

Druids Heath

Public Consultation

27 November 2017 - 31 January 2018



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 **Birmingham**
City Council

INTRODUCTION

Druids Heath is a purpose-built municipal housing estate that is located approximately six miles south of the city centre and lies on the periphery of Birmingham and Bromsgrove local authority boundaries. It is within the Selly Oak District and Brandwood Ward, and borders green belt land which is within the local authority of Bromsgrove District Council.

The area has good access to the motorway network and local bus services. Local rail services are 3 miles and 4.5 miles away at Cotteridge (Kings Norton) and Shirley.

Druids Heath is predominately a residential area, primarily developed in the 1960's with smaller extensions in later decades to provide a mixture of low rise and high rise accommodation. Many homes are not laid out well with a number of homes not fronting on to streets. There are cul-du-sacs set within substantial areas of open space, which is largely unused and have no identified recreational purpose. The area has remained unchanged since it was built. Druids Heath remains the only large municipal estate in Birmingham that has received no major regeneration and is an area that represents a significant housing market and regeneration opportunity.

WHY ARE WE CONSULTING?

Birmingham City Council is working with master planners to develop three options (A, B and C) for the area. These options have now been worked up and are ready for your comments.

We now require your help to assist our team in shaping the future of your community.

WHAT ARE WE PROPOSING?

There are three options with different levels of rehousing, demolition and new build.

Option A – This option has the least level of rehousing and demolition and focuses on the rehousing of the High Rise Tower Blocks and possible development land.

Option B - This option includes the same properties and redevelopment as Option A and includes the rehousing and demolition of some extra properties which are located in Druids Heath East.

Option C - This option includes the same demolition and new build as Option B and includes additional properties for rehousing and demolition in Druids Heath South.

Please view the enclosed maps with each option shown per map. If you have not got copies of the maps please contact us. Details are at the end of this document.

WHICH AREA IS COVERED

Birmingham City Council considered four areas, Bells Farm, Pennyacre, Druids Heath East and Druids Heath South. After looking at the condition of properties within all the areas, we will be focusing on two areas which are Druids Heath East and Druids Heath South.

Please note that Heath House High Rise Tower Block has received approval to rehouse and demolish.

The remaining 14 High Rise Tower Blocks that will form part of this consultation include:

Barratts House, Bellfield House, Brookpiece House, Drews House, Harrison House, Hillcroft House, Kingswood House, Middlefield House, Moor House, Parker House, Pitmeadow House, Pleck House, Saxelby House, and Topfield House.

Baverstock School has also closed, and this consultation includes a proposal for the site to be used for new housing. The government's Department for Education (DfE) allowed Baverstock to convert to academy status which then ran into special measures and lost pupils. Birmingham City Council appealed to the DfE to find a new sponsor but nobody would take it on so the trustees decided to ask for closure. Birmingham City Council worked with the school to make sure that all pupils had places in new schools. The council therefore feels that as the school falls within the development area, it is best to use the site to provide more quality housing in the area, if the site can be acquired. We realise that in so doing, many local residents will be upset that the site cannot be used as a school, but this is not possible without additional funding from government.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

We have also included general information about rehousing due to regeneration and redevelopment in a question and answer format.

Birmingham City Council recognises that if you live in an area that is being redeveloped and you are directly affected, meaning you have to move home, it can be a stressful time.

We are committed to ensuring that you are kept fully informed and supported throughout the process. We will make sure that there is always someone to answer your questions.

Here are the answers to the questions most frequently asked by customers affected by clearance and redevelopment schemes. If you have any additional questions, or need assistance, one of our Clearance Rehousing Officers will be happy to help you.

Will I be entitled to any compensation?

If you have lived in your property for 12 months or more, a statutory 'Home Loss' payment currently of £6,100 (reviewed annually by central government) is payable when you move out. If you have lived in your property for less than 12 months, you may be entitled to a pro-rata payment, for example, if you have lived there for six months you will receive half.

Deductions will be made to take account of any current and late tenancy arrears and rechargeable repairs to your existing or previous tenancies.

This compensation can only be claimed after you have moved to your new home and handed in the keys to your current property. We will arrange for a cheque to be sent to you as quickly as possible following receipt of your completed Home Loss form. Payments are usually made within four weeks.

You can also apply for a 'Disturbance Allowance' to claim back some of the money that you have spent because of moving home. For example, you can claim the costs of adapting carpets and curtains, although you cannot claim the costs of buying new ones. We will discuss how you can make your claim when your Clearance Rehousing Officer visits you. It is very important that you keep receipts for all payments you make so your claim can be properly assessed.

We will provide a free removal service within the city of Birmingham, and pay compensation regardless of the type of property or tenancy you move to, including if you choose to rehouse yourself.

What help will I get to move?

We are committed to ensuring that your move is as stress-free as possible. To help you, we will arrange and pay to move your furniture and belongings to your new home.

After your removal has been booked we can arrange for boxes to be delivered to you for you to pack your possessions. We will also arrange for qualified engineers to disconnect and reconnect your cooker and washing machine, free of charge.

To ensure your property is secured on the day you move out, and to protect other residents in the area, we encourage you to book a morning removal.

What help, support and assistance will I get?

Before you are made any offers of alternative housing, you will be required to complete an online application form so that you are accepted onto our housing register and correctly assessed for your rehousing requirements. Please be aware that you will need to provide an email address and national insurance numbers for all household members over the age of 16.

You will then be visited by a Clearance Rehousing Officer who will explain the whole rehousing process to you. This dedicated officer will be your first point of contact for any concerns or questions you have and will work with you throughout the process. If they are not available at any time, another member of the Clearance Team will assist.

Will all of my family be moved under clearance?

The Council will rehouse everybody in your household who was living with you when clearance was declared. You will need to complete an online application form and provide information for all household members for them to be accepted as part of your household.

How will I be made offers of accommodation?

Birmingham City Council no longer allocates homes to customers on the waiting list. Instead, customers who need or want to be rehoused bid for available properties under a system called 'choice based lettings'. The council's scheme is called Birmingham Choice. Your Clearance Rehousing Officer will fully explain choice based lettings to you when we first talk about your rehousing needs.

Can you tell me more about choice based lettings?

Birmingham City Council and some of its housing association partners advertise available properties every week on the Birmingham Choice website. The advertisements give you brief details about the property including the family size that it is suitable for, and the date on which viewings will be undertaken for those invited applicants.

If you are interested in moving to one of the homes, you can make a bid for it. Please note that no money is involved; your 'bid' is an expression of interest for that property. When bidding closes after a few days, the bid applications are assessed. If your household is too large or too small for the property your bid will fail.

Of those customers who are eligible for the property, their applications are placed in priority order based on the housing need banding that each has been awarded and the date that the award was made. Customers affected by clearance are given a Band 2 priority award. The top two or three customers are invited to view the property, and you will be invited to view the property by email if you are in first, second or third position.

After everybody has viewed the property, the person in first place (or Bid Position 1) will then be offered it. If they accept the other two customers need to bid again for different properties. If the first-placed person refuses, it is offered to the customer in Bid Position 2. If you are third, you may only be offered the property if the first and second place customers refuse it.

N.B. If you do not attend the viewing, an offer might be made in your absence and may be counted as one of your two offers, see the 'How many offers will I receive?' question.

If you accept the property, the Officer undertaking the viewing will explain the process of how, where and when you formally accept the tenancy and the date on which the repairs are scheduled to be completed. This will give you some time to start packing and make your arrangements. It is important that you advise your Clearance Rehousing Officer of your decision to accept your new home.

This might seem like a complicated process, but our Clearance Rehousing Officers will give you as much assistance as you need to bid for your new home. If you decide not to participate in Birmingham Choice, automatic bids will have to be made on your behalf. This may lead to offers being made of properties that would not be your first choice.

What if I have a change in circumstances during the rehousing process?

You would have to report all change of circumstances online and once reported the application will be reassessed and the outcome confirmed by email.

Where will I be rehoused?

We will work with you to find you a home in, or near to, the areas you want to relocate to. Through Birmingham Choice, you can search for properties in selected areas. Generally, the more areas you are able to consider, the more chance you have of finding a suitable home more quickly.

How quickly will I be made an offer?

This depends on how flexible you are able to be in terms of where you can, or are willing to, move to. Under Birmingham Choice, available properties will be advertised every week which will show you where and what size / type of homes are available.

You may find that there are several suitable properties in an area you want to move to, in which case it is more likely that your bid will be successful and you will be invited to view. An offer may then follow. If your choices are too limited it will take longer for you to be rehoused.

How many offers will I receive?

In most cases you will be made up to two offers of alternative accommodation, following successful bids through Birmingham Choice. These could be council homes or housing association properties, if you have placed bids on homes managed by a registered social landlord.

If you choose to relocate to an area where the council has no properties or to a property you are not eligible for, we will make one offer of accommodation that meets your needs before we take legal action to gain possession of your house.

What should I do with the keys to my current property?

The keys to your current home should be passed to your Clearance Rehousing Officer on the day you relocate, unless an alternative arrangement has been made directly with them. If you fail to return your keys on the date agreed, you will be charged an extra week's rent. We will not process your 'Home Loss' payment (see next page) until the keys to your property have been returned and we are satisfied that you have not left any rubbish at the property, including in the garden, unless previously agreed directly with your Clearance Rehousing Officer.

I am currently in receipt of Housing and Council Tax Benefits. How do these transfer to my new address?

If you accept another Birmingham City Council tenancy, the necessary forms should be completed when you sign to accept the property. Your Benefits will then transfer to your new address.

If you accept a housing association tenancy, you may need to make an appointment at your Customer Contact Centre if you need help to complete the forms.

How do I contact the Clearance Team?

By phone on: **0121 303 1892** or by e-mail: **clearance@birmingham.gov.uk**

Who do I contact if I have issues with my online application?

You can call the **Registration Team** on **0121 303 7410**.

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED IN THIS CONSULTATION

You can complete a questionnaire:

- Online on the Be Heard website:
www.birminghambeheard.org.uk/economy/druids-heath-consultation-on-3-options
- Complete a hand-written questionnaire and return using the attached FREEPOST envelope. If you do not have a FREEPOST envelope please contact us, see details below.

- Come along and ask questions and fill in the questionnaire with a Birmingham City Council officer at any of the consultation sessions listed below:

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Friday 1 December 2017	12:00 midday until 8:00pm	Bells Farm Community Centre, Bells Farm Close B14 5QP
Saturday 2 December 2017	12:00 midday until 6:00pm	The Oaks Primary School, Bells Lane B14 5RY
Wednesday 6 December 2017	12:00 midday until 8:00pm	Manningford Hall Community Centre B14 5RY

If you have any difficulties with accessibility to any of these buildings please call the numbers listed below or email bali.paddock@birmingham.gov.uk and alternative arrangements will be made for you.

An independent organisation is also supporting us with door knocking the properties that are proposed for demolition. Your support would be appreciated by filling in a questionnaire with them. Please note that all officers will have a letter from Birmingham City Council, please request to see this if you have any concerns.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

After the consultation has ended the results will be analysed to find out which option people prefer. A report will then be produced with all the financial information and presented to Birmingham City Council's Cabinet. This report will be presented by the summer of 2018.

Please note that all options are long-term programmes and dates of where and when we start and end will not be available until 2018, after approval by Birmingham City Council Cabinet.

ANY QUESTIONS

If you have any questions please contact:

Bali Paddock

Email: bali.paddock@birmingham.gov.uk or phone **0121 303 3968**

Anne Weston

Email: anne.weston@birmingham.gov.uk or phone **0121 303 6151**

DEADLINE

Please complete online or return the postal questionnaire by **31 January 2018**.



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