

The Future of Avondale Drive Estate

A GUIDE FOR PRIVATE TENANTS



Looking to the future for Avondale Drive Estate

Hillingdon Council wants to ensure that Avondale Drive Estate is a good place to live for existing residents and future generations.

Following initial consultation with residents over the summer of 2020 the majority of residents wanted the council to explore a redevelopment option and the council is therefore developing designs for a new estate, in consultation with residents.

When finalised eligible residents will be able to vote on whether they want the proposals for redevelopment to go ahead. If you have been on the housing register for 12 months at the time of the Landlord Offer you will get a vote.

No decision will be made to go ahead with the redevelopment proposals until the result of the ballot is known.

What this might mean for private tenants if there is a yes vote

If residents vote yes, and the council approves the redevelopment proposal, the council will buy back homes that are privately owned on the estate so that the existing buildings can be demolished, and new homes built. This means that private landlords will need to ask their tenants to move out of their homes before the council buys them back.

Private residents who have been on the housing register for a year or more when the Landlord Offer is published will get a vote.

The council understands that this can be an unsettling time but wants to reassure you that it will provide regular, open, transparent, timely information to landlords and their tenants, including plenty of notice about the programme and any key dates that need to be planned for. We will act fairly in line with good practice.

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The council will redevelop the estate in phases, so most residents will not need to move out immediately. In most cases the council will buy back before the phase of development is about to begin, however this could be earlier if your landlord decides to sell their property back to the council earlier.

If you are a private tenant, you are likely to be renting on an Assured Shorthold Tenancy. This allows the landlord to give you two months' notice when they need you to vacate.

Help for private tenants to find alternative accommodation

Many private tenants will manage to arrange alternative accommodation in their notice period, but we are aware that some tenants may find this challenging for various reasons.

The council is committed to offering relevant support and practical advice to enable affected tenants to find a replacement home. Therefore, the council will:

- assist private tenants through the Homeless Prevention Service in order to find alternative and affordable private rented accommodation
- provide a tailored housing advice service to explain accommodation options including shared ownership or Help to Buy property
- support affected tenants by signposting local letting agencies, liaising with agencies and landlords, helping households to complete applications, and advising on benefit entitlements
- commit to an ongoing communication process so that private tenants will know which phase they are in and the likely date that their property will be needed so they will have a lot of time to plan their move.

Subject to eligibility, the council may also be able to provide financial assistance to cover:

- a tenancy deposit,
- the first month's rent and
- reasonable removal costs

It will be some time before anyone needs to move but if you would like to discuss your individual situation and understand how we might be able to help you in the future please phone the Homeless Prevention team on 01895 556 666.

Private tenants on the council's housing register

The council is conscious that there are some private renters on the estate that are on the council's housing register and that they have been actively bidding for some time.

If the redevelopment goes ahead, the council intends to build a number of additional council homes on the estate, in addition to re-providing homes for the current council tenants. If you are on the housing register and using the Choice Based Letting system this should mean, there will be more homes to bid for in the future.

If you wish to discuss your individual circumstances and banding please contact the Homeless Prevention team on 01895 556 666.

Households on Band A and B on the housing register

In the interests of providing housing for those in the highest demonstrable housing need, while at the same time recognising the need to support sustainable communities, the council will reserve the additional new council properties being built for those Band A and B households who already live on the estate. This means that where there are surplus new homes in a phase, that meet your requirements, you will be given **priority** to bid for the homes, ahead of Band A and B households from elsewhere in the borough.

This will only apply to private residents who are in band A or B on the council's housing register and have been on the housing register and living on the estate for over one year prior to the publication of the Landlord Offer.

This offer is not open to lodgers or residents who are not considered to be part of the tenants' household. You will be accessed for a property that fits your housing needs in line with the council's Social Housing Allocation Policy.

If you would prefer to move off the estate at that point, you will be given **priority banding** on the council's Choice Based Letting system six months before your move. You will be able to bid for properties that you are interested in across the borough.

As a private renter becoming a new council tenant on Avondale Drive Estate you will be charged a property let at 'London Affordable Rent' appropriate to that new home. You will be provided with an introductory tenancy for 12 months and once this period completes, and if there are no issues with your tenancy during the trial period, this will become a five-year fixed tenancy. If you choose to move off the estate, you will pay the rent as set out on the Choice Based Letting system for that particular property.

The council will not need your landlord to provide vacant possession of your current property until it is needed in the phased programme, however, if your landlord chooses to sell their property back to the council earlier than planned, you will be provided with **high priority banding to bid for alternative accommodation away from the estate.**

Independent Tenant and Leaseholder Advisor

All residents have access to an 'Independent Tenant and Leaseholder Advisor' who has experience of the issues that arise for tenants in this situation and can give independent advice. They can be contacted on:

0800 317 066

info@ppcr.org.uk

The Ballot

Hillingdon Council will undertake a ballot of residents in the spring which will be run in line with the Greater London Authority (GLA) requirements for resident ballots. The design proposals and re-housing offer will be set out in a written Landlord Offer and eligible residents will vote yes or no to the proposals. Once the Landlord Offer is issued you will have five weeks to consider it before you have to cast your vote.

The following residents will be eligible to vote if they live in a block that is part of the planned redevelopment programme:

- An existing secure or assured tenant named on the tenancy agreement,
- A resident on the estate who has been on the housing register for at least 12 months prior to the Landlord Offer
- A resident homeowner, named on the lease, who has been resident on the estate for at least 12 months before the Landlord Offer

In line with GLA requirements the ballot is being run entirely independently from the council by Civica (formerly Electoral Reform Services). They will issue and collect the ballot papers and confirm the result. You will be able to vote by post, phone or online.

Contacting us

If you would like further information, please contact the team on:

Phone: 0800 944 9323

Email: consultation@iceniprojects.com