

HAM CLOSE UPLIFT PROGRAMME

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED | 100 FAQs



Over the past few months Richmond Council and RHP have asked for your views and feedback on the draft options for the potential regeneration of Ham Close. Throughout this period we've been committed to finding out the answers to the questions you've asked. We've collated the first 100 questions and comments we've received from you and provided responses where we can. In order to be completely transparent the comments/ questions have been included exactly as we received them. You can still submit your feedback and questions by emailing hamclose@rhp.org.uk.

1. In conversation a further question has arisen Why is the construction phase of the development being spread in 3 phases over 72months (6 years)? The presumption is that the Phase 1 "High End" dwellings can be sold to fund Phase 2 in advance and ditto for Phase 3. By this means RHP can minimise their cost of funding at the expense of 4 years unnecessary construction noise, traffic and disruption to the adjacent area?

A key principle of this work as outlined in the Prince's Foundation Report is for residents to remain in the community, this is shared by RHP and LBRuT. The first phase needs to be built on vacant (open) land in order to provide accommodation for those residents who will need to be decanted in order to enable the second phase of development to be undertaken. This process is repeated throughout subsequent phases. This means that the first phase is likely to have a high proportion of replacement accommodation for residents of the estate. If the regeneration was loaded so that private -for sale- accommodation was built first then this would entail residents of the estate being moved off site for the construction period.

2. Why can't the project be funded properly by borrowing at current low interest rates so that it can be carried out in the shortest time and cause minimum disruption?

The funding mechanism will need to be agreed at a slightly later stage of the project. At this stage, we are seeking to understand the views of the proposal of the residents and the community. By having three phases, this reduces disruption to residents who would otherwise have to move out of Ham Close, but this does create a longer period of disruption in the area.

3. Could we have a link to the answers to the questions set in the document shared on Monday 20th of July? I understand new questions have been asked but reading some of the Ham close residents association meeting minutes some of the questions have been answered?

The team is working on providing answers to the questions raised. We feel that due to the large number of questions and comments we will issue an FAQ section which we will share through the Ham Close Community Forum and on the Council and RHP websites.

4. I have just seen the plans for redevelopment of Ham Close. These plans are wholly inappropriate for the space and for Ham village as a whole. The ideal solution would be to refurbish the existing buildings; they are ugly and out of place, but of their time and providing valuable homes for people with plenty of green space. The proposed development does not retain the green space or integrate Ham Close into the village, stated aims at the beginning of the consultation. What has happened to the other proposals for lower density housing?

Refurbishment options were considered but when costed these were not viable. The proposed development would retain an area of green space equal to the current demise of the Green. The proposed development would integrate Ham Close into the local community by virtue of increasing the frontage of the Green onto Ham Street. The proposals for lower density housing were also considered but were found not to be viable.

5. I am shocked at the plans for Ham Close. These buildings are disgraceful and will ruin the beautiful village feel of Ham. It is clear to see the agenda of over crowding is a priority for you! You MUST have visited areas where these buildings have been erected and seen what happens with the people living there - extra traffic, rubbish etc (Steele Court in Teddington is a perfect example!). House prices will plummet because no one will want to look on to blocks of concrete with flat tenants looking into everyone's gardens and houses. Do you live in the area? Ham is known for its beautiful green and peaceful environment - one of the last affordable areas that have this - why destroy this?

The character of Ham Street belies a village environment. However, there are a number of developments in the vicinity of Ham Street that are not of a village character; for example the Grey Court School and a number of local housing estates including the subject site. The existing Ham Close estate comprises flat blocks that range from 3 to 5 storeys in height. The majority of accommodation comprises 5 storey blocks. There are 9 blocks that are 5 storey, 3 blocks that are 4 storey and 2 blocks are 3 storey plus services facilities:- Ham Clinic, Library and Youth Centre. There is no housing on the existing site. The existing estate does not conform to accepted 'village' characteristics. The fact that the higher 5 storey blocks are orientated at 45 degrees to the site and the local street layout presents a challenge to the viability of development options that incorporate new residential buildings infilled between existing buildings on the estate.

6. Why was no feedback or direct questioning allowed at the “consultation meeting” 20/07/15

We are trying to run a comprehensive and open consultation process and the event on 20th July was an opportunity to share a very large amount of information with a very large group of people. The structure of the event was therefore arranged to allow LBRuT and RHP to make introductions and statements regarding the process and the consultant team to present their information and then to break off into workshop style areas where people could ask questions or state their views to the facilitators. The reason for this was that we felt that a group of that size would not allow all people to ask their questions or express their views and this would be best achieved by having the smaller groups. Based on the outcome of the evening, we believe that this did achieve what it set out to do and from the quality and amount of feedback which we received from the workshops. Feedback was also then provided on the evening through Newman Francis (the independent chair of the Ham Close Community Forum) to everyone who attended.

7. Why have 5 options have been reduced to one (although its being spun as two) on a take it or leave it basis

The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave his Budget to Parliament on Wednesday 8th July, including changes to social housing. One important change was the fact that all housing associations will have to reduce their rent levels by 1% per annum over the next four years. This will lead to a reduction in income of £100m over the next 10 years when compared to pre-budget assumptions. RHP has always said that any scheme undertaken at Ham would need to be financially viable and this now means that the scheme must be viable on a stand-alone basis. The scheme which is most likely to be able to meet the key attributes as set out in the Prince's Foundation Report and be able to generate and attract funding to make it viable is the full redevelopment option. Expenditure on refurbishment would not generate any additional income to enable the cost of these works to be covered.

8. Why is the funding available for alternative solutions? There must be other viable options even though the budget affected the planning for most of the original schemes.

Current funding schemes are focused on the support and provision of additional housing and not for refurbishment of existing housing.

9. It is not clearly stated how much of housing will be “affordable” and how much “luxury” – will all housing around the green be luxury? A breakdown should be provided giving details of housing by type and cost with a plan showing the locations

Page 19 of the consultation document shows an example of the possible mix of the additional homes. In this example, 50% of the additional homes will be for sale on the open market and 50% for Affordable Housing which may include Affordable rented homes and Shared Ownership properties. The details of exactly which properties on a plan will follow at a later stage.

10. How much profit will RHP make out of the development of units for sale?

The level of profit generated will depend upon the number of homes developed for sale on the open market. It is intended that all of the profit from the sale of these homes will be re-invested into this scheme to contribute to making it financially viable.

11. What is the area of planned Ham green compared with current area?

The area of the existing Ham Green is 11,734m². The area of the reconfigured Green is 12,067m²

12. 196 Units currently v 400 units planned will introduce approx. 600 – 800 new residents into Ham. This will cause strain on local infrastructure which plans will only replicate existing facilities with no additional services:

The LBRuT planners will assess the extent of increased demand upon local facilities. Any developer is required to make a financial contribution towards 'Community Services Infrastructure' (C.I.L.). The C.I.L. levy will provide funding assistance for local services to be increased. It is also worth considering that the local services do not just provide for the residents within Ham Close, they provide for residents within the whole of Ham and the wider area.

13. What is being done to alleviate road access issues (Through Petersham and From Kingston.)? These will become more congested

The impact of this scheme from a traffic perspective will be raised through LBRuT via the Planning Department to the Highways Department through a concept planning meeting. This will allow suggestions for alleviating any issues to be made and considered.

14. No additional medical or dental facilities appear to be planned - is this correct?

No additional medical facilities have been provided. The existing Ham Clinic facilities and Dental Practice would be re-provided within the proposed Community Hub building.

15. No Additional school facilities appear to be planned- is this correct?

No new school places are planned specifically through this project. However, advice will be sought through the concept planning meeting with the Planning Department who will be able to consider the impact of the scheme on school places.

16. Will there be Fewer shops and what kind (will Sainsbury's/ Tesco's etc. be “invited” in to the Hub Building)?

The current proposal provides 10 shop units as opposed to 13 units. However, the combined floor area of the 10 units is slightly larger than the combined area of the 13 existing units. No plans have been put forward to invite a large supermarket chain to participate in the consultation process; this would present a conflict of interest with existing retailers.

17. Will shop rents be affordable for small local businesses?

Existing businesses will not be disadvantaged by the proposals. The exact details will need to be progressed with each of the leaseholders if they are impacted by the proposals.

18. Will shop rents be affordable for small local businesses?

Existing businesses will not be disadvantaged by the proposals. The exact details will need to be progressed with each of the leaseholders if they are impacted by the proposals.

19. Will youth centre and library service be enlarged to cater for additional population?

The services will be designed to accommodate the demand within the local area. The current expectation is that they will not need to be larger than they currently are but more modern and flexible in their design.

20. The development has 400 parking places but destroys all the existing garages and off road parking - Will 400 parking places be adequate will "second" cars just be parked on adjacent streets?

The parking provision is currently proposed at 1 space per residence. This provision is based on an outline assessment of current LBRuT planning policy requirements. In reality some residents will not have cars. Provision will be made for visitor parking. A transport survey will be undertaken as part of the planning requirements in order to assess proposed requirements. Therefore, this provision may be subject to further revision in that exact numbers of parking spaces could increase or decrease dependent upon the perceived demand.

21. Will bus services be enhanced to allow for increased population?

At this stage, additional number of buses or bus routes has not been addressed. We would expect this to be considered partly through the concept planning meeting, but then any discussions required with TfL would be held by the Council at a later stage.

22. How will the congestion caused by parking for Greycourt School be affected in Ham Street during the construction period and long term?

A Construction Method Statement will be required to consider access and the impact of any construction works at a later stage. During construction works there would be more traffic due to the construction workforce.

23. Will there be Parking provided for the Shops?

At this stage, the design allows parking for disabled residents for the retail re-provision. It is not envisaged that general parking will be provided for visitors to the shops, however we would welcome peoples views in this regard.

24. How many mature trees will have to be felled?

The current proposal would require a substantial number of mature trees to be felled. New trees would be provided in accordance with LBRuT planning condition and landscape requirements.

25. How much money has been wasted on play areas, planting etc on the existing green?

No money has been wasted. The Council has invested in enhancing the green as per one of the key principles of the Prince's Foundation Report and we feel that this has been very well received and used by the community.

26. What happens if CPO on Ham Street/ Ashburnam Road flats and shops and flats not possible?

A CPO would only be considered as a last resort to allow a proposal to be developed. If this were required, the formal process would be followed.

27. What mechanism will be used to ensure owners of existing flats be fully reimbursed for value?

RHP Homeowners will have their homes valued by an independent RICS qualified surveyor. If the homeowner is not satisfied with the valuation, they can instruct their own RICS qualified surveyor at RHP's cost. In addition to the market value, owner-occupiers will receive an additional 10% of the market value for homeless and non-resident homeowners (landlords) will receive an additional 7.5%. In addition, there will be a disturbance payment to cover the legal costs of moving.

28. Will people in small communities be allowed to keep present neighbours?

Every effort would be made to re-house residents according to their requirements based upon their current status. This would include ensuring, where possible, that neighbours could be re-located together.

29. How will decant of occupiers be handled?

Residents of Ham Close will be moved in phases to enable people to remain in Ham Close whilst the construction of the new homes is carried out. Tenants will receive a disturbance payment of £5,000 to cover the costs of removals, re-directing post etc. Vulnerable residents will be given additional support.

30. How will construction traffic disruption/noise etc. Be mitigated to prevent long term nuisance to adjacent households?

In accordance with LBRuT planning requirements, the development proposals will be subject to a condition regarding construction traffic. At the outset of the construction phase, the contractor will be required to submit details to LBRuT regarding the management of vehicle movements, including the time of day of and number of vehicle movements. These conditions would also include for requirements for the safety of pedestrians and for keeping local roads clean.

31. Is there need for a running track in view of the local access to Richmond park etc. Will this cause conflict of use with other residents (especially the elderly)

The inclusion of a running track is optional and would be subject to resident's requirements/preference. The proposal was meant to depict a wide path and was not intended exclusively / specifically for running.

32. What mechanism will be used to ensure transparency with regard to residents' views being taken into account – if the majority are against the scheme will it be cancelled? How will you gauge opinion – will it be put to a vote?

The consultation is a consultation with residents of Ham Close and the wider community of Ham. We will listen to the options and comments made by all those who participate in the consultation and will gauge direction based on this feedback.

33. Why is the construction phase of the development being spread in 3 phases over 72months (6 years)? The presumption is that the Phase 1 “High End” dwellings can be sold to fund Phase 2 in advance and ditto for Phase 3. By this means RHP can minimise their cost of funding at the expense of 4 years unnecessary construction noise, traffic and disruption to the adjacent area.

Construction has been planned in phases in a similar way to other regeneration projects across London. This enables a decant process to be managed which enables residents to remain in Ham Close while the construction is carried out. This will also mean residents will only have to move once. In addition a phased construction is likely to be preferred by contractors and sub-contractors. The exact phasing and timing of the scheme will be confirmed once a final scheme has been approved and a contractor has been appointed.

34. Why can't the project be funded properly by borrowing at current low interest rates so that it can be carried out in the shortest time and cause minimum disruption?

See answer to Q33

35. Could we have a link to the answers to the questions set in the document shared on Monday 20th of July? I understand new questions have been asked but reading some of the Ham close residents association meeting minutes some of the questions have been answered.

See answer to Q3.

36. Where will residents currently be moved to while redevelopment is taking place?

Construction is planned in phases to enable a decant process which will then allow residents to remain in Ham Close while the construction is carried out. This will also mean residents will only have to move once.

37. I am an absent landlord and I rent my property out. Will I be offered a new property in the first phase for my tenant to move into?

Construction is planned in phases, so it will depend on the phase that your property is in. The exact phasing and scheme timings will be confirmed once a scheme has been approved and a contractor selected.

38. Will residents be restricted to only moving once, or would we have the opportunity to move twice if we would prefer to live in another section of the new development?

It would be preferable for residents to only move once as otherwise we will be in a position of creating additional disruption and incurring additional costs for relocation etc. We would only expect one move.

39. Will current residents be guaranteed 'like for like?'

Residents will be given the opportunity to move into a new home with the same number of bedrooms they currently have. If a family is currently over-crowded, they will have the opportunity to move into a larger home.

40. Will rent levels remain the same?

For current residents, the same rent structure will be applied. If a target rent is currently paid then a target rent will be payable on the new property. If an affordable rent is paid then an affordable rent will be payable on the new property. As these will be new properties it is likely that under either rent structure the rent payable will increase slightly.

41. Will service charge levels remain the same?

Cannot determine at this stage.

42. When will leaseholders/freeholders be informed about valuation of their current home?

Cannot specify when that information will be available at this stage of the process.

43. Will owners receive the market value for their home?

Yes. RHP Homeowners will have their homes valued by an independent RICS qualified surveyor. If the homeowner is not satisfied with the valuation, they can instruct their own RICS qualified surveyor at RHP's cost. In addition to the market value, owner-occupiers will receive an additional 10% of the market value for homeless and non-resident homeowners (landlords) will receive an additional 7.5%. In addition, there will be a disturbance payment to cover the legal costs of moving.

44. What will be offered to leaseholders and freeholders currently living on Ham?

RHP Homeowners will have their homes valued by an independent RICS qualified surveyor. If the homeowner is not satisfied with the valuation, they can instruct their own RICS qualified surveyor at RHP's cost. In addition to the market value, owner-occupiers will receive an additional 10% of the market value for homeless and non-resident homeowners (landlords) will receive an additional 7.5%. In addition, there will be a disturbance payment to cover the legal costs of moving.

45. What is the compulsory purchase process?

A Compulsory Purchase Order will only be used as a last resort to allow any development to proceed. A useful guide to the process can be found at: www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/planningpolicyandlegislation/currentenglishpolicy/goodpracticeguides/compurchase

46. Will leaseholders be able to choose which property they move into on the new development?

There will be some flexibility regarding choice of new properties and further details would be provided at a later stage. This could be constrained by phasing arrangements.

47. Will leaseholders' leases be extended under the full redevelopment option?

Yes, this would be considered.

48. Will tenants be offered a new build property?

All current RHP tenants who wish to remain living at Ham Close will be offered one of the new properties.

49. Will tenants currently in a studio be offered a one bedroom flat in the new build?

Yes. We will not be building new studio apartments, so tenants in these properties will be offered a one bedroom home.

50. Will tenancy rights change?

No. You will still have the same rights that you currently have.

51. What is the tenure breakdown for the new development?

Page 19 of the consultation document shows an example of the mix of the additional homes. In this example, 50% of the additional homes will be for sale on the open market and 50% for Affordable Housing which will include Affordable rented and Shared Ownership homes.

52. What is the lifespan of current stock?

We don't hold definitive dates for the life of properties but may replace major parts (ie roofs) over time.

53. Would the shops be built in the first phase?

No, under this proposal these would be built in the second phase of the development in order to permit the continuity of retail operations. Any new build shops would be phased so that they would be able to stay open without interruption.

54. Will shop owners be guaranteed new premises?

Yes. No businesses will be disadvantaged by the development.

55. Will new shops be like for like?

Yes that is the intention. However, the retail units will not be exactly the same. The layout of the units will vary in comparison with existing units. It is intended that the floor area would be equal or greater than the existing units.

56. Where will the new shops be built?

The current proposed Option 1: wholesale redevelopment, proposes that the retail will be re-provided on the library site within the second phase of development.

57. Will leases be provided at the same cost?

See answer to Q17.

58. What rights do tenants renting the shop premises have? Will they be guaranteed a new tenancy or will they need to compete with others?

See answer to Q17.

59. Will local people be given priority when new houses are put up for sale?

Properties for sale will be available on the open market.

60. Could higher buildings be positioned in the middle of the estate, with lower buildings on the outside?

The current proposed Option 1: wholesale redevelopment, is configured so that the majority of higher building are located towards the centre of the site. However, it is not possible to locate all of the taller buildings within the central body of the site. The existing site has a number of five storey blocks located near to the edges of the site along Woodville and Asburnham roads.

61. Will garages be provided in the redevelopment?

There is no intention to provide separate garages within the proposed development.

62. Will residents be compensated if they lose garage space?
No. Garages do not form part of residents tenancies or leases, so there will be no compensation.
63. Will all residents on Ham have free parking?
This level of detail will be considered at a later stage, but the intention will be to provide free parking. We would appreciate peoples views on this matter.
64. Will parking permits be introduced?
See answer to Q63
65. Will residents only be given one parking space?
See answer to Q20.
66. Where will the parking for the community hub be located?
There will be a minimum number of parking spaces associated with the Community Hub. These will be for disabled car parking and essential spaces for staff parking whereby vehicle usage is an incumbent requirement of their work; for example for staff who are health visitors.
67. Will the ground floor flats located around the podium parking have a view of the parked cars?
No. The design of the undercroft parking is intended as a shared internal car park, parking spaces will be within the vicinity to homes but may not be directly adjacent. In addition, the design of the structure does not permit windows and doors to individual houses to have direct access to the car park for reasons of ventilation and fire safety.
68. Will security be provided for car parks?
It is likely that the internal car parks will be controlled by means of security gated access. The internal security arrangements would include:- provision for means of escape in the event of a fire and good lighting levels. It is likely that there will be a requirement for CCTV.
69. What proportion would be social housing?
See answer to Q51
70. How will parking accommodate for the increased population?
See answer to Q20.
71. If 5 storey blocks require lifts, will this increase the service charge levels across the whole estate or only within these blocks?
It is not possible to know what impact this may have on a service charge at this stage of the process.
72. Will there be any maisonettes in the new development?
No.
73. When would the redevelopment begin?
Whilst not possible to be specific at this stage, and dependent upon client, funding and planning approvals, development possibly start in 2018.
74. Can public toilet be included in new build?
Yes.
75. Will residents have to walk between flats to access the green?
No. Residents will have open access to the Green in the same way as it can be openly accessed now.
76. Will the new development be gated?
No the development will not be gated. However, it is likley that internal 'podium' car parks will have security gated access controls.
77. What will be the estimated value of the new builds?
It is not possible to know at this stage of the process.
78. Does the scheme rely on sales of private properties to achieve financial viability?
Yes.
79. Can there be a design competition for architects to put forward designs?
This is possible in principle yes.
80. What percentage of redevelopment will be social housing?
See answer to Q51
81. How long will the whole development take?
The current proposal has identified a three phase development, two years per phase. It is likely to be in the order of 18 to 24 months before construction would commence see also answer:73. An indication of timescale is also given in the Ham Close Regeneration Study Consultation Document: page 18 Item 5.1

82. How will local services handle the increased population on the estate (i.e. roads, shops, schools, health services, etc).

Local services would need to be assessed and where they do not have the capacity to cope with the increased level of demand that the new development would impose then these services would need to be increased. See also Answer 12

83. Will the trees on the estate be cut down to make room for new builds?

Yes, a number of trees would need to be cut down. At planning stage a tree survey would be carried out to establish precisely which trees would require to be removed. The planning application and associated drawings would identify the provision of new trees. The LBRuT planning requirements would need to be satisfied in respect of this; in principle that the removal of existing trees is offset by the provision of new trees.

84. There is a tree on Ham Close that was planted as a memorial to somebody who died. Will this be protected during the redevelopment?

The tree in question would need to be identified and measures undertaken to protect or relocate this tree within the new development.

85. Has the lease for the citizens advice bureau been terminated?

We are not involved in the CAB lease.

86. Has the lease for the medical clinic been terminated?

Neither RHP or the Council own this building

87. Will the youth centre be reprovided?

Yes.

88. What will happen to community policing?

Provision will be made so that this can be reprovided.

89. Why has money been spent on refurbishment of the library and the clinic?

The Ham Library was invested in because it was in need of refurbishment and those works were completed in 2013. The final decision as to whether a redevelopment is required and the exact format of that has not yet finalised and as such the Council and RHP will continue to be responsible for the buildings within Ham Close. We will not let buildings fall into a state of disrepair in the meantime as this would not be good for residents or the wider community.

90. How much money has been spent on the refurbishment of the library and the clinic?

c.£146,000 was spent on refurbishing the library. The Clinic was not funded by the Council.

91. What will happen to existing play areas?

With regard to Option 1: Wholesale redevelopment, LBRuT planning requirements will demand that new play areas are provided. If it is possible to re-use existing equipment within the new play areas, this will be considered.

92. Are new schools being proposed in the area? If so, where would they be built?

See answer to Q15.

93. How much has this programme cost to date?

To be confirmed

94. Who made the decision to reduce the options available from 5 to 2?

See answer to Q7

95. What repairs and maintenance work would be provided in 'stay as you are' option?

Normal repairs and maintenance will continue to be provided however refurbishment (such as the introduction of lifts or remodelling of the homes) will not.

96. If residents express that they do not want to go ahead with redevelopment, will RHP and the council be able to proceed regardless?

RHP and the Council will be looking to understand the views of the residents and wider community and are currently doing this through extensive consultation. Ultimately, a decision will be made by the RHP Board and LBRuT Cabinet regarding which option will be chosen.

97. Will residents be given a vote?

Customers living at Ham Close will help to create the Customer Charter, which will include how their views will be taken into consideration.

98. Why is partial refurbishment no longer an option?

See answer to Q7

99. Will residents on surrounding streets also be consulted surrounding the options?

The wider community will be consulted and this is already underway. There has been one open public meeting on 20th July and there is a further public meeting scheduled for late Autumn this year. Any member of the community is able to attend the drop in sessions in the library or read the proposals which are available online and comment via email, phone or drop in session.

100. Was H.R.H Prince Charles consulted about the change of plans ?

There is no requirement to consult HRH the Prince of Wales.