

EXECUTIVE - 13 JULY 2017

## **SHEERWATER REGENERATION - SPECIAL LETTING POLICY**

### **Executive Summary**

The Council at its meeting on the 6 April authorised the Sheerwater Regeneration project.

In the report consider by the Executive and Council there was provision for the Executive to approve a Special Letting Policy to enable tenants, subject to the availability of property, to leave the regeneration area in advance of their property being needed for the regeneration.

The Community Charter (published January 2016) for the Sheerwater Regeneration contains the Council's Core Commitments to all those who are affected by the regeneration scheme and attached at Appendix 1 is the relevant extract from the Community Charter for Secure Council Tenants concerning Rehousing Options (paragraph 1.5).

It is now proposed that Secure Tenants wishing to move early will have the benefit of the Home Loss and Disturbance Payments provided they surrender their automatic "Right to Return" to Sheerwater. These early movers may be assisted as a "Management Move", particularly those with high needs or special requirements; others will simply be able to bid under the Council's Choice Based Lettings Scheme (Hometrak). As Sheerwater Regeneration Secure Tenants seeking to move out of Sheerwater they will, as provided for by the Charter, be placed in Band B under the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme. Whilst these Secure Tenants will have a priority status they will, as voluntary movers, be limited to a maximum of two "Offers" meeting their assessed needs after which they will have to wait until they need to be moved for the regeneration.

Where properties within the regeneration area become vacant as a result of Secure Tenants moving, the Council will continue use these empty properties on a temporary basis until the whole site has been vacated and works can begin. Any such households placed in vacant properties on a temporary basis will not receive any of the rights under the Community Charter as they will not be Secure Tenants; however their respective housing needs will be assessed and appropriate arrangements will be made but they will not receive any compensation.

### **Reasons for Decision**

To provide arrangements for Secure Tenants within the Sheerwater Regeneration Area who wish to move out of the area in advance to do so and benefit from the Home Loss and Disturbance Payments provided they surrender the automatic right to return.

### **Recommendations**

The Executive is requested to:

#### **RESOLVE That**

- i) With effect from 1 October 2017 Secure Tenants who wish to move out of the Regeneration Area in advance of any required relocation date will be eligible for Home Loss and Disturbance Payment provide they surrender the Right of Return to the Sheerwater Regeneration area, and
- ii) 50% of the new Units in the Housing Revenue Account will be earmarked and made available for Secure Tenants from within the Sheerwater Regeneration area.

**The Executive has authority to determine the above recommendations.**

**Background Papers:**

Sheerwater Regeneration proposals approved by Council 6 April 2017.  
Sustainability Impact Assessment  
Equalities Impact Assessment

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### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council, at its meeting on the 6 April 2017, authorised the Sheerwater Regeneration project. As part of the report to Council it was proposed that the Executive approve a Special Letting Policy to enable tenants, subject to the availability of property, to leave the regeneration area in advance of their property being needed for the regeneration and be able to take advantage of Home Loss and Disturbance Payments provision of the Community Charter.
- 1.2 The Community Charter was published in January 2016 and provided for those tenants who have to move to be placed in Band B of the Council's Choice Based Letting Scheme but stated that those wishing to move in advance of any required relocation date would not be entitled to the Home Loss and Disturbance Scheme.
- 1.3 This report seeks to enable secure tenants to take advantage of the financial provisions of the Community Charter if they wish to move early and are willing to surrender the right to automatically return.

### 2.0 Rehousing Options

- 2.1 Now that Council (6 April 2017) has approved the Sheerwater Regeneration Scheme it is proposed, as discussed at the Executive and Council, that Secure Tenants should be treated in the same way as Private Owners who are willing to sell in advance of their property being needed. This will mean that, as Private Owners selling early will benefit from the financial arrangements provided by the Charter, Secure Tenants will also benefit provided they surrender the right to automatically return.
- 2.2 It is proposed that, with effect from 1 October 2017, Secure Tenants within the Regeneration Area will be able to opt to move and benefit from the Home Loss and Disturbance Payments of the Community Charter.
- 2.3 It is intended to allocate a team of Officers that will work directly with tenants and establish their detailed needs. Initially this work will be done with those indicating a willingness to move early but by February 2018 all Secure Tenants in the regeneration area will have been engaged in individual discussion and assessment of need. When the needs are established each tenant will be provided personal support to relocate, either within Sheerwater as the development is undertaken or to leave Sheerwater earlier to an alternative property of choice within the Borough.
- 2.4 Some of the early movers may be assisted as a "Management Move", particularly those with high needs or special requirements; others will simply be able to bid under the Council's Choice Based Lettings Scheme (Hometrak). As Sheerwater Regeneration Secure Tenants seeking to move out of Sheerwater they will be placed in Band B under the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme. Whilst these Secure Tenants will have a priority status they will, as voluntary movers, be limited to a maximum of two "Offers" meeting their assessed needs after which they will have to wait until they need to be moved for the regeneration.
- 2.5 Secure Tenants seeking to move early will need to surrender the Right of Return to the Sheerwater Regeneration Area. However should their Housing Need change over time and they need further rehousing they will be able to apply to be rehoused in Sheerwater through bidding normally but without the special Sheerwater Regeneration related banding.

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- 2.6 Where properties within the regeneration area become vacant as a result of Secure Tenants moving, the Council will continue to use these empty properties on a temporary basis until the whole site has been vacated and works can begin.
- 2.7 Any households placed in vacant properties on a temporary basis will not receive any of the rights under the Community Charter as they will not be Secure Tenants; however their respective housing needs will be assessed and appropriate arrangements will be made when the temporary homes are demolished, the key difference is that they will not receive any compensation or the guarantee of staying in Sheerwater. Appropriate arrangements mean that households may be placed in other temporary accommodation as no right to permanent housing will arise.

### **3.0 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Development**

- 3.1 The Council when approving its Investment Programme in February 2017 provided for direct investment in more HRA dwellings to meet both the relocation needs of the Sheerwater Regeneration and the wider housing need.
- 3.2 A programme of investments in new developments as part of the HRA, subject to Planning Consent, is being actively pursued with the potential of some 12 family homes and 20+ apartments being delivered in 2018 and with more to follow in future years. It is proposed that up to 50% of these new units are earmarked for Secure Tenants from within the Sheerwater Regeneration Area until all Secure Tenants wishing to relocate out of the regeneration area have been suitably accommodated. These arrangements will be managed by the team of Officers working with Sheerwater Regeneration area Secure Tenants, either as Management Moves or through bidding via Hometrak as outlined in paragraphs 2.3 – 2.5 above.

#### Financial

- 3.3 The early relocation of Secure Tenants will give rise to Home Loss and Disturbance Payments which will be paid by the Council and recharged to the Sheerwater Regeneration scheme.
- 3.4 The cost of the Officer Team to work with tenants will ultimately be recharged to the Sheerwater Regenerations scheme
- 3.5 The new housing developments will be approved in accordance with Investment Programme arrangements for the use of funds already approved by the Council.

#### Human Resource/Training and Development

- 3.6 It is envisaged that there will need to be a team of three or four dedicated Officers to enable effective direct engagement with Secure Tenants, and subsequently tenants of temporary accommodation within the regeneration area, to ensure they are appropriately assisted.

#### Community Safety

- 3.7 There are no Community Safety issues raised by this report.

#### Risk Management

- 3.8 It is considered that these arrangements will greatly assist Secure Tenants in dealing with the initial disturbance caused by the regeneration.

Sustainability

- 3.1 There are no specific sustainability issues arising from this report.

Equalities

- 3.2 The approach being proposed for Secure Tenants wishing to move out of the Sheerwater Regeneration area will ensure that their needs, especially those with complex needs are met. The approach will seek to ensure that any Band A, other Band B or Band C medical need cases are appropriately considered before implementing a "Management Move" for a regeneration area Secure Tenant.

**4.0 Consultations**

- 4.1 The Portfolio Holder for Housing has been consulted.

**REPORT ENDS**

EXE17-051

## Sheerwater Regeneration - Special Letting Policy

**SHEERWATER REGENERATION – COUNCIL COMMITMENTS**

**EXTRACT FROM THE COMMUNITY CHARTER (JANUARY 2016) COMMITMENTS TO COUNCIL TENANTS**

**1.5 Rehousing Options**

As a secure Council Tenant living in the Sheerwater regeneration area, you currently pay a social rent. If you move to a new home of the same size within the regeneration area you will continue to pay a social rent.

As an existing Council Tenant, if you wish to remain in or return to Sheerwater, we are committed to rehousing you in Sheerwater where possible. We will ensure that wherever possible tenants being rehoused only have to move once.

However, due to the nature of the regeneration process this will not always be possible and some tenants, wishing to remain in Sheerwater, may have to move twice.

All Council Tenants who have to move will be allocated 'Band B' priority status under the Choice Based Lettings Scheme, known as Hometrak, and the Council will work with you to make a direct offer of alternative accommodation.

If, as an existing Council Tenant, you choose to move away from Sheerwater, you will be given the option to move to suitable alternative accommodation owned and managed by the Council where this is available.

We will give you a minimum of 12 months notice before you have to move from your existing home.

If you currently live in the regeneration area, but make a successful bid for an alternative property via the Choice Based Lettings Scheme before your property is needed for the regeneration project to go ahead, you will not be entitled to a Home Loss Payment or Disturbance Payments. Additionally in such circumstances you will forego any Right of Return to the Sheerwater Regeneration Area.

If you wish to consider moving to a housing association property, the Council may be able to nominate you through one of our preferred registered housing provider partners.

## Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to improve the work of the Council by making sure that it does not discriminate against any individual or group and that, where possible, it promotes equality. The Council has a legal duty to comply with equalities legislation and this template enables you to consider the impact (positive or negative) a strategy, policy, project or service may have upon the protected groups.

		Positive impact?			Negative impact?	No specific impact	What will the impact be? If the impact is negative how can it be mitigated? (action) <b>THIS SECTION NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED AS EVIDENCE OF WHAT THE POSITIVE IMPACT IS OR WHAT ACTIONS ARE BEING TAKEN TO MITIGATE ANY NEGATIVE IMPACTS</b>
		Eliminate discrimination	Advance equality	Good relations			
<b>Gender</b>	Men					X	
	Women					X	
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>							
<b>Race</b>	White					X	
	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups					X	
	Asian/Asian British					X	
	Black/African/Caribbean/ Black British					X	
	Gypsies / travellers					X	
	Other ethnic group					X	



		Positive impact?			Negative impact?	No specific impact	What will the impact be? If the impact is negative how can it be mitigated? (action) <b>THIS SECTION NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED AS EVIDENCE OF WHAT THE POSITIVE IMPACT IS OR WHAT ACTIONS ARE BEING TAKEN TO MITIGATE ANY NEGATIVE IMPACTS</b>
		Eliminate discrimination	Advance equality	Good relations			
<b>Disability</b>	Physical					X	
	Sensory					X	
	Learning Difficulties					X	
	Mental Health					X	
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	Lesbian, gay men, bisexual					X	
<b>Age</b>	Older people (50+)					X	
	Younger people (16 - 25)					X	
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	Faith Groups					X	
<b>Pregnancy &amp; maternity</b>						X	
<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b>						X	
<b>Socio-economic Background</b>						X	

The purpose of the Equality Impact Assessment is to improve the work of the Council by making sure it does not discriminate against any individual or group and that, where possible, it promotes equality. The assessment is quick and straightforward to undertake but it is an important step to make sure that individuals and teams think carefully about the likely impact of their work on people in Woking and take action to improve strategies, policies, services and projects, where appropriate. Further details and guidance on completing the form are [available](#).

## Sustainability Impact Assessment

Officers preparing a committee report are required to complete a Sustainability Impact Assessment. Sustainability is one of the Council's 'cross-cutting themes' and the Council has made a corporate commitment to address the social, economic and environmental effects of activities across Business Units. The purpose of this Impact Assessment is to record any positive or negative impacts this decision, project or programme is likely to have on each of the Council's Sustainability Themes. For assistance with completing the Impact Assessment, please refer to the instructions below. Further details and guidance on completing the form are [available](#).

<b>Theme (Potential impacts of the project)</b>	<b>Positive Impact</b>	<b>Negative Impact</b>	<b>No specific impact</b>	<b>What will the impact be? If the impact is negative, how can it be mitigated? (action)</b>
Use of energy, water, minerals and materials			X	
Waste generation / sustainable waste management			X	
Pollution to air, land and water			X	
Factors that contribute to Climate Change			X	
Protection of and access to the natural environment			X	
Travel choices that do not rely on the car			X	
A strong, diverse and sustainable local economy			X	
Meet local needs locally			X	
Opportunities for education and information			X	
Provision of appropriate and sustainable housing			X	
Personal safety and reduced fear of crime			X	
Equality in health and good health			X	
Access to cultural and leisure facilities			X	
Social inclusion / engage and consult communities			X	
Equal opportunities for the whole community			X	
Contribute to Woking's pride of place			X	