

# LOVE LANE RESIDENTS CHARTER

## MARCH 2014



**LOVE LANE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**



# Preamble

For a long time, the Council has wanted to regenerate North Tottenham and it was identified as priority area in the Haringey Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (2002 – 2012). The riots of the summer 2011 provided a stark reminder of the urgent need for change.

In response to the riots, the Council together with the Mayor of London has produced *A Plan for Tottenham*, which sets out the strategy to make it a better place for everyone. A key element of that strategy for Tottenham is the master plan for the High Road West area.

The High Road West master plan sets out what needs to be done locally in our immediate neighbourhood. It is based upon the consultation the Council carried out with the community over the last eighteen months. The consultation has identified six main priorities for change.

Those priorities are for:

- Better open spaces and a safer place to live
- High quality local housing
- Encourage enterprise and more local job opportunities
- Better education
- Better health and wellbeing
- A thriving high street.

It is difficult seeing anybody disagreeing with any of them. They are all good things that we would wish to see happen. The big question is how those priorities will be delivered. The Council itself has not got enough money. Instead it is relying on the investment that will be brought into the area on the back of the plans for the Spurs stadium. The redevelopment of the stadium then is a major catalyst in helping to achieve change in the area.

The riots and the redevelopment of the Spurs then provide the impetus for change. These are both things that the community has had no control over or choice in. As a community then we are still trying to come to terms with what has happened as best we can.

Over the summer of last year, the Council consulted with residents on three options for the future of the High Road West all of which included redevelopment proposals for the Love Lane Estate. The most ambitious option will bring about the biggest change, it will take the longest time and it requires the demolition of the whole estate. For some, the proposed redevelopment is an exciting prospect, opening up new opportunities; for others, it is deeply upsetting as we will lose much loved homes and it could provoke a sense of crisis in our lives. Most of us probably still have to

make up our minds, uncertain about what the future will bring, how we feel and where we stand.

As a community then, we are anxious about the impact of that the regeneration will have on our lives, the stress and the disruption it will cause to our residents (particularly to vulnerable people), and the damage it could cause to community bonds.

Therefore, with the support of the Council we appointed Strategic Urban Futures (StUF), our Independent Tenant and leaseholder Adviser, to produce a Residents Charter for the Love Lane Estate. The Residents Charter is a document that puts down in writing what we the residents want from the proposed regeneration of our estate and how we think it should be done. It is the voice of our residents.

Over the last six months, we have carried out a lot of consultation to find out what you want included in the Love Lane Estate Residents Charter. The programme of consultation included the Residents Charter Day, the block meetings and focus groups, and different community events. It has provided opportunities for residents to express their views and ideas independently. In all, 90 residents have contributed their views, opinions and suggestions.

We believe that the Love Lane Residents Charter provides a good basis for taking the redevelopment forward in a way that involves the whole community. However, it still has to be adopted by the Council.

Love Residents' Association Committee  
20/02/2014

# CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Key Principles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Kind of Community</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4. Type of Place</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>5. Design of Homes</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>6. Housing Offer</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>7. Working Together</b>	<b>17</b>



# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The regeneration of North Tottenham – Northumberland Park and High Road West - is a major priority for Haringey Council. You may have seen the hoardings on the High Road proclaiming that it is ‘sports lead regeneration’.
- 1.1.2 The big idea is to transform the prospects of the area by turning Tottenham Hotspur’s football ground into a ‘world class stadium’. It will be one of London’s premier leisure destinations, attracting one million visitors a year, and bringing in £430 million of investment. In turn, this will help to improve local housing opportunities, create local employment and support local businesses.
- 1.1.3 However the plans require at least some redevelopment of the High Road West area. For a start, the access to the new stadium has to be improved to cope with the anticipated big increase in visitor numbers and it has already been decided that this will be achieved by moving one of the entrances to White Hart Lane Station southwards and creating new station square that links directly to the High Road.
- 1.1.4 The Council has consulted the community on three different options for the regeneration of the High Road West. It has concluded that the option which “proposes the most amount of new homes, jobs and facilities” is our preferred one. The ‘preferred option’ entails the demolition of the business premises on the Peacock industrial estate and the homes on the Love Lane housing estate (297 properties). The benefits are that it will provide 1,600 new homes, 700 new jobs, and training and skills opportunities for local people.
- 1.1.5 We realise that some redevelopment is inevitable. However we are worried about the scale of the change being proposed and the impact of the increased capacity of the Spurs stadium. Our aim is protect the interests of our community. We want to ensure that our residents get their fair share of the benefits of the regeneration and that it isn’t done at the expense of our quality of life.

## 1.2 Purpose

- 1.2.1 The Love Lane Residents Charter seeks to establish the principles that we believe should guide the regeneration of the High Road West area and the redevelopment of the Love Lane Estate.
- 1.2.2 By setting out our aspirations, priorities and our concerns, it will provide a framework for what should be done on our estate and how it should be done. In other words, it will set out what we want, anticipate and expect from the redevelopment.
- 1.2.3 The Love Lane Residents Charter also enshrines the guarantees we expect the Council to provide for our residents over the course of the redevelopment. Our entitlements to receive our fair share of the benefits of the redevelopment, to adequate compensation, to have affordable choices, to be treated sensitively and to be taken seriously

1.2.4 The charter is structured under six main headings:

- As statement of the key principles
- What kind of community
- The type of place
- Design of our new homes
- The housing offer to residents
- Working together.

1.2.5 Those headings provide the main themes of the Love Lane Residents Charter. They express what we think are the important matters to be considered in the redevelopment.

## 1.3 Conclusions

1.3.1 We believe that the Love Lane Residents' Charter provides a sound basis for a constructive working relationship with the Council. It builds on the assurances already given by the Council. But it cannot, of course, cover every eventuality. The charter document may well require revision over the course of the redevelopment as and when circumstances change.

1.3.2 Whilst we understand and respect the wishes of any resident who opts to move, we hope that it will encourage our residents to remain living in the area. Fundamentally, we believe the test of the success of the regeneration is how many of our residents chose to stay.



## 2 KEY PRINCIPLES

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 In the Love Lane Residents' Charter, we call on the Council to be open and honest about what it hopes to achieve and what it plans to do. The redevelopment should proceed on the basis of mutual understanding and trust between the Council and the community.
- 2.1.2 The scale and pace of the proposed change inevitably will be very disruptive and deeply unsettling for our residents. It needs to be managed properly and handled sensitively by the Council. Most importantly the local community must be engaged genuinely in the process of change to give it a greater sense of ownership.
- 2.1.3 The more deeply our residents are involved in the regeneration of the Love Lane Estate and the wider area, the more likely it is that that change will be experienced positively by local residents and that they will decide to stay living in the area. We want to see our community placed at the heart of the redevelopment process.

### 2.2 Statement of key principles

- 2.2.1 This section of the Residents Charter outlines the core principles that we believe will provide a proper framework for the redevelopment of our estate and the regeneration of the wider neighbourhood.
- 2.2.2 The key principles that should guide the redevelopment of the Love Lane Estate are as follows:
- No resident should suffer financially or their housing circumstances made worse as a result of the redevelopment.
  - The primary benefits of the redevelopment – improved living conditions, better housing, more job opportunities , etc. - must be for local residents.
  - Minimise disruption and distress to our residents, especially the elderly, children and other vulnerable people.
  - Keep the community together and maintain social stability.
  - Existing public land should remain in public ownership.
  - All new homes in the redevelopment to be well designed, with generous space allocation and built to the best possible construction standards – The Mayor's London Design Guide should be set as a minimum and not adopted as an optimum.
  - Residents should have good, appropriate and affordable housing choices, including the type of tenure, property and area.
  - There should be no net loss of social housing in the area and all new social housing should be council housing.
  - Existing council tenants should have the right to remain council tenants whether they chose to remain living on the estate or move away to alternative accommodation.

- The number of moves that residents have to make should be minimised (ideally only once). However, if residents want the opportunity for more than one move, then they should be offered that choice.
- Where residents have to move temporarily off the estate because of the redevelopment they will retain an automatic right to return.
- All residents shall receive proper compensation for the expense of moving and the loss of their homes, and the arrangements should be agreed with residents and published in an appropriate resident handbook(s).
- Residents should be consulted properly – we have the right to have a say, to be heard and their views taken on board, and to be taken seriously.

## 2.3 Conclusions

- 2.3.1 The redevelopment of the Love Lane Estate could and should improve the quality of life of and increase the prospects for all our residents. However it needs to be carried out sensitively, with imagination and the full engagement of the community.
- 2.3.2 The principles we seek to establish not only seek to address what needs to change but also how that change should be brought about. Our immediate concerns are about the design of our new neighbourhood, the nature of our changing community, the quality of our new homes, and the housing choices facing our residents. We want to ensure that the wider social and economic gains are of direct benefit to the immediate locality.
- 2.3.3 Most of all, we are worried that the redevelopment will destroy our existing community, by displacing and dispersing our residents to other parts of the Borough (and further afield). As far as possible, we need to minimise 'community drain', to retain and strengthen community bonds, and to maintain social cohesion and stability throughout the redevelopment process.

# 3 KIND OF COMMUNITY

## 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The Council's regeneration proposals focus upon physical change to the High Road West area. The physical transformation of the neighbourhood will have a big impact on the identity, composition and size of the local population. The Council suggests that the outcome of those demographic shifts will be to create a stronger community. We remain to be convinced.
- 3.1.2 In particular, the Council considers that current housing mix of the area is far from ideal in maintaining a sustainable community. It wants to reverse the dominance of social housing (currently 53% of the housing stock) in favour of a greater proportion of home-ownership (currently 24% of the housing stock). Tenure change, in other words, is being used as the driver to change the socio-economic nature of the area through a process that is often called 'gentrification'.
- 3.1.3 We can debate whether gentrification is a desirable for the neighbourhood. Or perhaps we should ask the question: just how much and what kind of gentrification is good or bad? So far, there has been little consultation with residents on the kind of community we would like to see.
- 3.1.4 Of course, many different factors are important in creating and sustaining a strong community. Indeed, in many respects we already live in a cultural diverse community with strong community ties, and we want to retain that variety and social vitality. However, we also recognise that social change is already happening in the High Road West area, as it is in other parts of Tottenham.
- 3.1.5 But that change needs to be planned and handled more carefully, otherwise it will overwhelm our community. Much more thought should be given to what constitutes the best population mix in relation to a whole host of factors. They include social class (loosely defined as occupation), racial and cultural background, household type (e.g. single people, couples, families, etc.), and the age profile.
- 3.1.6 We also need to think carefully about what makes the right social balance. The evidence from around the world appears to be that successful communities are those that are more socially equal, greater social mobility, and with a fairer income distribution. By contrast, those communities with marked disparities in income and wealth have greater social polarisation, are less cohesive with weaker social bonds, and as a result are likely to be more unstable. Generally too, their residents tend to have a weaker attachments to place as well as to each other.
- 3.1.7 We must not ignore what is plain to see in other areas of London. There are lessons to be learned, for example, from the bleak picture of widening inequality in Islington - which the New Economics describes as leading inexorably to "residents leading [increasingly] separate lives, lack of understanding between groups and social alienation". We do not want our neighbourhood turning into a place of "distant neighbours".

## 3.2 Keeping the community together, strengthening community relations and maximising community benefits.

3.2.1 Our main aims are to keep our community together, to support and strengthen community relations and to ensure that we maximise the social and economic benefits of the redevelopment for our residents.

3.2.2 We believe that those aims can be achieved by:

- Working with the Council to produce a comprehensive community development and capacity building strategy.
- Developing more effective strategies for involving and engaging the community.
- The community truly 'owning the masterplan'.
- An open and honest dialogue with the Council about what constitutes desirable community change.
- Prioritising existing residents and maximising their access to new homes on the estate.
- Ensuring that the new housing is well designed and built, affordable and desirable.
- Developing more and better local community facilities and places for socialising.
- Rehousing neighbours together.
- Providing family housing and a range of other household types, including good provision for single people and childless couples, the elderly and people with disabilities across all the tenures.
- Respecting cultural and ethnic diversity.
- Reducing anti-social behaviour
- Developing innovative models and structures for greater community control over the proposed redevelopment, the management of local community facilities and the delivery of public services (for instance, establishing a Local Management Organisation).
- Increasing work and training opportunities through such initiatives as a local labour scheme, supporting local businesses and contractors and the development of suitable training and employment initiatives for local people.
- Supporting the development of local community groups, active citizenship and volunteering by establishing a community chest
- Taking action against payday and doorstep lenders by setting up a local credit union
- Developing more effective joint community initiatives with Spurs.

## 3.3 Conclusion

3.3.1 A regeneration strategy that relies upon market forces, rising land values and rapid gentrification is unlikely to change the prospects of our residents and our neighbourhood for the better. Instead, we fear that it will disperse the present population, fracture community relations, heighten social tensions and weaken community cohesion. And that will only serve to entrench further already serious disadvantage.

3.3.2 Instead we want to keep a stable and a cohesive community, where change is at a scale and pace that the community can accommodate successfully. Most of all we want the benefits of the regeneration to create opportunity and improve the quality of life for our existing residents.

# 4 TYPE OF PLACE

## 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The Council is drawing up the final master plan for the High Road West area. The purpose is to “stimulate and shape growth” in order “to help it become a neighbourhood that people want to move to”.
- 4.1.2 Our priority is the people who already live on the Love Lane estate. What we would like to see is the emphasis of the master plan refocused to encouraging people already living here to remain. They should be the primary beneficiaries of the regeneration.
- 4.1.3 Our community is the biggest stakeholder in the regeneration. But if by the end of the redevelopment most of our residents have moved away then the regeneration will have failed. Our residents will have voted with their feet to leave. The future did not belong to them.

## 4.2 Master planning issues

- 4.2.1 Our residents do not want to live in a high rise and high density ‘concrete jungle’ of poorly designed housing, with inadequate local facilities and badly maintained open spaces. But whilst we know what we don’t want, we need more time to think about, say and plan what kind place High Road West could become.
- 4.2.2 We are concerned about the impact of the new Spurs stadium and its impact upon dividing and zoning the estate. The ‘communal park’, the primary purpose of which is to provide a walkway for football fans, could create a different character to other parts of the estate. As a consequence, it may separate and fragment the community, splitting it into different factions.
- 4.2.3 Our initial priorities are as follows:
  - Return to a more traditional street layout, opening out on to the High Street
  - Buildings of a traditional design.
  - Mix of different types and sizes of homes.
  - Mix of housing tenures owner-occupiers, private rented and social housing, the majority of which need to be affordable to local people in order to avoid social polarisation.
  - It should not be possible to distinguish between the different tenures and they should be mixed together in the same buildings and on the same floors (pepper potting).
  - Retain all existing council land under public or alternative forms of community ownership (e.g. a land trust.)
  - Good local facilities (schools, GP surgery, nursery, community centre for all ages, etc.).
  - Better planned open space that encourages people to socialise and with no dogs.
  - Play spaces for children of all ages.
  - Outdoor gym area.
  - More private gardens.
  - Better, secure and designated car-parking.

- Better local shops (fewer take-aways and betting shops and more traditional, independent shops, like a butchers, bakers, fishmongers, haberdasheries, etc.).
- Respect local heritage (for instance the railway arches).
- A timeline for when the redevelopment will take place so that residents know what is happening.

## 4.3 Conclusions

- 4.3.1 We appreciate that the master planning process is at an early stage and that the Council will be undertaking much more detailed consultation over the forthcoming months. Nevertheless, some of the key master planning decisions may have already been taken. In particular, we wish to establish whether the Council has adopted a 'preferred plan for change' or whether the options for redevelopment are still open for discussion. There needs to be much greater clarity and transparency from the Council about the master planning issues that the community can influence.
- 4.3.2 Residents also want much better information about when the redevelopment will start and how long it will take. At the moment, there is a great deal of confusion about when things will happen. Many residents feel like they have been left in limbo, and they are unable to make decisions on such practical matters as redecorating their homes or buying new furniture. They have had to put their lives on hold.
- 4.3.3 Moreover, the master planning for the High Road West area has to have a good fit with the wider regeneration aims and objectives for North Tottenham and in a way that is easily understandable for local residents. We accept that the plans for our estate cannot be taken in isolation but that they will be an important part of creating a stronger neighbourhood. However, much more work needs to be done with local people to define the different neighbourhoods that exist in the area and how they can be better integrated.
- 4.3.4 Inevitably, the focus of a master plan is on physical change. The purpose though is to build a better neighbourhood. We would like much more discussion with the Council about what for our residents constitutes a better neighbourhood.

# 5 DESIGN OF HOMES

*“The important things in the design of homes is to concentrate on satisfying the requirements of [the people] that are likely to live in them”.*

Report of the Parker Morris Committee, ‘Homes for Today and Tomorrow’ (1961).

## 5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The Parker Morris Report was written over 50 years ago. Its central message - that our homes should be designed around our needs, the requirements of our households and the patterns of our everyday activities – is as relevant now as it was then.
- 5.1.2 But the design of our homes is about more than simply meeting our physical needs for space and light and warmth and comfort; it is also about satisfying our psychological, social and spiritual needs. As places of emotional security, domestic and delight. Or, as the philosopher Alain de Botton puts it in his book ‘The Architecture of Happiness’, buildings that will provide us with the “the promises of the highest and most intelligent kinds of happiness”.
- 5.1.3 Of course, we expect our new homes to be well designed, environmentally sustainable and comfortable to live in, cheap to run and built to high standards. But most of all, we want them to be inspiring and to be beautiful. They must raise our spirits and fill us with delight. According to Alain de Botton that requires us “to change the way we think about our homes, our streets and ourselves”.

## 5.2 Type, appearance and orientation of the buildings

- 5.2.1 The type, appearance and orientation of the buildings is important in creating a welcoming and attractive area as is the quality of the streetscape and public spaces.
- 5.2.2 The main design points we want to be taken into consideration are:
- The predominant height of buildings should be no more than a maximum of four to five storeys.
  - There must be adequate space between the building to avoid a claustrophobic design and to protect privacy.
  - A range of different housing types and sizes should be provided to meet the needs of all the community.
  - The number of houses should be maximised, especially family housing
  - Proper housing provision for the elderly, vulnerable residents and people with disabilities, fitted with the appropriate special features.
  - The buildings should be orientated to ensure good views and the best access to sunlight.
  - All the properties should be double aspect.
  - All properties should have access to private open space.

## 5.3 Space standards and internal layouts

- 5.3.1 In its publication, 'The Case for Space', the Royal Institute of British Architects argued that most new build housing in England is simply not big enough for modern living. Indeed, we are building some of the smallest housing in Europe.
- 5.3.2 The London Design Guide should therefore be used as a minimum standard, as the base-line and not the top-line. The interior design issues that of most importance to our residents are:
- The new homes must be large, light and bright, with large windows and good ceiling heights.
  - The amount of storage must be appropriate for the size of the property and the type of household.
  - Different household types and cultural groups have different preferences for internal room lay-outs, in particular with regard to open-plan living. Therefore there must be choice and flexibility in design to provide for separate cooking, eating and living rooms in the home.
  - Kitchens should be large enough to be used as communal rooms.
  - Kitchens should have windows.
  - All bedrooms should be double-sized.
  - All properties should have a separate toilet and bathroom.
  - All properties of two bedrooms and above should have more than one toilet, and larger properties should have more than one bathroom.
- 5.3.3 Our new homes need to be of sufficient size to provide adequate storage, to respect the need for individual privacy of household members, and to allow enough space for everyday household activities (such as cooking, eating together, recreation and socialising).

## 5.4 Utilities

- 5.4.1 All the new homes must be designed to modern standards of thermal comfort and noise insulation. As a general principle, residents should be offered a choice between different kinds of heating systems, types of fuel and energy suppliers.
- 5.4.2 The cost and efficiency of heating is a major concern of residents. Many of whom are in fuel poverty, with energy bills taking up a high percentage of their incomes.
- 5.4.3 Different households and cultural groups have different traditions in the ways in which they prepare and cook food. Residents then have different preferences for cooking with gas or electricity and those preferences should be respected in the design of the new homes.

## 5.5 Communal areas and open space

- 5.5.1 There needs to be a better understanding of, the different types of communal areas and open space - private, communal (shared with other residents) and other open spaces – and how they are used and experienced by residents. Some of the communal or shared areas



will be internal to the building. Private open space is used for different activities – including, relaxation and entertainment, growing plants, children’s play, and drying washing – and it must be designed to allow for a wide variety of purposes.

5.5.2 The aspects of the design of communal areas and open space that are important to our residents are as follows:

- All homes should be provided with private open space.
- Private open space should be big enough to meet the needs of different household types and as a minimum should be able to accommodate two chairs and a small table.
- Families with young children should be provided with a garden.
- Courtyard gardens for communal space.
- Play areas for different ages of children and located sensitively.

## 5.6 Safety and security

5.6.1 Crime and community safety are matters of serious concern to our community. The design of new homes must follow the Secure by Design guidelines.

5.6.2 The particular issues we would like to see addressed are:

- Adequate lighting for communal areas with a contrast of surfaces for people with visual impairment.
- All properties to have front and back fire escape routes.  
Secure communal entrances (gated communal areas with fob entry, CCTV, etc.).
- Secure parking.
- One entrance door for a maximum of 10 homes in blocks of flats.
- A maximum of four flats per landing in a flatted block, with no long external walkways or internal corridors.
- Natural surveillance of communal areas from windows and balconies.

## 5.7 Conclusion

5.7.1 We understand that we are at the very early stages of the master planning process and that the detailed design work for our new homes will not take place for several years. We anticipate that there will be a lot more consultation with our community about our design ideas and preferences.

5.7.2 The results of that consultation should be developed further into a more comprehensive resident design statement.

**“Family homes have to cater for a way of life that is much more complex than in smaller households. They have to accommodate individual and different group interests and activities involving any number, or all, of the family, with or without visitors; and the design must be such as to provide reasonable individual and group privacy as well as facilities for family life as part of a community of friends and relations”**

Report of the Parker Morris Committee, ‘Homes for Today and Tomorrow’ (1961).



# 6 HOUSING OFFER

## 6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 The basis of the housing offer must be that no resident should suffer financially or their housing situation made worse as a result of the redevelopment of the Love Lane estate. All housing must at least be equivalent to, and should be better than, what we have currently. Indeed, the redevelopment presents a good opportunity to improve the housing conditions and the housing choices of our residents.
- 6.1.2 The Council should produce a written 'housing offer' document(s) for all our residents – council tenants, private tenants, and leaseholders. The document(s) should set out clearly our entitlements to compensation and disturbance payments, our housing choices, and the details of the rehousing process. The main purpose is to provide us with the accurate and timely information so that we can make informed decisions about our future homes.
- 6.1.3 The Council must treat our residents fairly, reasonably and sensitively throughout the redevelopment. All of our residents should receive equal treatment, irrespective of household type, tenure and employment status as well as the statutory equal opportunities requirements. The 'housing offer' document(s) should lay out those service standards. Residents should also be advised about the independent advice funded by the Council and encouraged to access that those advice services.
- 6.1.4 As part of housing offer to our residents, and in line with good practice in regeneration, the Council should introduce a local lettings policy for the Love Lane estate.

## 6.2 Housing offer for council tenants

- 6.2.1 In line with the general principles as defined in the Residents Charter, we expect the Council to make the following commitments to all council tenants on the love Lane estate.
  - a) A good range of affordable rehousing options to be provided on and off the estate to extend housing choice for existing tenants and their household members.
  - b) Notwithstanding the extension of housing choice, all existing tenants should retain an absolute right to retain council secure tenancies either on or off the estate according to their preference.
  - c) The rent levels of council secure tenancies will be set according to 'traditionally set social rents'.
  - d) Any tenant who is currently under-occupying their home should be given the choice of property with the same number of bedrooms as at present or smaller depending upon their expressed preferences.
  - e) As a rule, tenants should only be expected to move once subject to individual circumstances and unavoidable requirements of the redevelopment programme. However, if tenants want to move more than once, then it should be their choice.
  - f) If it is necessary to move council tenants off the estate temporarily they should have an automatic right to return to a new home on the estate when it is built.

- g) All tenants who wish to be rehoused as a secure tenant (or into another form of social housing tenure) off the estate should be allowed to do so through Haringey's Choice Based Lettings Scheme. Tenants requiring rehousing off the estate should receive top priority as their relocation is required as part of a redevelopment scheme. Direct offers should only be used as a last resort for vulnerable tenants and they should receive at least three 'reasonable offers' to consider.
- h) A reasonable period of time must be allowed for the decant process to allow sufficient choice for tenants who wish to be rehoused off the estate and to for proper consideration of their households circumstances, needs and preferences.
- i) Proper arrangements must be put in place to meet the housing needs of the adult children of council tenants and other 'hidden households' and this must include opportunities to be rehoused together or separately as secure council tenants.
- j) A proper compensation package for home loss, any improvements carried out to the property by the tenant and disturbance allowances should be provided by the Council and the statutory entitlements should be treated as a minimum.

6.2.2 We are unhappy with the way in which the present choice based lettings system is operated and in particular the routine use of auto-bidding by the Council's allocations officers.

## 6.3 Housing offer for council leaseholders

6.3.1 There are two categories of leaseholders on the estate: non-resident and resident leaseholds. We are concerned primarily with protecting the interests of our resident leaseholders. However the same issues of fairness, equity and expediency in the valuation and buy-back process apply equally to both category of leaseholder.

6.3.2 For most of our resident leaseholders, the question of affordability will be a major issue. It will be almost certainly the case that the sales values of their present homes will be significantly lower than the sales values of similar properties elsewhere in the borough and in particular the new properties on the estate. Many of our resident leaseholders are likely to be struggling on marginal incomes, with restricted access to mortgage finance and low levels of equity. Furthermore, many resident leaseholders will only have had limited experience of purchasing properties on the open market.

6.3.3 Therefore, and in accordance with the general principles as defined in the Residents Charter, we expect the Council to make the following commitments to the resident leaseholds on the love Lane estate.

- a) The valuation and buy-back process must be open, equitable and transparent.
- b) All valuations must be based on open market values in area as if the redevelopment scheme had not been taking place and disregarding the reasons for purchase.
- c) Fair and effective arrangements for arbitration should be established from the outset and resident leaseholders should be encouraged to access the appropriate independent professional and technical advice.
- d) An early buy-back process must be in place to avoid planning blight.
- e) A good range of affordable rehousing options to be provided on and off the estate for resident leaseholders and their household members. We expect that these will include such standard offers as:
  - i. Open market sale
  - ii. Discounted market sale

- iii. Assisted purchase
  - iv. Shared ownership
  - v. Shared equity
  - vi. Leasehold swap
  - vii. Revert to social tenancy.
- k) If resident leaseholders chose to buy a new home on the estate, the service charges should be set at a rate no higher than the current service charges for their property.
- l) All resident leaseholders who wish to remain home-owners in the area should be encouraged to do so. The new properties must be affordable and within the means of existing resident leaseholders. Temporary accommodation may have to be provided if they have to sell their homes before the new properties are built.
- m) A proper compensation package for home loss, any improvements carried out to the property by the resident leaseholder and disturbance allowances should be provided by the Council and the statutory entitlements should be treated as a minimum.

## 6.4 Housing offer for private tenants

- 6.4.1 Private tenants do not receive the statutory rights enjoyed by council tenants and leaseholders in the redevelopment process. Moreover, a local authority's legal responsibilities to help homeless people have been reduced significantly over recent years.
- 6.4.2 Nevertheless, we believe that the Council has a moral duty towards the private tenants on the Love Lane estate, many of whom have been living in the area for a number of years, not least because it is the Council that will be making them homeless.
- 6.4.3 Therefore, and in accordance with the general principles as defined in the Residents Charter, we expect the Council to make the following commitments to the private tenants on the love Lane estate.
- a) All homeless applications by private tenants of the Love Lane Estate will be treated sympathetically by the Council.
  - b) An intermediate market rent scheme will be provided as part of the new housing on the estate and that those intermediate rents should be set at a level that existing private tenants can afford.
  - c) The compensation arrangements for home loss and disturbance should be extended to private tenants.

## 6.5 Local lettings and sales schemes

- 6.5.1 One of our biggest priorities is to keep our community together. To encourage residents to stay in the area, priority should be given to local people in the allocation of the new council homes or the sale of the new private homes built during the redevelopment of our estate. In other words, the redevelopment should provide local housing for local people.
- 6.5.2 Perhaps the best way of achieving that is through the development of the local lettings and local sales policies with the appropriate incentives to encourage and support residents to access the new housing opportunities.

- 6.5.3 We have particular concerns to maintain the affordability of the new housing at a level that local people can afford, and to restrict outside buy-to-let investment.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

- 6.6.1 There must be much more consultation between the Council and our residents over the content, style and format of the housing offer document (s). Those housing offer document(s) should be legally binding and enforceable.
- 6.6.2 In addition, we recommend that a comprehensive housing needs and preference survey be carried out of all our residents. The survey should also be used to gather information about the affordability of the proposed housing options for council tenants, private tenants and resident leaseholders, especially as the redevelopment scheme is likely to lead to increasing land values, rising housing prices and higher market rents.
- 6.6.3 We look forward to an early meeting with the Council to discuss the Love Lane Residents' Charter and to agree its implementation.

# 7 WORKING TOGETHER

## 7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 Quite rightly, the Council has identified our residents “as the largest group of stakeholders affected by the redevelopment plans” within the High Road West area.
- 7.1.2 The same report suggests that “residents feel that there is a lack of transparency around the plans for change and are frustrated by lack of continued engagement...to gain support and confidence and ensure that the community are involved and understand the plans for change, the Council needs a fundamental shift in the way it approaches consultation’.
- 7.1.3 We support and share the Council’s commitment to “working with residents and the local community to ensure they are at the centre of an influence any plans” and its intention to maximise ‘resident engagement [in] and community ownership of the plans for change”. We agree that there needs to be a fundamental shift in the approach to consultation. We think that this should be about listening more.

## 7.2 Community engagement issues

- 7.2.1 Therefore, we want to work with the Council to develop and implement a detailed strategy for the effective engagement of the local community in the redevelopment of our estate.
- 7.2.2 Our priorities are:
- The Council should provide clear, accurate and timely information about the plans for the estate.
  - All information needs to be easy to understand, avoid jargon and be translated into the main community languages.
  - A clear timetable for the redevelopment of the estate should be produced as a priority
  - The Council should mean what it says and does what it says
  - Local councillors should be more involved in the redevelopment and accessible to the local community.
  - An office should be provided on the estate to provide a base for the Love Lane Residents’ Association and our ITLA.
  - The Council needs to feedback the results of all consultation it and its partners undertake with the community and clearly identify where community views and inputs have or have not been adopted.
  - Different methods of engagement should be used to involve different sections of the community, especially black and minority groups, older people, young people and other hard-to-reach groups.
  - There should be greater transparency in decision making and a local regeneration forum should be established for the estate to involve local residents.
- 7.2.3 We recognise that different groups within our community may have different priorities and different interests. Whilst acknowledging and respecting those differences, we are

committed to build agreement and consensus and we want to work with the Council to avoid creating divisions within our community.

## **7.3 Conclusion**

- 7.3.1 The regeneration will have a dramatic impact upon our lives. As a community, we want to have to have a greater say in and more control over the nature, scale, direction and pace of the change.
- 7.3.2 In 1969, Sherry R. Arnstein wrote a very influential paper that famously distinguished between eight categories of community engagement in her Ladder of Citizen Participation. Those categories can be simplified as four elements: information, consultation, participation and control.
- 7.3.3 We believe that the primary aim of the Love Lane Community Engagement Strategy should be to create greater ownership of the redevelopment plans, their implementation and the delivery of local services to the estate. Our view is that ownership implies at least some degree of 'control over' over the redevelopment. We would like to work with the Council to explore those options for greater community control.