

Site Allocation SA3.4 – Greater Carpenters District

This note is prepared in response to the Inspector's additional questions of 24th March 2015 in relation to Site Allocation 3.4 – Greater Carpenters District. It confirms the Legacy Corporation's position in relation to each question raised.

- 1. Site Allocation SA3.4 is described as “Existing mixed-use area with potential for extensive mixed-use redevelopment”. The LB Newham referred me to Policy SO6 of Newham’s Local Plan – The Core Strategy, which refers to “Extensive redevelopment to create a more mixed-use area across Carpenters District. ...”. However, Policy SO6 also states “Where this does not conflict with wider regeneration aspirations set out in Policy S2 the Council will support the retention of existing low rise family housing on the estate in accordance with Policy H4.”. In view of the LLDC’s Policy SP2 which is concerned with maximising housing provision “particularly family housing” and “safeguarding existing residential units and land”, should there also be a reference to supporting the retention of the existing low-rise family housing in Site Allocation SA3.4? If not, is there a departure from the Newham Local Plan and is it justified?**

LLDC response

Support for retention of existing residential units and land is indeed provided within Policy SP.2. In this context, and to ensure that the site allocation remains consistent with the adopted development plan, it is proposed to add the following wording to the ‘Supporting development principles’ as a main modification:

- Consider retention of existing low-rise family housing where this does not prevent the achievement of wider regeneration objectives

This modification can be found at MM58 of the Main and Other Minor Modifications document (LD/31) which will be subject to public consultation.

- 2. At the hearings, LLDC made it plain that it did not favour making reference to refurbishment rather than redevelopment of existing high rise accommodation. LB Newham referred to an assessment of one of the tower blocks in 2004 which had demonstrated that the cost of re-fitting would be very high (£25 million was mentioned). However, is there any more recent evidence which would rule out the prospect of any refurbishment, and provide justification for the wording in SA3.4?**

LLDC response

The Legacy Corporation considers that at the Matter 7 Examination hearing the London Borough of Newham (LBN) provided a robust justification of why the refurbishment of the Carpenters Estate is unviable. Appendix 1 to this response provides some further publically-available detail from the LBN website of why redevelopment of the estate is the only viable option, given the estimated costs of refurbishment, compounded by the presence of asbestos. It also provides some useful, up-to-date information on the number of remaining leases.

The following statement has been received from the London Borough of Newham:

There is no further information available on costings for refurbishment of the tower blocks as compared to redevelopment, than what is set out within Appendix 1. The decision to redevelop rather than refurbish was taken by the Council some years ago,

and the procedure for decanting the blocks is well advanced. The most up to date information that is available on decanting is contained within Appendix 2.

- 3. The local community referred me to the Carpenters Community Plan 2013 and to their Neighbourhood Forum. In response to my earlier Matters, Issues and Questions, LLDC stated that “community engagement will be a central form of any site proposals from LBN ...”. In view of the emphasis placed on community engagement and neighbourhood planning in the NPPF, and the potentially serious impact of redevelopment of people’s housing and neighbourhood at this site, should SA3.4 include a specific commitment to engage with existing local residents and provide positive support for their interest in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan?**

LLDC response

A specific commitment to engaging with the community on redevelopment proposals within the site allocation was included in paragraph 14.31 of the Local Plan Consultation Document (LD/3). The omission of this statement in the Publication version of the Local Plan (LD/1) was to reflect the change in format of the site allocations in general, not a removal of the value behind this statement. The principle of community engagement is supported by the Legacy Corporation for all planning applications within its area, however given the level of discussion that has taken place relating to this site allocation it is considered appropriate to re-introduce wording to this effect within the Local Plan alongside a statement of support for the principle of Neighbourhood Planning within the area. It is therefore proposed to add the following wording to the ‘Supporting development principles’ as main modifications:

- Ensure early community consultation where specific development proposals or regeneration plans are brought forward
- Support the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan where this conforms to the requirements of this site allocation and involves cooperation with the Council in its roles as landowner and housing authority.

These modifications can be found at MM58 of the Main and Other Minor Modifications document (LD/31) which will be subject to public consultation.

Appendix 1

This information has been copied directly from the London Borough of Newham website at <http://www.newham.gov.uk/Pages/ServiceChild/The-Carpenters-Estate-Stratford.aspx> .

The Carpenters Estate, Stratford

About the Carpenters Estate, Stratford

The Carpenters Estate, Stratford, in north-west Newham, was built in 1967 and includes three of our largest tower blocks:

- James Riley Point
- Lund Point
- Dennison Point.

It also contains homes with gardens, smaller blocks of flats, a school, a college and a number of local businesses.

In the late 1990s tenants and leaseholders started to manage the estate through the Carpenters Tenant Management Organisation (TMO). Carpenters TMO is responsible for repairs and maintenance, caretaking, managing tenancies and maintaining the grounds. It also manages the community hall on the Carpenters Estate.

An elected group of tenants works with us, representing the interests of tenants, leaseholders and freeholders about the long-term regeneration of the area.

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The road to regeneration

Plans for regeneration of the Carpenters Estate have been under consideration since 2000/1. Residents have seen a number of plans since that time. The last proposals – presented in 2008 – were cancelled due to a lack of investment funds because of the global economic crisis.

By 2004 it had become clear that the estate was falling into disrepair and needed significant improvement work to bring it up to a modern standard and maintain it.

After analysing the costs, it was clear that this would be an expensive process costing up to £25 million per tower. In 2004 a Newham Cabinet Report recommended emptying and demolishing James Riley Point. This was to release land for development to provide the money to pay for the maintenance of the other two blocks.

The recommendation was approved and the process of emptying the block began. Housing services worked with local urban planners to develop a masterplan for the two remaining blocks and the locality.

In 2006 and 2007 we spoke to the Greater London Authority to ask for funding to refurbish the remaining two blocks, but the work was considered too expensive.

The start of the economic downturn compounded this issue.

While the refurbishment itself was costly, it would also mean extra costs due to new building regulations. The tower block buildings have a skeleton of asbestos which is buried underneath the concrete skin. The blocks would need to be empty during any work. Lund Point and Dennison Point both needed extra work to seal the asbestos for the future, as the cladding was affected.

Many residents of Lund Point and Dennison Point were leaseholders who had bought their properties through the Right-to-Buy scheme. Some now own a number of properties. Leaseholders would have had to pay the cost of the major refurbishment needed, which was estimated at £120,000 per property valued at £110,000.

We took the view that it was not acceptable to ask leaseholders to pay for major works that would not add anywhere near the equivalent value to their properties. And it was not acceptable to expect residents to live in deteriorating accommodation.

A programme of modernisation for new kitchens and bathrooms was also not feasible as the exterior of the block required significant work and offset the benefits of a limited upgrade programme.

The asbestos in the blocks is now safe and will stay safe. Nearly all of it is contained in concrete so can't be accessed. Any areas which can be accessed have been legally tagged and the asbestos safely removed. Any structural work to the blocks would risk exposing it.

Between 2004 and 2009 we asked the residents TMO what it thought about a number of possible options to refurbish the blocks. Every option was too expensive to be feasible as the costs outweighed the value of the leaseholders' properties and council-owned flats.

After a public meeting with residents in 2008, the Cabinet recommended demolition of the two remaining blocks and a smaller block, Doran Walk. This was in addition to the decision in 2004 to transfer the residents and demolish James Riley Point.

Many residents have now left the Carpenters Estate through our transfer programme, mainly to homes in Stratford and surrounding areas of Newham. More than three quarters of residents from homes in the towers have now been transferred with 70 per cent rehoused within the E15 postcode.

We worked with residents in specific properties, including the tower blocks, to help them find an alternative property of their choice which met their specific needs.

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The Carpenters Residents Charter

The Carpenters Residents Charter sets out the council's commitment to residents affected by the rehousing from the Carpenters Estate.

The TMO, along with an independent tenant adviser, helped to run a residents steering group. The group made sure that residents were involved in the process and worked with us to agree and update the Charter. The TMO has also formally represented a number of concerns on behalf of the residents.

The charter promises that no rehoused residents will be worse off and offers a generous compensation and removal package. Tenants will be prioritised on the council's housing waiting list with preference for properties in Stratford, including East Village (the Athletes Village on the Olympic Park).

Resident leaseholders and freeholders will be offered full market value plus 10 per cent, while non-resident leaseholders and freeholders are entitled to full market value plus 7.5 per cent. All residents will have access to independent advice.

The charter also guarantees residents the right to return subject to availability. This means that residents will be transferred to new accommodation of their choice and will then be able to choose to return once the redevelopment of the estate is complete, subject to availability.

[Download the Residents Charter \(PDF\)](#)

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Stratford Metropolitan Masterplan

On 16 December 2010 the Mayor of Newham approved the Stratford Metropolitan Masterplan for the regeneration of the Stratford area, including the existing town centre, Stratford City and the Olympic Site after the 2012 Games.

We developed the Masterplan through a year-long process involving widespread consultation and option testing. The plan is supported by a range of background studies, including a:

- detailed evidence base
- sustainability appraisal
- transport study
- community infrastructure assessment.

The Masterplan sets out our ambition for Stratford as an integrated metropolitan centre for east London. A centre which will offer new opportunities for Newham's residents, including:

- 46,000 new jobs,
- 20,000 new homes
- eight new schools
- new shops
- leisure facilities
- local services
- better walking routes
- transport connections.

One of the early development opportunities identified in the Masterplan was The Greater Carpenters Neighbourhood.

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Interest from University College London

On 13 May we announced that negotiations regarding the proposed University College London (UCL) development at the Carpenters Estate had ended without agreement. [Read the full press release.](#)

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Rehousing programme

Residential occupancy of the Carpenters tower blocks – September 2014.

Block	Total properties	Leaseholders remaining	Tenants remaining
James Riley Point	132	4	0
Lund Point	168	14	8
Dennison Point	134	18	13

Total	434	36	21
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More than three quarters of residents from homes in the three towers have now been transferred with 70 per cent rehoused within the E15 postcode.

This process was long and considered, we investigated many options to arrive at our decision to transfer residents and demolish James Riley Point, Lund Point, Dennison Point and part of Doran Walk as part of the wider regeneration of the Carpenters Estate.

Appendix 2

Block	Void	Tenants	Lease-holders	Total
James Riley Point	128	0	4	132
Lund Point	148	6	14	168
Dennison Point	107	9	18	134
Total	383	15	36	434