused separately or do they have to move with me to my new home?**

If your adult child / children (or grandchildren) have lived in your home for 12 months or more, prior to the application, and they are successful following a housing allocations verification, they will qualify for independent housing in Camden (not on a new development) and will receive a direct offer.

Your own bedroom need, as main tenant, will be adjusted as you may no longer have the current assessed bed need. We refer to this as a 'split household'.

**Will removal costs be paid for my adult child / children moving to independent living?**

No, Camden's Regeneration team does not contribute, arrange or pay for any adult child / children's removals for independent living and they will need to make their own removals arrangements.

**Are rents for proposed new homes calculated in the same way as other Camden Council homes across the borough?**

Yes, Camden rents on new build homes are calculated in exactly the same way across the Borough of Camden as all other Council homes. Camden refer to, and use, a national formula set by the Government for calculating council rents.

**Will the rent for my new home be different to what I pay now?**

Yes, this could be for a number of reasons:

- Camden use a national formula set by the Government that calculates the rent, taking into account the improved quality and therefore higher value of the new home.
  - You may change bedroom size to meet your housing need and so your rent will be different.
  - Also, there are many long standing secure residents across Camden with rents calculated using historic rent formulas. The new rents will be higher in comparison due to Camden using the national formula set by the Government for calculating rents.
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