

Using the Council's Planning Powers to Tackle Overcrowding

Presentation to the Housing Scrutiny Committee

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Affordable Housing Delivery through Planning Permissions 2022-3

- Planning permission secured for 1,112 genuinely affordable homes across four sites i.e. Holloway Prison, Barnsbury Estate, Vorley Road and Mount Pleasant. This includes 896 homes for social rent (including 60 extra care homes) and 216 homes for shared ownership.
- The homes for social rent include 291 new homes to replace homes demolished on the Barnsbury Estate. These will provide better quality homes for the local residents and address overcrowding across the Estate.
- 55 homes for social rent will be delivered on the Mount Pleasant site whereas the previous planning permission did not secure any homes for social rent (all consented at 'affordable rent').
- Construction on the Parkhurst Road site (TRA site) is also underway. This is delivering 50% affordable housing including 41 homes for social rent whereas the former landowners originally proposed zero affordable housing. Landmark legal case setting national policy.
- Additional planning benefits on housing schemes include: a Womens' Building on the Holloway Prison site; a new public park in Holloway; improvements to the Old Barnsbury Estate; a broader investment into adjoining parks and greenspaces at Barnsbury and Cil and s106 payments.
- Small Sites Contributions

Local Plan Housing Targets and Policies

- 775 new homes to be built in the borough each year based on very detailed and rigorous analysis of site availability and when sites are likely to come forward.
- At least 50% of new homes to be genuinely affordable (70% social rent and 30% intermediate i.e. London Living Rent or shared ownership).
- Concerns about the affordability of intermediate tenure. No intermediate on Barnsbury Estate – all target rents or less than target rents.
- Local Plan policies on affordable housing exceed London Plan policies.
- Planning policies also provide guidance on space standards and the size of new homes (number of bedrooms) but there are detailed negotiations with colleagues in Housing on each site to ensure that the size of the new homes reflects Ward level demand. See next slide.

Draft Local Plan – Housing Size Mix

Table 3.2: Housing size mix priorities for each housing tenure

Tenure	Studio/bedsit	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4-bed
Social rented	None	Low/Medium	High	Medium	Low
Intermediate rent – at London Living Rent levels (or rents akin to social rent)	None	Medium	High	Medium	Low
Intermediate rent – other Discounted Market Rent products	None	High	Medium	None	None
Intermediate – shared ownership	None	High	Medium	None	None
Market	None	Low	High	Medium	Low

Quantity vs Quality ?

- Borough is already densely developed with low levels of developable land. Developable sites tend to be constrained – no ‘easy’ sites.
- Quality of life (amenity) for future residents for example: space standards; sunlight and daylight in homes and open spaces; aspect, ventilation and overheating; privacy and overlooking; outdoor space; and play space. These factors often compete with one another.
- Quality of life (amenity) of existing and neighbouring residents for example: sunlight and daylight in homes and open spaces; and privacy and overlooking.
- Other factors e.g. open space and urban greening.

Tall Buildings (30 metres+) – are they the answer ?

- Planning policies set out in the Local Plan and London Plan restrict tall buildings (above 30 metres) except on sites that are specifically allocated for tall buildings. Sites have been identified following Tall Buildings Study (2018) and extensive consultation.
- Planning policies require exceptional design and that tall buildings have an acceptable impact on: the local microclimate (e.g. wind and overshadowing of surrounding buildings and open spaces); bio-diversity; streetscape; townscape; heritage; and views.
- Tall Buildings have been consented on housing sites that have not been allocated for tall buildings for example on the Holloway Prison site and the Barnsbury Estate. In both cases, the harm caused by the tall building (s) was considered to be outweighed by public benefits including the delivery of genuinely affordable housing. Vorley Road site allocated for a tall building.
- Construction costs and viability.
- Resident attitudes to tall buildings (positive and negative).
- All parts of tall buildings may not suitable for all tenants for example families and disabled and older people.
- Housing colleagues clear that all new homes for social rent are lettable including

Next Steps – Challenges

- Adoption of Local Plan and First Homes policy.
- Government reviewing its policies on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This may mean an entirely different approach to securing affordable housing on sites that are not owned by the council ?
- Emerging GLA and Government approach to the fire safety of tall residential buildings creating uncertainty.
- Uncertainty in the housing market.

Next Steps - Opportunities

- Continuing discussions with the New Build Service to bring forward affordable housing on council owned sites e.g. Finsbury Leisure Centre.
- Continuing discussions with external landowners to bring forward development on sites that are not owned by the council for example Archway Campus site (potentially up to 100 new genuinely affordable homes).
- Proactive discussions with the owners of residential sites in the Borough encouraging them to come forward with schemes (including private landowners, RPs and the Corporation of the City of London).
- Encouraging the use of new architectural practices to test innovative approaches to density.

Questions, Comments and Discussion