

Appendix 7 – Summary of Responses to Additional Comments made by Respondents to the Consultation in respect of the Ambrose and Mallory Court Local Lettings Policy

The additional comments made by respondents, as grouped under 13 points/themes A-M, have been considered and the responses to each point/theme are as follows:

A - People in temporary accommodation should be prioritised for properties

If Housing Register applicants, including those in temporary accommodation, were prioritised for the 30 homes at Ambrose and Mallory Courts, this would be contrary to the proposed Local Lettings Policy which has received support from a substantial majority of Housing Register applicants.

If the proposed Local Lettings Policy was not adopted, this would undermine the policy objective of regenerating the Love Lane Estate.

Under the proposed Local Lettings Policy, Housing Register applicants, including those in temporary accommodation, will be able to bid for properties at Ambrose and Mallory Courts not taken up by Love Lane tenants.

Homeless households in temporary accommodation are awarded priority under the main provisions of the Council's Allocations Policy.

The delays in providing permanent accommodation for Housing Register applicants, including those in temporary accommodation, are a consequence of the acute shortage of affordable housing in the borough, which the High Road West Regeneration Scheme is seeking to address through plans to provide 1,200 new homes, a significant proportion of which will be affordable.

The reason for prioritising Love Lane tenants under the proposed Local Lettings Policy is to enable the regeneration to proceed, including the provision of additional homes.

B - People already on the Housing Register should be prioritised for properties

A number of these comments refer to applicants waiting on the Housing Register for long periods, some for 10 years or more.

The main provisions of the Council's Allocations Policy prioritises Housing Register applicants in bands from an effective date and households who bid for accommodation under Choice Based Lettings are normally allocated properties on the basis of which bidder is in the highest band, with the earliest effective date.

The proposed Local Lettings Policy is being put forward to deal with particular circumstances and the priority awarded to Housing Register applicants in respect of other lettings is unaffected.

The 30 lettings at Ambrose and Mallory Courts only represent about 3% of the total lettings the Council allocates annually to vacancies in its stock and through its nominations to housing association vacancies. Over the 5 year period 2009/14, the Council allocated, on average, 977 homes per annum to households on the Housing Register.

The Housing Register has included 5 bands (A-E), with A being the highest band, but at its meeting on 14 October 2014, the Cabinet decided to remove households in bands D and E from the Housing Register as they have no realistic prospect of re-housing.

The responses under item A above are also relevant.

C - People with a disability should be prioritised/I have disability and should be prioritised

Many of these comments refer to difficult personal circumstances related to disability.

The proposed Local Lettings Policy prioritises Love Lane tenants and then, within this group, gives high priority to critical and serious medical cases, which will include residents with disability/health needs.

The 30 units at Ambrose and Mallory Courts are all built to 'lifetime homes' standard, which can be adapted to meet the needs of disabled households, and 7 (23%) are wheelchair accessible units.

Housing Register applicants with medical needs, including disability, affected by their housing conditions are awarded priority under the main provisions of the Council's Allocations Policy.

D - Agree with the Local Lettings Policy

These are brief comments supportive of the proposed Local Lettings Policy.

E - Residents unhappy with their current housing situation/conditions

These comments report difficult housing situations faced by applicants and a number include requests for re-housing. The responses under items A and B above are relevant.

F - Residents who raised an existing health problem they/family member has

These comments report a range of health problems faced by applicants and a number include requests for re-housing. The response under item C above is relevant.

G - Disagree with the proposed Local Lettings Policy

These are mostly brief comments which disagree with the proposed policy, with some indicating that Love Lane tenants should not be given additional preference over Housing Register applicants. The responses under items A, B and C above are relevant.

H – Other

These include a variety of comments on wider policies, other parts of the borough, other tenures and points of clarification

I - People who are working should be prioritised for properties

The Council's Allocations Policy does not include a priority category for those who are working, however, it does provide for Local Lettings Policies which can be used to help create balanced communities and achieve wider community objectives, such as a broader social mix and supporting and encouraging people into employment. The Local Lettings Policy for Ambrose and Mallory Courts does not include such a priority category.

J - Residents want to be considered for a property/want a new home

These comments relate to specific requests for re-housing and 22 indicate interest in being accommodated at Ambrose and Mallory Courts

K - Concern for older or younger people. Need to support prioritise them.

These comments reflect the concerns of Housing Register applicants whose households comprise/ include older or younger people.

Under its Allocations Policy, the Council accommodates older and younger people living independently or as part of larger households. The Council makes specific provision for older people, for example, in sheltered housing and young people, including care leavers.

The responses under items A, B and C above are relevant.

L - Need more affordable homes in the borough

These comments call for more affordable housing.

This is an important priority for the Council as reflected in planning policy and the housing strategy.

The High Road West Regeneration Scheme, which the proposed Local Lettings Plan is seeking to support, aims to provide additional affordable housing.

M - Overcrowding is a current issue for residents/people in overcrowded accommodation should be prioritised

These comments refer to the overcrowding being experienced by applicants and a number include requests for re-housing.

The Local Lettings Policy prioritises Love Lane tenants and then, within this group, gives priority to those affected by overcrowding.

The Council's Allocations Policy awards priority to households lacking bedrooms and sharing facilities.