

Stratford Metropolitan Masterplan Supporting Document: Housing Paper

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STRATFORD METROPOLITAN MASTERPLAN HOUSING APPROACH

Introduction

- 1.1 The approach to housing in the Stratford Metropolitan Masterplan has been informed by the *Strategic Housing Market Assessment* (August 2010) (SHMA), *Affordable Housing Economic Viability Assessment* (July 2010), the *Choices for the Core Strategy* consultation document (November 2010), *The Mayor of Newham's Approach* (November 2010) and a meeting and conversations with housing officers at Newham (that took place from August to November 2010).

Current and Emerging Housing Policy

Strategic Market Housing Assessment

- 1.2 As part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy, a borough wide Strategic Housing Market Assessment has been undertaken. Whilst this provides the evidence to inform a policy response rather than providing the policies themselves, there are a number of points raised that are relevant for the Stratford Metropolitan Masterplan:

- 17.5% of all households in Newham live in overcrowded conditions.
- 32% of people in Newham want to move, and the main reasons found by the SHMA are that people are feeling overcrowded and therefore seeking larger homes.
- Many larger homes have been converted into smaller units since 2001 (therefore probably compounding the need for more family homes), with Stratford and West Ham community forum area having the highest number of homes in multiple occupation (HMO) in the borough.
- One and two bed units make up nearly 60% of the borough's stock. Just under half of homes are flats.
- 17.3% of households in the Stratford and New Town ward are unsuitably housed.
- Over 20% of households have moved within the last 12 months, with the most significant turnover in the privately rented sector.
- There are falling levels of owner occupiers, down from 29% in 2001 to 19.5% in 2009.
- There is a need for 20,000 dwellings in Stratford and West Ham Community Forum area over the next five years. The proposed development in Stratford would make a significant contribution towards meeting this need.
- Of the above figure, there is a significant requirement for larger family homes in the affordable housing tenure.

- 1.3 These key findings in terms of housing need and the housing market have informed the masterplan's approach across the area and are explained in more detail below.

Core Strategy

- 1.4 Based on this evidence, the *Choices for the Core Strategy* consultation document (which is subject to public consultation in November and early December 2010) states that:
- A proportion of 39% of all new homes are proposed as family homes, with a preference that family housing is to be three-bedroom (particularly where it is affordable). However, ultimately, the mix of tenures and sizes on individual schemes will be assessed on a case by case basis, taking into account factors including the location of the site and the existing housing mix in the area. The viability of this proportion of family housing also needs to be assessed as recommended in the *Affordable Housing Economic Viability Assessment* report.

- Strategic sites defined in the *Choices for the Core Strategy* are defined as being suitable for low, medium or high family housing provision. As a general rule, low family provision would comprise 20% of the units, medium family would be 30%, and high family would be 40%.
- As a guide, low density would typically be 2 to 3 storey houses and flats making a strong provision for families; medium density generally from 4 to 6 storeys comprising a mix of flats accommodating family and small households; and high density schemes would accommodate mostly smaller households and some families in flats consisting of development of 7 storeys and above.
- The Council proposes a target for negotiation of between 35% and 50% of housing to be affordable based on viability evidence. This will be applied flexibly on a case-by-case basis.
- The preferred split within the affordable housing provision is for 40% intermediate housing and 60% social rented, although, again, this may vary on a case-by-case basis.
- Existing UDP policy, as well as the emerging Core Strategy, emphasises the importance of creating successful places, including requiring high design quality and integrating high quality amenity space. The provision of private amenity space for family dwellings is particularly important.

1.5 In addition the *Choices for the Core Strategy* consultation document states that in considering planning applications for housing, the primary concern will be the need to secure mixed and balanced communities and to meet the Core Strategy housing target as set by the London Plan. The Council will also have regard to the following matters when determining an appropriate level of affordable housing:

- scheme viability,
- the availability of subsidy,
- the existing mix of housing in the area,
- the individual circumstances of the site in terms of site conditions, local context and site features,
- the availability of required infrastructure and community facilities for residents.

1.6 There is reference in the Core Strategy as well as the SHMA to the relationship between worklessness and housing. The provision of good quality housing is integral to tackling worklessness, and to the creation and maintenance of successful communities. In other circumstances, overcoming worklessness through other means can be key to people being able to access good quality housing.

Mayor of Newham's Draft Housing Strategy

1.7 The Mayor sets out some key principles through his draft housing strategy. Those that are particularly relevant to this strategic masterplan are as follows:

- providing aspirational housing that helps to tackle the high levels of population churn in Newham;
- avoiding enclaves of either social or private housing and instead balancing them alongside each other;
- high quality housing, irrespective of tenure;
- improvements in energy efficiency in new and existing homes;
- creation of more three-bedroomed properties to allow as many families as possible access to high quality homes;
- reiteration of the Core Strategy point that 39% of all new homes need to be family homes.

1.8 It also notes that whilst a third of Newham's housing stock is social rented housing, need still outstrips demand (as demonstrated through the SHMA). However the strategy

emphasises that to date there has been too great a priority on building social housing. Instead, alternative ways should be found to addressing the need for social housing such as promoting a major shared equity scheme in the borough and using the private rented sector to meet housing need.

Meeting with Council Officers

- 1.9 In addition to review of published materials, the masterplanning team met with housing officers to discuss the masterplan. Officers emphasised a number of further points that they wished to be taken account of:
- Housing should be truly tenure-blind with no differentiation in external appearance or finish, or in the application of sustainability or space standards.
 - All tenures should include 10% wheelchair accessible units.
 - All tenures should ideally use the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) space standards. This will either be supported by a future Core Strategy policy, or strongly encouraged if not.
- 1.10 In relation to affordable provision, officers note that where new-build homes are in high density housing forms such as in tower blocks, the Council will aim for a minimum affordable housing provision of at least 35% of dwellings. In the first instance, this should be provided on site, in line with Government guidance on mixed-tenure housing provision. However, where there are clear and justifiable reasons why the provision cannot be accommodated on site, the Council may discuss alternative forms of provision with the developer. For example, it may be permissible to provide 40% of the proposed affordable homes on site as intermediate homes, with the remaining 60% of provision being translated into a commuted sum in lieu of on-site provision. This will be used to fund affordable housing provision elsewhere.
- 1.11 Where densities are mid-range or low, and there is a proportion of 'front and back door' housing types, the Council will expect the developer to build out the full proportion of affordable homes in line with the policy set out above. The exact approach on each site would be negotiated and depend on site conditions, context and viability amongst other considerations.
- 1.12 Some of these points can be reflected in the Stratford Metropolitan Masterplan, however they should also be followed up in any future supplementary planning document (SPD).

Stratford Metropolitan Masterplan Proposals

Areas of Focus

- 1.13 The following paragraphs set out how the Council's housing policy and strategy has been integrated into the housing approach that the masterplan has taken in the four areas of focus. These approaches to housing development have been incorporated into the masterplan and have informed the financial viability testing, transport assessment and community infrastructure assessment.

Town Centre

- 1.14 The majority of housing proposed through the masterplan for the town centre is as high-density apartments which will provide urban living rather than family living. The Council is also seeking to achieve a range of community benefits in this area such as additional connections, a publicly-accessible leisure centre, a destination market, improved public realm and a contribution towards infrastructure such as the two-way working of the gyratory. Therefore, in this area, it is suggested that there should be flexibility in terms of provision of family housing and affordable housing. In terms of affordable housing, as suggested by housing officers, requiring commuted sums for part of the affordable housing provision might be appropriate, particularly if schemes were able to demonstrate that they were meeting other Council's aims and aspirations for the area.

Carpenters

- 1.15 With relation to the Carpenters area, the needs of the borough must be balanced against the needs of existing residents and the provision of the Carpenters Charter, which is already in place for residents of the areas committed for demolition. The Charter allows for existing residents to return to a new home in the area. The remaining community has reiterated their desire to stay in the area and stay together and the Council will facilitate this.
- 1.16 Housing in Carpenters should be high quality, aspirational housing, with a wide mix of apartments, terraced and mews houses and maisonettes (with their own front door to the street) and high levels of family housing. This will help to meet the Mayor's objectives of combating churn and provision of more three bedroom homes.
- 1.17 The principle which underpins the new mix of homes in the Carpenters area is that there is no net loss of affordable housing space (as per the London Plan). This is the starting point, but may need to be negotiated depending on community needs, viability, emerging government housing policy and the availability of grant. It is proposed that:
- Former residents of the three towers and selected Doran Walk properties currently being decanted who were legally renting from the Council will have the option to return to the estate. This offer will be extended to any other tenants affected by the development.
 - The balance of affordable units that are then required could be re-provided as an appropriate mixture of intermediate and social tenures, balancing housing need; financial viability and the Mayor of Newham's strategy of avoiding enclaves of social or private housing.
 - Leaseholders/freeholders will be offered a shared equity scheme if they wish to stay in the area by purchasing a home in the development.

Chobham

- 1.18 Housing in Chobham should be high quality, aspirational housing, with a wide mix of apartments and terraced housing and high levels of family housing. This will help to meet the mayor's objectives of combating churn and provision of more three-bedroom homes.
- 1.19 Affordable homes should be provided on site in line with Council guidance (see above).

Sugar House Lane

- 1.20 Housing in Sugar House Lane should be high quality, aspirational housing, with a wide mix of apartments, terraced and mews houses and maisonettes (with their own front door to the street) and high levels of family housing, including private family housing including four bedroom properties. This area also has the potential to accommodate some high-end town houses fronting the Three Mills Wall River, which will provide a unique offer that is unavailable elsewhere in Newham. This will help to meet the mayor's objectives of combating churn and providing more three-bedroom homes and help differentiate this housing offer from other housing that is being developed across the wider Stratford area.
- 1.21 Affordable homes should be provided on site in line with Council guidance (see above).

