

ABBAY CO-OP - LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Abbey Co-op estate is located in Kilburn Ward on the junction of Abbey and Belsize Roads. The estate was built in the early 1970s. The estate is comprised of two 20 storey tower blocks known as Snowman and Casterbridge, which together contain 136 2 bed and 68 1 bed flats. There are also two smaller blocks, Emminster, comprised of 54 one bed units, and Hinstock which contains 10 one bed and 10 bedsit units. The estate also has a public open space located behind Snowman and Casterbridge. Abbey Community Centre, the Belsize Priory Health Centre, and a range of local shops are located on the Hinstock and Emminster site. The estate is managed by a Resident-Managed Co-op.
- 1.2 The estate is located opposite a large multi-storey car park which is owned by the Housing Department. This has been identified as a site for redevelopment.
- 1.3 The Council has undertaken a master-planning exercise which is proposing options for redevelopment, regeneration and investment in the Abbey Co-op estate. Abbey Co-op forms part of the Council's Estate Regeneration programme; estates within this programme are those that have high investment needs and where potential has been identified for new development to contribute to meeting estate needs.
- 1.4 The development of new homes at Abbey Co-op will achieve three objectives:
 - An improved built environment, and public realm
 - Increased supply of affordable housing
 - Generation of investment for improvement the estate and delivery of decent homes for residents in the wider area.
- 1.5 In July 2012 a report was presented to Cabinet outlining the regeneration strategy for the Abbey Area Project (of which the Abbey Co-op is a part). Cabinet approved the strategy and agreed that the project should proceed in line with it. The project will deliver:
 - New affordable housing, in the form of rented accommodation, to meet local and borough wide housing needs
 - New housing for sale that will generate receipts contributing to a fund that will be used to bring the existing housing at Abbey Co-op up to standard.
 - New non-residential development that would include commercial and retail space and new community and health centres to meet local needs and generate income for reinvestment.
 - Improvements to the public realm, including open spaces, roads, and footways associated with new development.

- 1.6 A key element of any proposals will be the development of new affordable housing and this is a key priority for residents at Abbey Co-op. New development has the potential to provide direct benefit to existing residents by meeting their housing needs.
- 1.7 This Local Letting Plan sets out the aims and process for all lettings of new social rented and intermediate housing units by the Council at the Abbey Co-op estate.

2. Aims of the LLP

2.1 The aims of this Local Lettings Plan are to:

- Ensure existing residents of Abbey Co-op are able to share the benefits of building new homes.
- Encourage the continued development of a mixed, stable and sustainable community at Abbey Co-op estate.

3. Letting arrangements – social rented housing (General Needs)

3.1 Local residents will have priority for lettings of new homes developed at Abbey Co-op. There will be three levels of priority for letting new homes:

- Tier 1: Any households within Emminster and Hinstock who are required to move because of redevelopment of their home will receive greatest priority. These households will also have the option to bid for properties elsewhere in the borough and will receive an award of additional points to enable bidding through the Choice Based Lettings system. In accordance with the Council's Full Allocations Scheme, households directly affected by redevelopment shall be entitled to bid for a home of the size they require (as defined by the Camden's Housing Allocation Scheme). Households currently occupying bedsit or studio accommodation will be entitled to bid for 1-bedroom properties.
- Tier 2: The Local Lettings Plan then will prioritise those living elsewhere in the Abbey Co-op Estate (i.e. Snowman & Casterbridge) who are in housing need.
- Tier 3: The Local Lettings Plan then will prioritise those living in the Abbey Estate and Alexandra and Ainsworth estate who are in housing need but who are not required to move because of redevelopment
- Any residual properties from the new development will be advertised under Camden's Choice-based Lettings scheme.

3.2 Direct offers will be made to tier 1 tenants. All lettings to tier 2 and 3 residents will be made via the London Borough of Camden's Choice-based Lettings system and in accordance with Camden's commitment to offering choice to Camden housing applicants.

- 3.3 All priorities will be subject to change pending any review of Camden's Full Allocations Scheme.
- 3.4 In the case of existing Council tenants, reasonable priority will be given in accordance with Camden Council's Full Allocations Scheme to:
- Households who are overcrowded and seeking a larger home;
 - Households that are under occupying existing accommodation and will release a larger unit for re-letting;
 - Households that demonstrate a local connection with Camden.
- 3.5 A separate referral and allocation process for any wheelchair units will be agreed.

4. Marketing of new lettings

- 4.1 Units will be advertised via Home Connections and adverts will be drafted in accordance with this system, providing consistency and clarity for applicants.
- 4.2 As an alternative to advertising each available unit, a generic advert may be placed via Home Connections for each unit size type per block stating clearly the Local Lettings Plan criteria.

5. New Lettings - Process

- 5.1 The LLP will be applied:
- Working proactively with transfer applicants living in the Abbey Co-op estate to encourage bids from these households.
 - Ensuring a suitable match between household size and unit mix within each phase.
 - Submitting all shortlisted applications to a staged verification process – to ensure the information provided by the applicant is accurate
- 5.2 The process required to be followed for lettings will be as follows:
- Apply the first criteria and ring-fence properties to Abbey Co-op residents required to move because of redevelopment works and who wish to return.
 - Apply the second criteria and ring-fence to those households living on the Abbey Co-op estate who are in housing need (i.e. overcrowded, under occupying, or medical need households)
 - Apply the third criteria and open the remaining properties to be opened to other applicants registered for housing.
 - Advertise properties via Choice-based lettings process

6. Relets

- 6.1 100% of re-lets will be made via the London Borough of Camden's Choice-based Lettings system. Future re-lets within the new development will wherever and as far as possible, accord with the aims and arrangements of the LLP.

7. Decant management

- 7.1 For the period of the development (from the point at which decanting commences), vacancies arising within the estate shall be ring-fenced in the first instance to assess whether they can be used for meeting the housing needs (temporary or permanent) of households in the first two categories of priority – defined at 3.1.

8. Review and monitoring

- 8.1 The Council will review this Local Lettings Plan on completion of all the first lettings.