

Sent 23rd November 2016



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Dear Residents,

This letter is being written to tenants and freeholders across Radcott, Standlake and Newbridge; Northmoor; Witney and Shifford Paths and Kelmscott to update all residents about the discussions around the future of the estate.

In brief summary:

- L&Q have been talking to residents of Witney and Shifford Paths about the condition of their homes and they are considering options around refurbishment and re-development.
- Council Officers have been talking to those in Radcott, Standlake and Newbridge and Northmoor about new homes being built on some of the open space.
- The new homes could be used to provide high quality homes designed specifically for older residents and re-house residents from Northmoor.

The Council has a target of building 500 new Council homes by March 2018, which is in response to the high demand for housing and need for new homes in the Borough. The council has an overall programme, which includes building new homes in a variety of areas.

New homes built on the estate could be a standalone project to help the delivery of the 500 new Council homes target by March 2018. However given that some of the existing Council homes on the estate are of poor quality and do not meet current housing standards it may be possible to build new homes for existing residents on this site freeing up further development opportunities elsewhere on the estate.

As L&Q are also looking at the options for improving Witney and Shifford paths, it could be that the Council and L&Q work together.

You may be aware that Lewisham Council's Mayor and Cabinet considered a report on Wednesday 11th November, which was agreed. This means that:

- The Council is to develop proposals for new homes to be built on the estate.
- The council will also work with L&Q to look at wider opportunities across the estate.
- These proposals are to be developed in discussion with all residents and there will be ongoing consultation throughout.

If you would like to read the report, it is available on the Council's website or using the link here. The report was called Housing Led Regeneration Opportunities.

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s39610/Housing%20Led%20Regeneration.pdf>

The Council is aware of some key issues:

- The green space and ball court on the estate are important amenity spaces for residents. In development of new homes, there will need to be high quality open space and play areas for children/ young people of different ages.
- The proposals would mean that Radcott, Standlake and Newbridge remain. Lewisham Homes have Estate Improvement Programme works forecast to these blocks for 2017/18. This is likely to include window replacement and other works to be agreed through a consultation process.
- The proposals could mean that residents in Northmoor are re-housed into new homes built on the estate, that would be designed specifically for older residents. Council Officers would provide individual support to residents affected by this and there would be a financial compensation package.
- L&Q are continuing looking at the possible options for Witney and Shifford Paths and will engage fully with residents on these.

The next step for the Council will be to select an architect to work up proposals for new homes.

The Council, Lewisham Homes and L&Q would also like to talk to you about these proposals in more detail and to find out your views on how best to keep you involved and up to date.

On Tuesday 1st December Officers from the Council, L&Q and Lewisham Homes will be about on the estate to talk to you between **3pm – 7pm**.

- We will be knocking on doors at Northmoor
- We will knock on doors on Witney and Shifford Paths
- We will also be in the lobby area of Newbridge Point

Alternatively, if you'd like to speak to us please contact us using the details on this letter, we would be happy to arrange a visit to you individually if you'd prefer.

Yours sincerely,



Rachel George
Regeneration and New Supply Manager
Rachel.George@lewisham.gov.uk



Name
Address

April 2016

Dear Resident

As you know, we have been exploring options for the future of your estate for some time now. The main two options we are considering are whether to keep the existing properties and upgrade them (refurbishment option) or to demolish the existing estate and build a new one (new build option).

On behalf of L&Q I would like to apologise for the length of time it has taken to reach a decision on the preferred option. Generally we would explore options more fully before beginning consultation but as we wanted to be open with residents we decided to begin consultation far sooner than we normally would.

Moving forward we will be consulting residents far more regularly and sharing information as we progress.

We recently met with representatives from the residents association and carried out a site inspection. We discussed what immediate improvements could be made to the estate and are currently looking into how we will do this.

In total the estate contains a total of 99 properties. 51 of these are owned by L&Q and 48 are privately owned freehold properties. In 2014 we carried out surveys on a sample of L&Q owned properties. We wanted to find out the cost of refurbishing the homes and bringing them up to modern day standards. We also considered what other improvements that we could make externally. This would form an important part of the refurbishment option and would benefit the whole estate.

The surveys highlighted that the main improvements needed were new windows and doors, new roof coverings and new rainwater items. These improvements would reduce the damp issues which has been a common problem across the estate.

Other recommendations were to install external wall insulation which would enhance the appearance of the estate and also make improvements to the energy efficiency of the properties.

In terms of the wider estate, the improvements which were identified included the replacement of rear fencing, new external lighting and improving the hard and soft landscaping across the communal parts of the estate.

As the owner of 51 properties and being responsible for the management of the wider estate, we want to take a long term view before deciding to make a substantial investment. We therefore calculate the total cost over a 30 year period, which allows for the renewal of certain items over that longer period.

In terms of the freehold properties, we are aware that figures for the cost of refurbishment have been discussed with residents in the past.

The figure of £34k only represented part of the costs that could be involved and was based on a number of assumptions. It is therefore not representative of the current considerations regarding refurbishment.

If the refurbishment option does proceed, there may be an option for private owners to buy in to the other improvement work which may take place on the L&Q properties, such as external wall insulation or new roof coverings.

Regarding the new build option, we have appointed architects and other professional consultants to investigate the potential to redevelop the estate.

We would aim to provide a variety of house types for people on different incomes. In addition, any new development is likely to include an increase in the overall number of homes, including an increase in the amount of affordable housing available.

All new homes would meet current standards in terms of size, layouts and energy efficiency. As advised previously, if this option does proceed we would welcome the opinions of existing residents regarding the design of the new development.

We would like to reassure all residents that you will have the option of returning to a new home on the re-developed estate. All existing L&Q tenants will have the option of returning to a new home on the same tenancy conditions. This includes rents, where existing residents on assured tenancies currently paying target rents would not switch to higher 'affordable' rent levels.

All existing freeholders will have the option of returning to the estate through home ownership options, such as shared equity. Freeholders will also have the option of selling their property to L&Q if they do not want to return to a new home on the redeveloped estate.

We are still in the process of assessing the possibility of the new build option and whether this option is more practical in the long term than the refurbishment option. This process has been affected by rising building costs and the government changes to rent restructuring which have delayed our decision.

In the meantime we would like to reassure residents that the day to day management of the estate remains our priority. We are currently liaising with the residents group about various improvements that could be made. As a result of this meeting, we have created a mailbox for non L&Q residents to report any estate issues - ShiffordPath@lqgroup.org.uk

In order to discuss these issues in more detail and answer any further questions we would like to invite residents to a consultation event. It will be held on the lawn at Shifford Path on Thursday 28 April between 4pm to 7pm.

If you would like to discuss the contents of this letter, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Jon Fish
Land Manager (Asset Development)

Phone: 0300 456 9998 ext 6357

Email: jfish@lqgroup.org.uk

List of questions for L&Q

L&Q responses are shown in blue

The stock transfer

1. Please provide a copies of:

- a. The Stock transfer agreement.

The Transfer Agreement is a legally binding agreement between the Council and L&Q and is not something that can be released.

- b. The stock transfer offer document

We can provide the Offer Documents as they are a matter of public record and were widely circulated to residents. (Attach documents)

- c. Any other documents containing promises made to residents at the time of the stock transfer.

As above

2. Did L&Q conduct site surveys prior to the stock transfer? Please provide copies of these surveys.

We cannot release any survey information carried out prior to the stock transfer.

3. According to Council Minutes of 1 Nov 2010, para 7.6 "The transfer to L&Q took place on Monday 11th October 2010. With an initial investment of £62m, L&Q will bring the Catford properties up to standard by April 2012 and the Perry Vale, Forest Hill & Sydenham, Central Lewisham by October 2012". What has changed since then that has led L&Q to the view that this is no longer possible?

The Council are satisfied that L&Q are fulfilling the obligations in the stock transfer agreement. This includes a longer term approach to Shifford and Witney Paths either re-development or more comprehensive refurbishment than has happened to date.

Since taking ownership of the stock L&Q have carried out internal improvements to the majority of the L&Q owned properties. In terms of further improvements, this depends on the outcome of our viability assessment.

Viability

4. What is the basis for L&Q's view (as stated in the Report to the Housing Committee) that the redevelopment option provides better value for money than the refurbishment option?

The viability assessment has not been concluded and no decision has been made. The Council was using information to that point from events and consultation it had seen and been part of. The Council makes no decision on L&Q's approach to its own housing.

5. Please provide copies of all surveys produced for L&Q on properties in SWM, both freehold and tenanted that helped L&Q in forming this view.

We are unable to provide the full surveys as these were carried out on L&Q owned properties. The main areas identified in the surveys included the requirement for new windows and doors, new roof coverings and replacement of rainwater goods. We did carry out inspections on four freehold properties however this was not a full survey and was just to check if there were any common issues identified in the L&Q homes that also applied to the freehold properties. We found that the freehold properties had already replaced the windows and doors but did require new roof coverings.

Please provide copies of the costs estimates produced by L&Q for both:

- a. the refurbishment and
- b. the redevelopment option.

The above costs estimates will form part of the viability assessment which is still being worked on.

6. With regard to the refurbishment option, what is the estimated cost of refurbishment per L&Q household? Please provide a breakdown of improvements that were included within that figure?

As above

7. With regard to the redevelopment option, were the following costs considered:
- a. The cost of compensating freeholders;
 - b. The cost of relocating tenants;

Yes these costs are considered. There are statutory costs set by Government and also the Council has existing schemes and this forms that basis for cost assumptions.

- c. The social and environmental costs.

Please see response to question 15 below.

8. To what extent were the proceeds from the sale of private housing at market rates taken into account in assessing viability?

L&Q's are a non profitable housing association. What this means is that any profit we make from private housing goes directly back into providing more affordable homes or improving existing stock. For this type of scheme any profit we make from the private sale element would be used to pay for the affordable element.

Impact

9. How many new properties is L&Q planning to build on the new development?
10. How many of these new properties will be:

- a. Council housing
- b. Social housing;
- c. Affordable housing;
- d. Private sale?

We do not know exact numbers at this stage but there will be an increase in the overall number of homes provided including an increase in the number of affordable homes provided.

11. How many trees will need to be knocked down to make way for the development?

We cannot say at this stage however any proposal would be scrutinised by the Council's tree officer. This would require us to carry out surveys on the condition of the trees and provide justification for any trees that need to be removed. There would also need to be a landscape strategy to show how we would retain high quality amenity space for residents.

12. Will the density of residents per square metre increase?

Yes it is likely that the density will increase although key to us would be to create a high quality place, so we wouldn't be looking simply to increase numbers but to design a place that people want to live and will enjoy.

13. What is the proposed reduction in amenity space?

Again we cannot say at this stage but the local planning authority would look very closely at this. In addition if the re-development option does proceed we would set up working groups with existing residents encouraged to provide input on our proposals. If there is any reduction in outdoor space, the intention would be to ensure that the proposals improve the quality of the amenity space and make areas more useable.

14. Following redevelopment, how many existing residents does L&Q expect to return to the Estate? Tenants and Freeholders?

Any proposals would be developed to provide re-housing for all existing tenants and resident freeholders if they want to return. Freeholders who live elsewhere would not be offered a new property.

15. Has L&Q attempted to evaluate the environment and social impacts of redevelopment?

As part of any planning application L&Q would be required to submit an Ecology report. This would provide recommendations on what actions to take to minimise the impact of our proposed development plans on the natural habitats.

Consultation

16. What consultation has been carried out with the residents of S,W and M to date?

Consultation to date has consisted of several door knocking sessions, letters, resident open days, and a public meeting.

- 17. Did L&Q conduct a survey of residents? Can we see a copy of the survey and a summary of the results? How many people were contacted?**

During the course of our consultation we have attempted to make contact with all residents on numerous occasions. This includes letters, door knocking and invites to the public events. Early on in our consultation we did seek views on whether residents would prefer a refurb or re-development. From the responses noted the findings were as follows:

Freehold residents:

16 – Either pro-redevelopment or would consider selling/returning

10 – Either against re-development or pro-refurb

10 – Either unsure or did not say

L&Q residents:

20 – Pro-redevelopment

4 – Either against re-development or pro-refurb

5 – Either unsure or did not say

- 18. Para 6.3 of the Report to Council says: "Generally there seems to be a mix of views about Witney and Shifford Paths with some residents saying that they think demolition and new build should take place and others who are happy with the condition of their properties." What were the percentages of residents who responded? Were those who were unhappy with the condition of their properties also asked whether they wanted refurbishment to take place?**

As in answers above, the report picked up on events and consultation that had been carried out until that point where a mix of views had been shared by residents

- 19. Will there be further consultation with residents? What will this consist of?**

Yes, attending resident's association meetings, L&Q arranged events etc. This would depend on the approach taken, for a regeneration option there would be exhibitions and events to shape the proposals, residents could form a design workshop and/ or steering group to get involved in the details

- 20. What guarantees are there that resident's views will be listened to properly?**

As the owner of 51 properties and responsibility for the wider estate it is in our interest to listen to existing residents as we are there for the long term.

- 21. How will L&Q ensure that SWAMRA is fully involved in the consultation process and kept up to date with all developments?**

We have already given a commitment to consult more regularly as we progress. Consulting with SWAMRA is one example of this. If you are able to send us a programme of SWAMRA

dates which you would like us to attend we will try to ensure you have an L&Q representative present.

Future process

22. What plans do L&Q have for further consultation with residents?

L&Q have agreed to attend further residents association meetings and will also provide regular updates through letters and other consultation events.

23. How long will the consultation take?

Consultation will continue until a preferred option has been selected. After this we will work with existing residents to progress the preferred option. In a re-development option there would be continued consultation about the scheme.

24. How will L&Q ensure minimum disruption to residents?

If the re-development option is selected L&Q will appoint a dedicated Resident Liaison Officer who will assist residents throughout the entire build process. Up until that point residents will continue to be supported by L&Q's Asset Management and Housing teams.

25. Will residents need to be decanted onto different parts of the estate?

If a re-development option is chosen, residents will need to be re-housed in phases in order for the building work to take place. L&Q and the Council will work with residents on a re-housing strategy. This can only be done once there is an agreed design and master plan.

26. What assurances will tenants have of their right to remain?

The local authority will only support a scheme which involves being able to re-house all existing tenants and resident freeholders.

27. How many properties will be converted into affordable tenancies?

In a re-development option it is likely that there will be increases in both private and affordable homes however the numbers aren't yet known. L&Q are committing to ensuring that existing tenants remain on their current tenancy conditions and this would mean social or target rent levels for residents on Assured Tenancies.

28. When L&Q conducted its evaluation, how many households did it assume would stay on the estate?

The basis for our evaluation is that a new home should be made available for all existing residents to return.

29. How many of the new properties will be affordable?

As above

30. Will current Tenants on "social rents" be protected from, or asked to pay higher "affordable" rents ?

This will depend on the form of tenancy. Any existing residents on Assured Tenancies who are currently paying social (target) rents will continue on this basis and will not switch to 'affordable rents'. There is however likely to be an increase in the level of rent as they reflect the condition and value of a property, which for a new home would be higher. As the scheme progresses L&Q will communicate the new rent levels with residents as soon as possible.

31. How much extra will current L&Q tenants pay?

As stated above, rent levels will depend on the value of the new property. It is therefore not possible at this stage to specify the new target rents.

L&Q will liaise with residents returning to the Estate, when target rent levels have been determined in line with L&Q rent policy.

32. Will L&Q hold a vote on redevelopment v refurbishment and will L&Q abide by the views of residents?

No vote will take place as this is not a usual way of decision making for regeneration schemes. However it is in our interest to consider the views of existing residents as L&Q have a long term interest in the estate and we want to progress with residents support for the long term future of the estate.

33. Will L&Q be fully transparent and share with residents all its findings?

We want residents to be involved and for us to work together. We will share all information where possible although some information such as the surveys on L&Q owned properties may be commercially sensitive.