

## Families and Homes Hub – frequently asked questions

### New services at the Families and Homes Hub:

#### What services will the Families and Homes Hub provide?

The Families and Homes Hub will provide Waltham Forest residents with access to the Council's social care and housing teams in a safe and welcoming environment. It will help the Council better engage with residents who are most in need of these services, in line with the Council's commitments to building better services and putting Waltham Forest residents at the heart of everything we do.

The services that will be provided through the Hub will deliver our Council's family and housing objectives in a single modern, integrated and convenient setting. These include housing solutions advice, some Youth Offending Services appointments and social care appointments and will be a joined-up Council service offer for local residents.

Currently, these services already operate locally in Willow House, Cedar Wood House and Rowan House.

The proposed design will include:

- A self-check-in reception space and signposting to relevant services
- A flexible pop-up space showing residents how Council services and programmes can help them
- A meet and greet area
- Assessment and interview areas, offering open and private spaces
- Touchdown workspace for Council officers to use in between meetings with residents

#### Why does the December 2019 Cabinet report mention that: "It is anticipated that the Probation Service and the DWP may wish to locate to the new Hub"?

When the Hub was first considered, a wide range of services were suggested and rejected including possible use by the National Probation Service. There are public service benefits to co-location as part of the One Public Estate strategy, but due to various logistical and service issues, the decision was made to locate LBWF services only to the Wood Street Families and Homes Hub.

#### What is the difference between the Youth Offending Service (YOS) and the probation service?

The Youth Offending Service works with children and their families who have come into contact with the criminal justice system. The National Probation Service is a national organisation that supervises adult offenders. They are separate entities.

As part of supporting young people in need, there may be limited YOS appointments at the Hub, but the main base for the YOS will be the new Family Resilience Centre, which is planned for the south of the borough.

### New homes:

#### Why does the Council need to build new homes here?

The Council is committed to providing affordable homes for Waltham Forest residents and we believe everyone deserves a safe, quality home. Part of this commitment includes providing affordable homes wherever possible on development sites. The definition of affordable is set by the Mayor of London and local residents are prioritised for affordable homes in the borough. To deliver the affordable homes and other infrastructure such as the Families and Homes Hub, some homes need to be built for sale.

### **How many new homes will there be?**

Approximately 65 new homes will be provided, and these will be designed to be as sympathetic as possible to the context in which the site is located. These homes will help the Council optimise the development to help us with our commitment to providing quality, affordable homes for local people and deliver the services the Hub will provide that will help us reach residents most in need of them.

### **How many of the new homes will be affordable and is this likely to change as the plans progress?**

The Council's target is for 50% of the homes in the new development to be affordable. The affordable homes will be delivered in line with London Plan and London Borough of Waltham Forest planning policy and will comprise both affordable rented and shared ownership homes.

## **Facilities:**

### **How many parking spaces will there be for residents and will these additional homes put more pressure on available nearby parking?**

Ten per cent of the new homes will be for people with disabilities and spaces for blue badge holders will be provided. There are a significant number of secure cycle bays being provided and dedicated cycle lanes are being implemented on Wood Street. This will be a car free development and residents will not be eligible for a parking permit to park on local streets.

## **Woodside Primary Academy:**

### **How are the Council working with Woodside Primary Academy in this development?**

The Council is working closely with Woodside Primary to ensure both the design of the development and any works undertaken do not compromise the health, safety and wellbeing of students, parents and staff. The school has open lines of communications with the Council and the contractor who is overseeing the current demolition works, and the design of the new Hub has developed in response to feedback and engagement we have had with the school. The Council works with the school to disseminate relevant information to parents, and we work with staff at the school to ensure they are able to answer any queries they receive.

To date, there have been two focused engagement sessions with Woodside:

24 September 2020: To update the school about early design ideas and understand their initial thoughts.

20 November 2020: To introduce the demolition contractor, Clifford Devlin, to answer any queries about the demolition, and the architect, Howarth Thompkins, to provide a design update. The design

update included showing proposed views from the interior of the new homes that face the school, to demonstrate the limited extent of any overlooking.

### **What measures have you put in place to ensure that homes don't overlook the school?**

In developing the design for the new building, the safety and wellbeing of children, parents and staff at Woodside Primary Academy will be prioritised. Potential overlooking of the school will be a key planning consideration, and as part of the planning process the project will be required to demonstrate that any impacts of the development on the school are fully mitigated. As such, a suitable setback from the school will be maintained in the design.

To address overlooking considerations, the current design of the proposed building includes the following features:

- Smaller windows on the school-facing side of the building
- An increased distance from the school building to the new building. The distance between the school and the current building is 10 metres; the new design will increase this to 12.5 metres
- The layout of the homes on the southern boundary, towards the school, will be arranged so that bedrooms are located towards the school. Compared to other rooms, these are typically used more at night when the school will be closed.
- The use of inset balconies, which reduce the impact of overlooking compared to cantilevered balconies

### **Will children be safe with any increased traffic or pollution caused by the works?**

Proposals for traffic management and the monitoring and management of dust and noise are a key part of the contractor's health and safety proposals and Construction Logistics Plan. The project team has already met to discuss any concerns and ensure lines of communication are open at all stages of the development.

### **What have you done to ensure the services at the Hub don't pose a risk to the students at Woodside Primary?**

The services that the Hub will offer will support the Council to keep children and teenagers safe. In developing these services, the Council works closely with schools, health and police partners to make sure that every child, especially those vulnerable to abuse or exploitation, has the support they need.

## **Consultation process:**

### **What input can residents have on the proposals and planning submission?**

From our public consultation event on 29 September 2020 until the planning application is submitted in early 2021, the Council will be sharing proposals for the development and inviting feedback, comments and questions. Prior to planning submission, we will be hosting an information event where the project team will outline how the design has evolved and considered feedback.

Residents will also be able to formally submit a response to the planning application during the planning consultation period. These responses will be considered by the Local Planning Authority.

Examples of public feedback influencing the design and function of other developments include Juniper House in Walthamstow, where the nursery was moved to an alternative location, and the Score Centre in Leyton, where location changes were made to the health centre and community rooms, and the nursery was modified to increase its capacity.

If you'd like to view the current proposals, you can do so on the Families and Homes Hub webpage at [www.walthamforest.gov.uk/FHH](http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/FHH)

## **Demolition:**

### **Why is the former library building being demolished in advance of submitting a planning application?**

Demolishing the existing structure allows the development to be more easily 'de-risked' as hidden site issues that aren't typically revealed until after demolition can be uncovered and dealt with. It will also help mitigate the risk of antisocial behaviour that an empty building can present, such as squatting or vandalism. The Council has followed the correct process to make the Local Planning Authority aware of the demolition. During the works the Council will comply with all health and safety and building control requirements.

### **Could the original building have been refurbished or repurposed instead?**

Following an extensive assessment, it was found that a refurbishment of the existing structure to meet current requirements for functionality, daylight and accessibility would be prohibitively expensive.

To ensure there was no loss of service provision for residents, the new, replacement library was formally opened on 13 August 2020, 500 metres from the former site as part of the Marlowe Road redevelopment. It offers community meeting spaces, digital access for the public, and a café with profits invested back into the library. The new library is fit for purpose and offers a more cost-efficient and modern way to deliver vital library services to the community.