

Questions from Hayes Town Centre Estate Residents

Secure Council Tenants

Most of the key facts that you need can be found in the Landlord Offer and the Guides, but we have set out below answers to questions we have been asked in the run up to the ballot as you might find them useful. If your question is not covered here please do contact us for a one to one discussion.

If you require this information in another format or need support understanding this material, please contact us on 0800 994 9323.

Please note this is a live document and will be updated

1. How is the Home Loss payment of £6,500 set?

Home Loss payment is a statutory payment, annually reviewed by the government, and currently set at £6,500. The council is also obliged to cover your reasonable costs of moving. Hillingdon Council propose to do this by organising a comprehensive removal and disconnection service but if there are other costs incurred by tenants outside of this service these will be reimbursed as disturbance payments on top of the £6,500.

2. What rehousing options elsewhere in Hillingdon are available for secure council tenants that do not want to stay on the estate?

As set out in the guide the council will support any council tenant that wants to move elsewhere in the borough or further afield. There is a lot of development taking place in the borough, including new homes being built by the council and housing associations, that would be available for tenants to bid into. Our officers will support tenants through this process.

3. What are the benefits to me if I decide to move off the estate?

The council understands that some tenants might not want to return to the new estate as want to live in a different part of the borough or type of property, or closer to friends or family.

This decision will not affect your right to the Home Loss payment of £6,500 to spend on what you wish, and the council will cover the cost of you moving and settling into your new home, in a similar way as you would get if you moved into one of the new homes.

4. If I decide to move to a new home off the estate, will the council cover the cost of decorating the new property?

It is your choice to bid for properties off the estate or to stay and take up one of the new properties. There will be a wide variety of properties off the estate of differing ages but all will be in a good lettable condition. If you think a property will be unsuitable you will not bid for it. The council will cover your reasonable costs of moving including the costs to alter or refit curtains and carpets.

5. Will the council reimburse the cost of improvements tenants have made to their existing homes such as new flooring, decorations and other items that can't be taken to their new home?

The new homes on the estate will come with floor covering and new kitchens and bathrooms. The council covers the reasonable costs of moving including dismantling furniture and moving to the new home. If there are items you wish to take with you from your current home such as fitted wardrobes we will arrange with our in-house removal contractor to assess this prior to moving these to your new home. If there are any other items you wish to take we will assess this on a case by case basis.

6. How will the phases work and will I be able to stay close to Hayes town centre because of local connections, children's school, doctor, workplace etc?

We will carry out the redevelopment in phases and this means that most people (from Phase 2,3 and 4) will only have to move once into a brand new home built for you on the estate.

However, those in the phase one demolition area, who want to stay on the estate, will have to make a short-term temporary move while we build a new home for them. This will definitely be within LB Hillingdon and we will aim to provide the temporary homes as close as possible to the estate, even utilising empty properties on the existing estate but on the later phases, where appropriate.

Alternatively, those tenants in phase one might want to make a permanent move rather than move twice. We will help you to use the Choice Based letting system to choose from any of the available social housing in LB Hillingdon and you will have priority banding to ensure that you find the right property in the timescale.

Where residents indicate that they wish to be relocated outside the borough we will do what we can to help but realistically it is very rare that this can be achieved.

The indicative phases and demolition dates are set out in the Landlord Offer.

7. Can the council do something about my overcrowding while I am waiting for a new property?

Where families on the estate are severely overcrowded, we will aim to move them where possible, to resultant empty properties that may arise in phases 2, 3 and 4 on the existing site while they wait for a new home. This is subject to assessing resident housing needs.

8. What will the council do to about the negative impact on residents of living near a construction site while the homes are being built?

The council will be working hard to ensure that disruption is minimised. It will ensure that the contractor is part of the "Considerate Contractors" scheme and will be make sure that they abide by strict health and safety requirements. Limits will be placed on working hours and measures put in place to reduce dust and noise nuisance. As part of the housing needs assessment, you will be able to highlight any particular health issues that the council needs to take into consideration.

9. Can the council provide translation for residents where English is not their first language?

We are happy if requested to provide information in an alternative format for residents and arranged telephone interpreters if required. Due to the covid restrictions we have consulted with over 90% of estate residents via telephone and found often other family members are happy to call us interpret and ask any follow up questions they may have about the proposals.

However, given the large number of Somali speakers on the estate we have made sure that there is a Somali speaker on hand at all of our recent drop in events.

10. Will there be four bedroomed homes and can I see the plans for those?

The council will build a range of new 1,2,3 and 4 bedroom homes on the estate and this is set out in the Landlord Offer.

11. What plans do the council have for more elderly residents in our estate who need help from their neighbours e.g. shopping, socializing day to day help?

The council will work closely with older and vulnerable residents throughout the redevelopment and specialist Decant Officers will be assigned to individual households. The officer will liaise with support providers and social services where necessary and provide an enhanced service to support residents with all aspects of the moving process

In addition, wherever possible, we will take into consideration any request for new accommodation to be near existing neighbours so that informal support networks can be maintained.

12. Do residents have a choice as to where they live in the estate?

Where there are several homes available in a phase of the right size for your household you will be able to choose location and we will take into consideration tenant preferences on floor level where possible. All homes above ground floor will be accessed by a lift and have level access.

13. Can I be re-imbursed for taking time off work to move?

If the main secure tenant will lose earnings in order to take time off work on the moving day the council will reimburse the tenant for one day of work.

14. Can the council say what the new rent and service charge will be?

You will be charged the formula social rent for the new build property that you move into. If you move to a larger or smaller home this will be reflected in the rent level.

Service charges are the set amount you are expected to pay in return for services. The charges are based on the actual costs that the council incurs to deliver services to the building, flat or the estate. As we are still designing the new estate it is too early to calculate the service charges.

The council understands the desire to limit service charges and as part of the detailed design process the cost of services can be kept down by considering lower maintenance materials and planting in communal areas for instance.

15. I would prefer to arrange for removals myself - why is the council doing it instead?

It has been found elsewhere that a comprehensively planned operation where the council arranges (and pays for) for removals will mean a smoother transition on moving day, no clash of removal vans, problems with disconnection of appliances causing flooding for neighbours etc. It also avoids residents needing to pay this cost in advance and having to claim it back later, with copies of invoices etc.

The Council will appoint reputable approved removals firms to ensure tenants possessions are treated with care and respect.

16. Will single tenants be catered for?

The council will build a range of new 1,2,3 and 4-bedroom homes that meets the need of various household sizes. Therefore, a single secure tenant will be rehoused in a 1-bedroom property that meets their needs either on the estate or elsewhere, if they prefer, using Locata. They can also keep one extra bedroom if they are currently under-occupying.