

A SELECTION OF FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

On this page is a selection of questions that we have been asked at the various resident events over the last year. You can find more at www.southend.gov.uk/betterqueensway

Why are the tower blocks being demolished?

A key objective of this project is to provide better quality and more energy efficient housing, a range of housing types, a better environment for people to live in, improved public spaces, improved infrastructure and a better connection between the homes in this area and the town centre.

Although the work we have done did not identify any significant structural defects or major structural repairs, it would however cost approximately £30m to refurbish and re-clad each of the existing tower blocks to a higher standard. If the tower blocks were retained this would not enable the Council to meet the wider key objectives of the Better Queensway regeneration.

It is therefore recommended that the project should include the demolition of the four tower blocks. This will clear the area and enable us to create a wonderful new community where people of all ages and backgrounds will wish to live.

Why do you need to build over 1,200 homes in their place?

We have committed to giving every tenant and leaseholder the option of staying within the Queensway estate – to do that and create the same number of affordable homes as currently exists will require a significant new development of private housing to fund that.

We have been talking to housing developers about the project, and all of them have confirmed that to maintain 440 affordable homes on the site well over 700 additional new private homes for sale or rent will be required to make the project financially viable.

How are this number of homes going to fit into the area?

The current housing on the regeneration area accounts for around 7.5% of the site. This means that it is possible from a design and space point of view to have approximately 1,200 homes within the overall regeneration area.

As well as the space created by the demolition works, the project regeneration area also includes the current temporary car parks where Queensway House and the Focus Youth Centre used to stand and we are proposing to reclaim some land through changes to the road layout.

The next stage will be to hold several sessions with residents to develop the options alongside potential development partners.

Where will I live when the tower blocks are demolished?

We have promised that we are going to give tenants and leaseholders that want to remain within the new Queensway that opportunity. That will inevitably lead to some inconvenience and disruption.

However, because large parts of the regeneration site are vacant and can be used as early phases to develop new

homes, we will do our best to ensure that residents only have to move once. That will all be down to the planning and phasing of the project and we want to make sure we manage that as best we can.

Following the tenant consultation in the Summer, we have a much better understanding of what people want to do – this includes tenant and leaseholders (resident and non-resident) and we will be holding several more targeted events before any development takes place to ensure that we know the individual needs of residents.

What tower block will be demolished first?

We do not know yet and this will depend on the phasing – details will become clearer on this once we have an outline planning application and a decanting policy.

I live on a first floor property due to health issues – will I be able to remain on the first floor in the new development?

We would hope to be flexible on location dependant on need and desire, and assessed health or mobility needs will be taken into account as part of the project. Whilst we cannot guarantee that we can give everyone what they ‘want’, we are expected to meet people’s ‘needs.’

When are you going to start and how much notice will we have?

The current draft programme allows for commencement on site in late 2018.

With our regular programme of Resident update meetings you will be kept up to date and have significant notice and choice to decide what is best for you.

Why have you been making improvements to the estate now when the block will just be pulled down anyway?

The improvements are being carried out firstly to respond to residents’ concerns and furthermore we are undertaking works which we have a statutory responsibility to carry out for fire and/or Health and Safety reasons. Although the area is subject to a major regeneration project, this regeneration will take many years to complete – in the meantime our tenants have the right to expect to live in decent homes.

Will the Queensway surgery be staying?

The surgery is not within the project area, and as far as we are aware the surgery is staying.

As a leaseholder, who will make the decision on the value of my property and when?

The Council will arrange for an independent market valuation to be undertaken of your property and you will be offered a package of compensation and support in line with current legislation. More details in respect of payments will be announced shortly and will be discussed with residents on a one to one basis.