Dear resident,

I hope in recent months you have been aware of, and possibly taken part in, discussions in your neighbourhood about ideas on how to improve the area where you live.

Since consulting on and publishing Westminster’s Housing Renewal Strategy, the council has been working with local groups of residents to appoint urban design specialists to look at selected neighbourhoods.

The specialists are working with the local community to come up with a variety of options which aim to increase the number of affordable homes in your area, as well as improve the quality of homes, outdoor spaces and public facilities.

As draft proposals and options are presented in your neighbourhood for discussion, some residents will want to know what will happen if their home is identified for improvement or redevelopment in the draft options.

This guide is for council tenants, leaseholders and freeholders who live in neighbourhoods where ideas for improvement and redevelopment are being discussed and consulted on. We are committed to providing a range of ways to help you find a new home if redevelopment plans are agreed that affect your home.

At the heart of all these re-housing options is our intention to help anyone who wants to stay living in their neighbourhood to remain. We very much hope that you will want to continue living in your neighbourhood and that you find helpful this guide to how we would help you to stay in the area.

Philippa Roe
Cabinet Member for Housing
Guide to re-housing options

Our commitments to secure tenants whose landlord is Westminster City Council

If redevelopment plans are agreed for your neighbourhood we will:

- Write to you to let you know if your home is affected and whether there will be a need for you to move.
- Re-house you through one of the five options set out in this guide.
- Provide you with your own personal re-housing officer who will help you with your options and any assistance you need to bid for new homes through the council’s Choice Based Lettings system.
- Pay you compensation for losing your home and cover your reasonable moving expenses which are currently £4,700.

4,700 Homeloss Payment – this is only paid if you lose your home. You will not receive this compensation if your current home is refurbished and you continue to live in it after improvement works finish.

Disturbance Payment – this is paid on a flat rate based on the size of your home. The maximum amount paid is normally £566 – although claims above this amount can be made with valid receipts for all moving expenses.

Some examples of reasonable moving expenses include use of registered packing and removal companies, Royal Mail redirection services and disconnection and reconnection of utility services such as gas, electricity and telephone. In some cases payment for white goods or furnishings may be paid for if they don’t fit in the new property.

Re-housing options for secure tenants:

1. Move straight into one of the new homes built: If new homes are build we will aim, if possible, for the new homes to be complete before you have to move out of your old home.

2. Get top priority on Choice Based Lettings to bid for other homes in your local area or across Westminster: If you want to move to a property advertised on Choice Based Lettings you will be given band A priority which will mean you have a high chance of being offered the property as a permanent re-housing offer. This option might be attractive if there is a particular estate or family member, friend, workplace or school you want to live closer to.

3. Move into a housing scheme for the over 60s: Secure tenants who are over 60 years of age and would like to, can be re-housed in one of Westminster’s Sheltered Housing Schemes or, if wanting to move outside of London, on the Seaside and Country Homes Relocation programme.

4. Become a home owner through a low cost home ownership scheme: Secure tenants will receive top priority for new homes built in their neighbourhood which help households get on the property ladder.

5. Accept a temporary re-housing offer but have a right of return to the new homes when construction is complete: If it is not possible to complete the new homes before you move out of your old home, we will re-house you into a temporary home until construction is complete.

Our commitments to leaseholders and freeholders

If redevelopment plans are agreed for your neighbourhood we will:

- Write to you to let you know if your home/property is affected and begin arrangements to buy back your property.

If the property is not your main home, we will:

- Pay you the market value for your property plus an additional 7.5% compensation for losing the property.
- Cover all reasonable expenses for the sale of the property, moving from the property, and purchase of a new property.

Examples of such disturbance payments include stamp duty, mortgage and lender fees, solicitors fees, registered packing and removal services, disconnection and reconnection of services and Royal Mail redirection services. In some cases payment for white goods or furnishings may be made if they don’t fit in the new property.

- Offer you a range of options for purchasing a new home which are summarised in this guide.
- Provide you with an independent advisory service which can help you with your re-housing options and financial advice.

Re-housing options for leaseholders and freeholders who both own and live in the property as their primary home:

1. Make your own arrangements to move: If you prefer, you can make your own arrangements for moving on from your home. The council will do all it can to assist you by fast tracking the sale process for buying back your property and payment of all monies and compensation.

2. Register your interest in swapping to another council property in Westminster: If you are interested in moving into a nearby property or to another Westminster neighbourhood, we will help you find a property which you could purchase and relocate to. This option might be attractive if there is a particular estate or family member, friend, workplace or school you want to live closer to.

3. Give you first preference to buy one of the new homes built for sale: If you want to continue living in your neighbourhood, you would be expected to make your own financial arrangements for buying one of the new homes (although the independent advisory service can provide you with advice on which lenders you could approach).

4. Transfer the value paid for your home into an equity stake in one of the new homes built: the new homes will be built to a higher design and modern

Continued overleaf
Re-housing options for leaseholders and freeholders who both own and live in the property as their primary home:

environmental standards, which means the values are likely to be more than your current home. We will offer you the option to transfer the value of your current home and your homeloss payment into the purchase of one of the new homes*. You will not have to pay any rent or other charges on the value you cannot afford.

The benefits to you of choosing this option are that you:
- won’t have to pay any charges or rent on the equity you do not own
- will be living in a higher quality home built to modern design standards (which should reduce your energy and water bills)
- will get your share of any increase in the value of the property if you decide to sell it in the future.

For example, if your home is worth £250,000 the council will buy it back from you at this price. The council will then pay you a homeloss payment of £25,000 (10% of the value). You can transfer the total payment amount of £275,000 into the purchase of one of the new homes built in your neighbourhood – even if the new home is valued at more than this amount.

The benefits of transferring to a new home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current home</th>
<th>New home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£50,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£100,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£150,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£200,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£250,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£300,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£350,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£400,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£450,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unowned equity stake

Your equity stake

Please note that this is an example and the market value of new homes has not been confirmed.

Become a tenant: If you face financial hardship and are finding it difficult to meet the costs of being a home owner, we will consider offering you the option to become a council tenant. Depending on individual circumstances, such as how long you were previously a tenant and your financial position, we will buy back your home at a discounted amount. You will not receive any additional compensation (homeloss payment or disturbance payment) under this option.

If we buy your home and assign you a tenancy, you will be re-housed under one of the four options outlined in this guide for secure tenants.

* The new home is required to be the same number of bedrooms as your current home, although you would have the option to buy a smaller property if this suited your needs better.