

YOU SAID WE DID

# DRUIDS HEATH COMMUNITY CHARTER



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# INTRODUCTION

Earlier in the year, the Council drafted a Community Charter for the Druids Heath regeneration programme. The Charter was designed to re-set the nature of the relationship with the community after a challenging history and to provide some written assurance to the community about their rights and entitlement throughout the process.

Throughout March-April 2024, the Council held several workshop sessions to get feedback from the community on the Charter and released a survey to give people a chance to provide feedback if they couldn't do so face to face. The workshops were facilitated independently by Loconomy.

Over the summer period, the Council have reviewed feedback from the community and updated the Charter taking in to account the feedback we received. We have tried to summarise the key themes people commented on below for transparency. This won't take into consideration all individual comments but picks up on feedback that was provided on multiple occasions by different people.



# LANGUAGE

There were some members of the community who felt that the language we used around the different offers for specific cohorts was too vague and didn't provide assurance that these offers would really happen.

We have taken this into account and tried to firm up the language wherever we can. However, the Druids Heath regeneration project is a project that is going to last for a minimum of 20 years.

We don't know what national, local and regional changes might happen in that time so have tried to be clear that the document is a flexible one that will require regular review.

Additionally, the Council are working hard to procure a development partner to support this project and they will want to have a say around how they can add to the offer, and they may have aspects that they can't support.

This has led to the Council not always being able to use definitive language.

# TIMELINE

During the workshop sessions, several members of the community wanted to be clearer about the timeline for delivery. The draft Charter was launched prior to the masterplan launch which set out the proposed timelines.

We have included the proposed timeline that was launched as part of the masterplan process. The timeline may change as it is reliant on both the planning and procurement process.



# WAYS OF COMMUNICATING

Several members of the community highlighted concerns with receiving overall, most of their information from the Council online. We understand that lots of the Druids Heath community don't communicate online and that continuing with this approach may exclude them.

The Charter includes information on how we will communicate with the community and make sure they can access important information. Whilst we know online engagement doesn't work for everyone, it works for some people.

We are committed to ensuring there are multiple ways of communicating key pieces of information and this might include letters, face to face sessions and specific visits, as well as online engagement.

# ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The Council have made changes to this section to incorporate the principles of the Council's Corporate Engagement Strategy. The strategy sets out a several principles that are based on a 'powered by the people' approach.

We have committed to continuing this approach moving forward. A new dedicated website has also been created which will provide the most up-to-date information about the regeneration.

# RESIDENTIAL & NON-RESIDENTIAL HOMEOWNERS

Homeowners expressed concerns about the amount of compensation they might be entitled to and the difference in price between their current home and a new build property. Generally, people were pleased that the Council are exploring financial models to enable them to remain on the estate if they want to.

However, the community wanted more certainty around what these models are and who would be entitled to them.

We have been open about our intentions to progress a shared equity or zero-rent shared ownership approach and this is still our intention. We have tried to be clear about this within the final version of the Charter.

We have also been clear and upfront about the minimum compensation payments homeowners are entitled to.

However, there will be negotiations that we need to have with individual households that will be dependent on their financial circumstances, the value of their home and their home ownership arrangements; for example, mortgages, home improvements made and the financial circumstances that the household are experiencing.

Because these individual circumstances need to be taken into consideration, we can't be more explicit about entitlements that might be more individual, but we hope the Charter is clear that we are committed to ensuring that there are financial models in place that mean homeowners are not priced out of the estate, wherever we can.



## DISABLED ACCESS

There were some concerns from the community that the Charter didn't reflect how people with physical disabilities would be supported to access a home that is suitable for them.

Some households wanted to know whether compensation payments would support any aids and adaptations and some just wanted to make sure that new homes would be suitable.

The Charter has been amended to provide clarity on the specific arrangements for people with disabilities. Fundamentally, the Council must ensure that households who have reported physical disabilities have a home that is suitable for their needs and our obligations under the Equality Act (2010) apply.

## PRIVATE RENTED TENANTS

It was highlighted that the Charter failed to consider an offer for tenants on the estate living in Private Rented accommodation. Initially this was left out as there are such small numbers of these households living on the estate.

However, we acknowledge that tenants living in private rented accommodation need to understand the offer and support available to them. Whilst the Council's statutory obligations are limited in this area, we do have an obligation to try and prevent homelessness wherever possible.

The Charter has now been updated to reflect our commitments in this area.

# LOCAL SERVICES

Community organisations and local services rightly pointed out throughout the feedback process that there was no specific reference to the support they would be entitled to. We acknowledge this was missing from the original Charter, particularly given the significant impact they have on the community.

The Charter has been updated to include a specific section highlighting the advice and support local services are entitled to.



# INDIVIDUAL CONCERNS

Lots of households, mostly those living on the Druids Heath estate expressed concerns about the emotional impact on them due to the proposed demolition of their home. We know that many households will have sentimental ties to their home and many have raised families in their home over generations.

The Council know that the thought of losing their home and facing uncertainty around what comes next can cause anxiety, stress and worry over a long period of time, particularly dependent on phasing.

We know that we cannot replace the memories or experiences that the community have in their home and there will be an element of loss that people will feel.

We are committed to treating people in a way which is empathetic, fair and most of all, transparent throughout this process. We will signpost you for support where we can and ensure that we take our obligations around people's mental health seriously.

For those whose home will be subject to demolition, we will work with you and your family to make sure that you get the best 'deal' possible. This means providing you with good quality advice and doing everything we can to make sure you can stay on the estate if you want to.

There are exciting opportunities through this process. We are keen to show the community what some of the new homes, businesses and the overall estate might look like and want the existing community to be able to benefit from this.

Whilst we haven't addressed people's individual concerns within the Charter, we thought it was important to make sure we recognised the upheaval regeneration can cause for the community and set out our commitments to treat you in the right way whilst you are experiencing this.





# GLOSSARY

Some members of the community highlighted that there were some aspects of the Charter that were hard to understand and wording that would be familiar to Council officers but might not be familiar to members of the community.

We acknowledge this and have added in a glossary section that defines some of the key phrases that people weren't sure about, particularly recognising that regeneration is a complex industry. This will be updated over time so that there is clarity for the community on phrasing used throughout the document.



# CONCLUSION

We would like to thank the Druids Heath community for their feedback throughout this process. The information we received has helped us to understand more what the community needs from us throughout this process.

We hope the Charter provides some assurance to the community that the Council are seeking to work in partnership throughout, in a way that is both fair and equitable. We know that there will still be questions and concerns about the impact on members of the community individually.

We know that regeneration of any kind impacts people in different ways and can cause anxiety. Whilst we won't have all the answers to your questions right at this point, we will make sure you are kept up to date, are well informed and can make the right choices for you and your family.



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