

Report for: **Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Panel – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020**

Title: **Housing Associations in Haringey**

Lead Officer: **David Sherrington, Director of Broadwater Farm – Homes for Haringey**

## 1. Overview of the estate

- 1.1 Broadwater Farm is located in N17 directly East of Lordship Recreation Ground. It comprises 1063 homes across 12 blocks and 27 low rise houses. The twelve blocks are made up from two towers (19 storeys), nine medium rise blocks (six and four storey) and one ziggurat (seven storeys). The vast majority of homes are either one bed or two bed (916 homes or 86%) with 113 three bed and 14 four bed homes. A series of site photos are included within the appendix.
- 1.2 Within the boundary of the estate there is also a school and children's centre serving pre-school, primary and special needs requirements. A Health Centre was built in the 1990s which remains operational and a number of small 'starter' business units are located in the Enterprise Centre, opposite Tangmere. These units are leased to a Head Leaseholder who is responsible for management and operations. Businesses include a hair-dresser, nail bar, ironmongery workshop and several offices. There is also a community centre on the estate with a large sports hall, gym and café (although the café does not currently have an operator).
- 1.3 Public transport on the estate is primarily through the W4 bus, which runs through the estate. Other major bus services can be found on both Lordship Lane to the north of the site and Phillip Lane to the south.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 In 2017, following the tragic events at Grenfell tower in Kensington and Chelsea, the Department for Communities and Local Government wrote to all Local Authorities requesting that they check that their large panel system (LPS) buildings. These checks are designed to ensure they meet the required standards to prevent against progressive collapse in the event of an explosion within a flat caused by a gas leaks or faulty gas cylinder.
- 2.2 Following receipt of a DCLG letter, the Council and Homes for Haringey reviewed archive evidence relating to the construction of the estate and found it inconclusive and incomplete. In light of this, structural surveys were instructed in 2017 to identify the construction method and compliance with building requirements. Of the 12 blocks, 11 were found to have problems.

2.3 More information about the outcomes of these surveys, with links to the survey documents, can be found in the appendix to this report. Included within the appendix is a detailed timeline of activity since 2017, and links to all Cabinet decisions made.

### **3. The Broadwater Farm improvement programme**

3.1 Due to the scale of intervention required on the estate in response to the structural issues, the Council and Homes for Haringey have agreed to form a shared project team across both organisations to take forward the various workstreams, coordinate between projects, and ensure a joined up and coherent message for residents and partners. Some workstreams are led by Homes for Haringey, and others from within the Council; the overall programme is led by a Director of Broadwater Farm based in Homes for Haringey.

3.2 Alongside the projects within the programme that are a response to the structural issues, we are aiming to implement additional projects to ensure that outcomes for residents are improved.

3.3 The programme has a draft set of objectives that will be tested and refined through resident and stakeholder feedback. A copy of these is included within the appendix to this report.

3.4 A project initiation was approved in 2018 and sets out the key projects within the programme. These are as follows:

- Estate and Housing Management – to drive up to standard of the core housing management offer
- Rehousing - to rehouse and support the residents of Tangmere and Northolt
- District Heating and kitchens and bathrooms – to install a new district heating network on the estate to enable the removal of gas supplies across the estate, and to upgrade kitchens and bathrooms where required to meet the Decent Homes standard
- Structural and refurbishment works – to develop designs and let contracts to deliver structural and refurbishment works on the medium rise blocks
- New Homes and Urban Design Framework – to bring forward designs and construction of new homes, and to establish a new Urban Design Framework and public realm strategy
- Communications and engagement – to ensure residents and stakeholders are communicated and engaged with throughout the programme
- Socio-economic programme – to introduce socio-economic programmes on the estate to tackle identified issues

- Non-housing assets – to ensure all non-housing assets are considered as part of the overall programme and vision for the estate
- Demolition – to procure and manage the demolition contractors once onsite

The following sections sets out an overview of the BWF programme.

#### **4. Estate and Housing Management**

4.1 To build trust and buy in from residents, we need to get the core housing service right. Through engagement with residents on the rehousing and district heating works throughout 2018, it became clear that cleaning, grounds maintenance and communal repair standards on the estate were not satisfactory. We have therefore been improving the focus on the core housing management offer and this work forms a part of our overall improvement works.

4.2 Areas of focus include:

- Improving cleaning externally and internally
- Improving grounds maintenance across the estate
- Reducing anti-social behaviour on the estate
- Ensuring that communal repairs are effectively logged and completed
- Offering weekly financial inclusion drop in sessions
- Delivering a programme of internal decorations to areas in the poorest condition ahead of the main refurbishment
- Ensuring a culture of not walking past issues and of taking ownership
- Improving communications and engagement with residents

#### **5. Rehousing programme**

5.1 A rehousing team has now been in place since 2018 to work with residents in Tangmere and Northolt to rehouse them from their blocks. We recognise it is a stressful process, so the rehousing team is based onsite and available for 1-2-1 discussions and appointments.

5.2 Although the bulk of the rehousing project is now complete, at the outset all residents had 1-2-1 support, had individual needs assessments completed, and received support and guidance regarding their proposed move.

5.3 Following their moves residents are contacted through home visits to ensure they have settled into their new homes and any issues (such as repairs or other tenancy

issues) are being dealt with. We follow up more regularly with vulnerable residents through further visits and phone calls.

- 5.4 In addition to the in-house team, an independent tenant and leaseholder advisor was procured (PPCR) to provide independent advice and guidance to affected residents.
- 5.5 Supporting the rehousing process is a Broadwater Farm rehousing and payments policy which sets out the council's commitments and responsibilities to affected residents. This has been sent to all residents in the affected blocks and advice from ITLA has been provided where residents need additional support.
- 5.6 The rehousing of residents in Tangmere began in June 2018. We have rehoused all tenants from the 92 council owned properties. Of the 12 leaseholders, we have purchased four properties and two are going through the conveyancing process. The remaining six are still under negotiation.
- 5.7 The decision to start rehousing Northolt tenants was taken in February 2019 following the Cabinet decision in November 2018 to demolish the block. We have 16 tenanted properties left in Northolt, from the original 83. Eight of these tenants have accepted offers for alternative accommodation and are either waiting for the property to be ready or are in the process of moving. We are working closely with the remaining eight tenants and expect to be able to find alternative accommodation very soon.
- 5.8 Of the original 14 leasehold properties in Northolt, we have purchased one and have heads of terms signed with three others.
- 5.9 All residents retain the right to move again if they are not happy with their first move the rehousing team will continue to support them for a further move. All residents also retain the right to return to the estate once new homes are built. They are also included in communications relevant to them, unless they have specifically asked not to be.
- 5.10 Risks associated with the structural issues within the block are being mitigated by the presence of 24-hour security, preventing anyone other than residents entering the building. In addition, neither building has a live gas supply and residents receive regular communications about the prohibition of gas bottles. Both buildings have also been protected from possible vehicle strike and flats are secured to prevent squatting or unauthorised entry, with regular checks to ensure they have not been broken into. Risk assessments for both buildings were completed last year and will be updated again this March.
- 5.11 In respect of the remaining leaseholders, the rehousing team is in contact with leaseholders to discuss their potential moves and will consider other options including mediation to help further negotiations. In addition, the team is looking at

what future CPO options are available in the event of us being unable to reach agreement with any leaseholders.

## **6. District Heating programme**

6.1 The district heating project was established to install a new district heating system across the estate so that gas installations could be removed. This solution was selected following an option appraisal, a link to which is provided within the appendices of this report.

6.2 The project has been tackled in three main phases. Phase one involved removing all existing gas cookers from residents' homes and replacing them with electric cookers (free of charge). Phase one also included the installation of automatic gas cut-off valves within homes in the event of a leak. These were installed to mitigate any risks ahead of the district heating system coming online. Phase one began shortly before Christmas of 2017 and was completed across all affected homes (725 flats) in just over six weeks.

6.3 Phase two involved the installation of a district heating infrastructure within the blocks and flats, to allow them to be removed from the gas supply and connected to temporary heating and hot water plant. The completion of this work was driven by a deadline put in place by the statutory body responsible for the gas network. The planning of the work began in February 2018 and was complete in time for the deadline of the end of October 2018.

6.4 Phase three (the current phase) involves the installation of site wide distribution, the upgrade of the central boiler house and installation of metering hardware so that residents can be charged for actual usage. In addition to these works, we have broadened the scope of the programme to also include:

- New kitchens and bathrooms where existing installations failed the decent homes criteria (circa 270 homes benefitting)
- New boosted cold-water supplies
- Fire stopping in flats where required

6.5 The value of the contract for the work is just over £18m and the current estimated completion date is April/May.

6.6 In order to ensure the district network aligns to the council's broader strategy around centralised energy a member of the Council's Carbon Reduction team has been working closely with the project team.

## **7. Structural and refurbishment works**

7.1 This project seeks to bring forward the required structural and refurbishment works to the retained blocks on the estate. Through this work we are also exploring the feasibility of infill homes in selected locations on the estate. To reduce disruption we are designing the works as a combined refurbishment and structural programme.

7.2 Some temporary decanting of residents in specific flats where the structural works take place will be required. It is likely that through the course of the programme around 150 residents will require a temporary decant to facilitate works, although the duration will only be established once a contractor is onboard and they have looked in more detail at sequencing of works. A dedicated rehousing team will be put in place to support this process once we are closer to starting works.

7.3 Two blocks have been selected as pilots for this work. Rochford has been identified as a pilot refurbishment block and Martlesham as a pilot for refurbishment and potential infill. Much of the high-level design work on the pilots (material choices for example) can be replicated across the estate as the medium storey blocks are all of a similar design and configuration.

7.4 To date we have completed in full the structural design work and undertaken several concept designs for the refurbishment and infill for both blocks. These concept designs will be firmed up in the coming months and the current programme anticipates works starting onsite at the end of the calendar year.

7.5 Much of the scope of the refurbishment has been established through engagement with residents, past consultations, repairs history and our knowledge of the stock. Further engagement work will take place ahead of works starting.

7.6 Work is also underway to look at how this work dovetails with the work of the new architects responsible for new homes and the public realm enhancements (see next section). This is to ensure that the different workstreams are aligned and joined up.

## **8. New Homes and Urban Design Framework**

8.1 This project seeks to work with the residents and the wider community to develop design proposals for the high quality replacement homes, which will be built on the Tangmere and Northolt sites. Following engagement with the community and a successful ballot outcome, planning applications for the new homes will be submitted.

8.2 This project also seeks to work with the community to develop a design framework for the estate. The purpose of this framework is to ensure that the design team considers the estate and surrounding area as whole when developing designs for the

new homes, such as the existing estate infrastructure (existing roads, utilities, pedestrian footpaths etc).

- 8.3 The framework will look at ground floor usage, with the view of exploring the possibility (subject to consultation) of infilling some areas to provide community amenity, additional homes, or commercial space. It will also include a strategy for public realm enhancements so that improvements to the existing green spaces and connections to the park can be bought forward.
- 8.4 The project will also develop design briefs for three sites on the periphery of the estate, to explore the potential for the delivery for new council housing, in line with the Council's commitment to deliver 1000 council homes.
- 8.5 Following a procurement exercise, the Council's Cabinet appointed Karakusevic Carson Architects (KCA) in December 2019 as the lead the Design Consultant for this project.
- 8.6 Since their appointment the Council, Homes for Haringey and KCA have been developing a community engagement strategy which seeks to maximise resident and community involvement in the proposals.
- 8.7 Between May and September 2020 KCA will be working with the community to develop design options for both the new homes and the design framework. These options will then be subject to community engagement and review.
- 8.8 Between October and December 2020 KCA will work with the community to develop preferred design proposals for the new homes and the design framework.
- 8.9 It is envisaged that in Spring 2021 the Council's Cabinet will be asked to approve preferred design options and grant permission to progress to a ballot.

## **9. Communications and engagement**

- 9.1 Good quality communications and engagement will underpin all of our work and through the joint project team we will ensure that residents receive a consistent and clear set of messages around what is going on and how they will be involved.
- 9.2 Following the appointment of architects for new homes, the BWF project team are working on a combined communications and engagement plan for the year, to ensure that messaging and engagement around this project dovetails with existing projects and plans.

9.3 To date we have introduced a number of new initiatives which we can build upon throughout the course of the coming year to talk to residents in detail about the council's emerging plans.

9.4 A communications and engagement framework has also been drafted to help guide our work and that of our partners. In summary this seeks to ensure that:

- Our communications are inclusive and respect the diversity of the estate
- Our communications are open and transparent
- We will use a variety of communications and engagement methods to reach residents

9.5 A summary of the existing communication and engagement tools, and the engagement framework, are provided as an appendix to this report.

## **10. Socio-economic programme**

10.1 While physical interventions on the estate form a significant part of our work on the estate, ensuring that outcomes for people are improved forms a strong part of our improvement programme.

10.2 The socio-economic work is guided by data and consultation feedback and we have programmes designed around the following themes, all of which is currently onsite and delivering aside from the employment and skills theme which starts in April.

- Positive activities for young people (ERF and GOLD)
- Employment and skills (ERF)
- Mental health and wellbeing (ERF)
- Activities for women and girls (ERF)
- Community safety (ERF)

10.3 The programme is funded through the Estate Renewal fund and Gold fund. It is focussed around the following themes:

## **11. Demolition programme**

11.1 This project covers the required demolition of both Tangmere and Northolt blocks. Tender documentation for works have been prepared and are ready to tender once a date for vacant possession of either block is more imminent.

11.2 Ahead of demolition works commencing, we are working with UK Power Networks to relocate existing electricity sub-stations that are located within both blocks. The contract for this work has been awarded and will commence onsite soon.

11.3 A timetable for demolition will only be available once a contractor is procured although it is likely to take a minimum of six months.

11.4 The work itself will likely cause significant disruption to residents so detailed engagement and communication will be required ahead of works starting.

## **12. Non-housing assets**

12.1 This workstream considers the non-housing assets on the estate and how they can be maximised and incorporated into our future work.

12.2 Further work on these assets will be considered as we progress the designs for new homes and urban design framework, in consultation with residents and stakeholders.

12.3 The key assets located on the estate are as follows:

- NHS Health Centre
- The Community Centre
- The Enterprise units and Opportunities Centre

### **Schedule of appendices:**

Appendix one – site photos

Appendix two – background on structural issues

Appendix three – timeline of activity since 2017

Appendix four – record of Cabinet decisions

Appendix five – draft programme objectives

Appendix six – communications and engagement tools

Appendix seven – communications and engagement framework

Appendix eight – Broadwater Farm newsletter