

New Build Homes - Frequently Asked Questions

Why are the Council building new homes?

The Council has more than 19,000 people on its waiting list for housing. The numbers on the register have been rising, while few council homes become empty. Across London, and locally in Tower Hamlets, there is a massive shortage of homes to rent. The Council is determined to tackle the housing crisis in a number of different ways. One of the ways in which the council is trying to meet this need is to build new homes on land that the council owns. We call these “in-fill” sites.

The council, with its partners, has embarked on a new build programme that aims to deliver 1,000 new affordable homes for local people over the 2014-2018 period. As part of that programme the Council will be building 180 new homes on four in-fill sites on four estates in the borough.

The council has already successfully completed the development of new housing in a number of other locations across the borough:

- Former unused garages at Bradwell Street, Stepney E1 4GP, completed in September 2015 delivering 12 new homes with a community hall for Longor Estate TRA.
- Dame Colet Court, E1 3FQ, completed in October 2015 delivering 40 new homes and transformed the existing Haileybury Youth Centre into a state of the art youth centre.

The council is also in the process constructing new housing:

- Former Poplar Baths site on East India Dock Road, E14 0EH with a brand new leisure centre, with 60 new homes being completed by April 2016 and the leisure centre being opened in June 2016
- Former Veolia depot on Watts Grove, London E3 3RE, completing end of 2016 providing 148 homes

How and when were these sites identified and chosen?

The potential for infill development was identified in a feasibility study in 2012 undertaken by THH and by PTEA. This was followed by a positive financial assessment of the development opportunities in 2013. In November 2014, the Council’s Cabinet approved these schemes as infill developments.

Were any other areas on my estate or nearby considered for infill?

An investigation by the council considered *Hereford Estate, Jubilee Street, Baroness Road and Locksley Estate* and identified the proposed sites to be suitable in planning and design terms for the addition of new homes.

Where and how many new homes are being built?

The proposed number of new homes:

Site	Postcode	Number of Homes proposed in August 2015	Number of Homes proposed in January 2016	Proposed number of Homes in March 2016
Baroness Road	E2 7PW	22	28	20
Hereford Estate	E2 6HL	54	48	38
Jubilee Street	E1 3EH	26	24	24
Locksley Estate Site A	E14	54	31-52	34
Locksley Site D	E14	21	37	20
Locksley Site E	E14	3	0	0
Total		180	168 to 189	136

How is the development funded?

The new build programme will be partially funded through the use of 'Right to Buy' sales receipts, where council tenants have exercised the right to buy their council home. Many council homes have been sold in this way, reducing the numbers of homes for rent. This programme will help replace some of those lost homes for rent, but the money must be used quickly or central government will require the council to pay it back. The council is also using some of its own capital funds to assist in delivering the homes.

Who will move into the new homes?

If the development gets the go-ahead, the new homes for rent will be advertised by the council and let through 'Choice Based Lettings', in the same way as other council properties, to residents already living and registered in Tower Hamlets or connected to the borough.

What sort of new homes are being built?

We are building a range of housing types, from larger family houses to one bedroom flats. New homes will be designed in line with the "London Housing Design Guide Standards" and will be easily accessible and adaptable to meet residents' changing needs. Some of the new homes will be designed especially for wheelchair users.

We are building new homes to high standards to help minimise residents' fuel bills and carbon emissions. They aim to support people to live sustainable lifestyles and encourage sustainable neighbourhoods.

Will the new homes be more expensive to live in than other council housing?

The new homes are 100% affordable, responding to the housing priorities of the borough and will be let at agreed affordable rents.

Although higher than the standard 'social' council rents, the new affordable rents are lower than private sector rents, subject to rent controls and would still be within the Local Housing Allowance and Housing Benefit limits for eligible households.

When will the building work begin and finish?

We hope to start the building work towards end of 2016, with the first new buildings completed by March 2018. This is subject to securing planning permission.

Will there be any loss of green or open space?

There will be some loss of green space, however, our scheme designs will have a holistic approach in re-providing the loss of green space, redesigning the layout of open space, and improving existing soft and hard landscaped areas to make them more usable and accessible.

Will any trees be lost?

The proposals may result in some trees being lost, but we will try to minimise this. Trees lost will be re-provided across the estate, in agreement with Council's tree officer.

Will any blocks be demolished?

The current proposals do not involve the demolition of any existing homes. A number of garages will be demolished as well as some underutilised pram stores.

Will the new development affect my view and light to my property?

We will be carrying out, via our Architects and surveyors an assessment to ensure that any shadowing or loss of light to existing blocks is avoided, or kept to a minimum as far as possible, and within permitted levels. Where a negative impact cannot be avoided, the council will contact those individual properties that are affected to discuss this further. Following the feedback from the Stage 2 consultation events, several schemes have already been redesigned to minimise the loss of views and light to neighbouring properties.

Will the fabric of my building be affected in any way due to the construction of the new proposals?

A structural engineer has been appointed to advise on building new development in close proximity to existing buildings and will take into account the design, temporary works and construction sequence. We will design our buildings in such a way to minimise impact on the existing blocks. We will carry out condition surveys to ensure that we are aware of the conditions of the existing properties. We will also issue as required party wall notices to the leaseholders in the block, with regard to the proposed new build.

How will the building works be controlled to restrict disruptions during construction?

We will ensure that the contractors' adhere to the standards of the 'Considerate Contractors Scheme' which is designed to promote and encourage safe, considerate, clean and responsible builders and building sites. The contractor will be committed to work within the permitted hours of working:

8.00 am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday

8.00 am to 1.00 pm on Saturday

No works to be carried out on Sundays or bank holidays.

Both the council and contractor will have resident liaison officers to ensure residents are consulted and communicated with in timely manner. A clerk of works will also be appointed to monitor the works and the performance of the contractor, ensuring they meet the standards expected.

What will be happening next?

The Council and THH have held six consultation events on your estate so far.

The first two consultation events took place in August 2015. Where we spoke to you about the proposal to build new homes on the estate and asked for your views to help shape the design.

We then came back to you with two more events in January 2016 and presented the initial designs, based on your comments, and asked for further feedback. We have now finished our amendments to the proposal based on the feedback received at the January consultation events.

We held the third set of consultation events in March 2016 showing residents the latest designs reflecting some of the feedback received at the January consultation events, as well as providing an opportunity for residents to give further comments on the revised designs. As a result of this series of consultation, we have made many changes to the original proposals. We believe that we have produced an attractive design for new homes on your estate, that is considerate to the surrounding community, and which will provide much needed new council housing for local residents.

The purpose of the 4th consultation event is to fully inform residents on the designs before they are formally submitted to the Planning Authority for consideration in May 2016.

The dates and times of each event are as follows:

Scheme	Dates/Times	Venue
Locksley Site D	Monday 9th May 2016 Between 2pm-7pm	Dora Hall Dora Street London E14 7TP
Baroness	Wednesday 11th May 2016 Between 2pm-7pm	Dorset Community Association Diss Street London E2 7QX
Jubilee	Wednesday 11th May 2016 Between 2pm-7pm	2 Jarman House Jubilee Street, London E1 3BL

A separate event will be held within the next few weeks to give residents the opportunity to see the finished designs for the other development sites on the Hereford Estate and Locksley Estate at Rhodeswell Road.

There will then be a formal consultation by Tower Hamlets Local Planning Authority for the scheme, before it is presented to the Council's Planning Committee later in the summer.

A link has been created on the Tower Hamlets Council website which will provide information on the New Build proposals. This will be updated with information as and when it becomes available:

http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ignl/housing/affordable_housing.aspx

For any queries please contact Laura Duncan, Resident Liaison Officer on: 020 7364 5015 or email council.newbuild@towerhamlets.gov.uk