

m i FAQs

Your initial questions answered



RUSHMOOR
BOROUGH COUNCIL

More answers April 2009 Update



UPDATE

Dear resident

We wrote to you on 20 February with our first newsletter as well as two leaflets of "frequently asked questions".

We have now met many residents at individual meetings and at the community consultations events at The North Town Base. They have raised lots more questions and here we aim to answer them.

We answer questions about:

- Design of the estate and construction
- Moving home
- New homes
- Existing properties

We hope this will make our position clear. If you've heard more than one answer to a question then this should clarify matters for you. However, if you have another question that we have not already answered clearly please do contact the My North Town enquiry line on **0800 358 0459** or ask a question on our website:

www.mynorthtown.net

Yours faithfully

Julie Ruffle

Neighbourhood Regeneration
Manager



NORTH TOWN

Neighbourhood Renewal

Please note that this information is for your guidance only and does not confer any legal or contractual obligations on the parties identified within it. Any reference to legislation or regulation should be verified and parties affected should always seek independent advice.

CONTENTS:

Questions about the design and construction	03
Questions about moving	04
Questions about new homes	08
Questions about existing properties	10

Questions about the design and construction

1. Will the roads be given new names or will the present ones be kept?

New road names are decided by the local authority in consultation with the Post Office. We are keen to keep a local identity that people can relate to and reflect the fact that North Town already has it's own strong sense of 'place'. So if residents have strong views on this we will do our best to support their wishes.

2. I am concerned at the possible level of construction noise for residents who are night shift workers

There will obviously be some disruption during the construction phases. However, when we select a contractor we will require their commitment to the 'Considerate Constructors' scheme which includes issues such as keeping disturbance to a minimum and not operate noisy machinery late at night, or weekend working for example.

3. Will there be any bungalows?

In the main we intend to build houses and flats. However as we are in consultation with residents

we are interested in your views on the type of properties you would like to see as part of the renewal.

4. What will the community facilities be?

We are already consulting with residents to find out what they would like for North Town. We are certainly exploring the option of providing a larger facility than the current North Town Base. Whatever the future arrangements are we will ensure that there is no lapse in the community facilities during the renewal process.

5. Will the playground be staying?

Yes. The playground facility will be staying and this can be moved if necessary in it's entirety to another location on the estate depending on the MasterPlan layout.

6. Can we choose what property we want i.e house/flat etc.?

This depends on demand for different property types and what people's needs are for a specific type of accommodation. For instance we cannot guarantee at this stage that everyone who wants a house will be able to have one but we will make every effort to match needs where possible, including housing for the disabled.

7. How will you address issues of traffic on North Lane if you propose to add more homes to the estate?

We have appointed Highway Consultants to negotiate with Hampshire County Council and Rushmoor Borough Council. We are aware that the view has been expressed that the County Council sees North Lane as primarily serving the industrial area of North Town rather than the residential area. As our proposals are for residential development then we will work with the relevant authorities to manage new traffic generation and make improvements where necessary.

8. Will there be dedicated older people accommodation particularly as some older people in Alma House and Alma Close have expressed a wish to stay together?

We will definitely be providing older people's accommodation on the estate. We are meeting older residents individually so that we can understand their specific requirements. We will then be looking at different options to meet these needs and we will be considering options for shared facilities such as common lounge, gardens etc. When we have clear proposals, we will fully consult with the affected older people as well as their relatives and carers.

9. Is the MasterPlan going to be like the Woodland Walk (former Boots depot) Estate?

We will listen very carefully to what residents in the area have to say about redevelopment in terms of the layout of the estate and the type of properties people want. We understand that the design of the Woodland Walk estate is not popular with everyone and we will be paying very careful attention to this issue when we produce the Draft Master Plan at the end of April 2009. There will be an opportunity for everyone to come and comment on the Draft MasterPlan and we will then revise it in the light of comments/

Questions about moving

1. Can I stay in Aldershot or on the estate?

Yes. We will do our best to make sure that anyone wishing to remain in the North Town area will be able to do so. The option of moving to another part of Aldershot or Farnborough will also be possible depending on vacancies at the time you are required to move. If you wish to move outside of North Town you may wish to join Rushmoor Borough Council's housing register now.

2. Will I still be entitled to any compensation payment if I decide to move now? I am thinking about renting privately, or buying my own home or taking an offer of alternative accommodation through the Housing Register

Yes. You will be entitled to the homeloss and disturbance payments providing the move is a permanent one.

3. Can I be housed next to my neighbours or family?

If you and a neighbour or family member both wish to continue to live close to one another then where possible we will endeavour to meet this need. However it does depend on the housing needs of both groups of people and the location of different sized accommodation in the phasing. Similarly if you do not want to live next to your current neighbours then we will also try to accommodate your wishes. Any information you provide to us regarding this issue will be kept confidential.

4. What happens about my laminate flooring?

Where possible we would expect you to re-use your existing flooring in a new property. However, if this is not possible we will pay for flooring of a similar quality to include fitting. This cost will come out of the

disturbance allowance. We will not however allow laminate flooring to certain types of properties, i.e upper floor flats due to noise issues.

5. Can we still do a mutual exchange?

At the moment yes. However, as the project progresses we will need to review this situation. Please note that anyone moving out of a property in the affected development area via a mutual exchange will not be entitled to the homeloss or disturbance payments. The incoming tenant will inherit this right when they take over the tenancy.

6. If I had to go to temporary accommodation off the estate and wanted to stay there permanently could I do this?

Yes providing the temporary accommodation meets your permanent housing needs and it is a Pavilion Housing property. However, if we don't have any empty Pavilion Housing homes at the time we need them, we may have to privately rent some accommodation in the area for people to temporarily move to. In this case you would not be entitled to remain in this type of accommodation permanently.

7. Can I keep my Pavilion Housing insurance in my temporary accommodation?

Yes. We can inform the insurance company of your temporary address so they can continue cover. However, this situation may not apply if you are placed in privately rented temporary accommodation.

8. What if I have rent arrears?

You can still be re-housed, but there may not be as many options open to you. It is important that you maintain and keep to a regular payment arrangement for any outstanding monies. Our rent recovery team will be pursuing any outstanding. Up to 75% of the homeless payment will be taken to pay off any arrears that remain at the time of a permanent move.

9. If I move into private rented accommodation can I move back again?

If your move to private rented accommodation was your intended permanent move then you would not be able to return. However, if this was a temporary arrangement made by us then you would be able to move back again. Once we have paid your homeless payment then our obligations regarding re-housing you have been met.

10. Does Pavilion Housing have people to do removals?

We will have professional removal companies. The disturbance allowance will be used to cover the cost of removals so residents will not be expected to fund or arrange this themselves. We can take care of all of this for you. However, if you wish to organise your own removals then the cost of this can be claimed back by providing Pavilion Housing with an invoice and would be met by the disturbance payment. We also have favourable rates with a self drive van hire company in the area if you wish to carry out your own removals. The cost of van hire will be paid by us out of the disturbance payment.

11. When will I have to move?

When we consult on the Draft MasterPlan at the end of April, we will also announce our proposals for the phasing timetable. We will then take note of residents' views and consider whether we need to amend the phasing proposals. We will announce our final plans for the phasing at the same time that we apply for planning permission in the summer. So all residents will be told by then which phase they will be in and when it is likely to happen.

As the renewal project is a 7 year programme, most residents will not be moving for several years.

However, there will be some residents in the area that we plan to work on in the first phase who will need to move by spring 2010, that is a year from now.

12. What happens if you can't find somewhere for me to go to if a new property is not ready yet?

We will have several temporary housing options for when residents cannot move straight into a new property. This will include using our own vacant homes on the estate as well as elsewhere. If necessary we will also rent private homes although we would continue to charge you normal rents. We will not move any residents into Bed and Breakfast or hotel accommodation and we will not be using mobile homes.

13. Will older people from Alma House have to move to temporary accommodation whilst the new homes are built?

No. We will build the new accommodation for older people before anyone moves so they will only move once.

14. If I'm overcrowded will I get a bigger place?

Yes. All housing requirements including overcrowding, medical or mobility issues and any other special requirements will be taken into account when providing you with a new home.

15. When does the disturbance allowance get paid?

This is paid once you have moved permanently. However, the removal company will invoice Pavilion Housing directly for removals so residents will not have to find the money up front to pay for these services. This is the same for most costs associated with the move.

16. I want to move out of the Rushmoor Area. Who are the other local councils and how do I apply for housing in those areas?

If you wish to move out of the Rushmoor area you should register with the Local Authority covering that area:

- For Guildford areas including Ash and Ash Hill – Guildford Borough Council
- For Camberley areas – Surrey Heath Borough Council
- For Farnham and surrounding areas – Waverley Borough Council
- For Fleet and surrounding areas – Hart District Council
- For Basingstoke and surrounding areas – Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.

Please note that your priority with other Councils will probably not be the same as your priority with Rushmoor Borough Council.

17. Can I get my own disconnection/reconnection of appliances done and how much would this cost?

Yes. You would need to obtain quotes for this and costs can be claimed from the disturbance allowance by providing a receipt from the company. We can of course arrange this with our own operatives and this cost will be taken out of the disturbance allowance.

18. When will extra points be added to housing applications?

When we know the phasing of the renewal we will be talking again with all residents in the first affected area. Rushmoor Borough Council will award demolition and notice points to every housing application for residents in the first affected area once planning permission is received. This will be an on-going process as the phasing progresses.

19. Will the homelessness payment affect my entitlement to benefits?

If receipt of your homelessness payment does not take your level of savings over £6,000 then it will not affect your entitlement to benefits. If you think your benefits may be affected because of this, then further free and confidential advice on this subject is available from our Welfare Benefits Advisor at Pavilion Housing.

Questions about new homes

1. Will the rents be increased on our existing homes every year as usual during the renewal process?

Yes. This is a seven year programme and until each phase of development starts normal tenancy management carries on as usual. This means we will be maintaining residents' existing homes throughout the renewal process and maintaining the communal areas as usual. The costs of delivering these services are reviewed annually and reflected in the rents charged to residents and this will continue to be reviewed yearly as part of this process. However rent increases are also limited by government rules.

2. Is an assured tenant the same as an assured shorthold tenant?

No. An assured tenant has security and therefore will have more re-housing options than an assured shorthold tenant. An assured tenant will also be entitled to both the homelessness and disturbance payment. An assured shorthold tenant would only be entitled to the disturbance allowance.

3. Can I have information on shared ownership

We intend to build some homes for

shared ownership (part buy part rent) as part of the renewal project. If you would like more general information on the cost of shared ownership then please contact our enquiry line. You can also access more information at www.homesinhants.co.uk

4. Could I rent first but change to shared ownership of my home later as I might be interested in shared ownership in the future?

Yes. We will build all the homes to the same standard and tenants will be able to choose to change their tenure to shared ownership at a later date if they satisfy all the relevant conditions.

5. Are the new homes going to be eco-homes?

Yes. All homes will meet the Government's Code for Sustainable Homes. This is an improvement over standard Building Regulations and the homes will be more energy and water efficient, produce fewer carbon emissions and will be better for the environment. The homes also have lower running costs due to their design and energy efficiency. A Code 3 home is estimated to be 25% more energy efficient than a home built to standard Building Regulations and a Code 4 home is estimated to be 44% more energy efficient. There may be a mix of different code rating homes built in My North Town during the seven year project but

the minimum will be Code 3. They will be cheaper to heat and more economic to run than your existing 1950s home.

6. Will the new flats have a door entry system?

Yes. The new development will have to meet the 'Secure by Design' regulations. We will be liaising with the Police on such matters and secure door entry systems are an important part of any new development.

7. I currently have a spare bedroom in my property. Will I be able to keep this in my new property?

We are currently developing a detailed "Allocations Policy" and this question will be answered shortly. Generally speaking, it will depend on the demand for accommodation. Pavilion Housing is working closely with Rushmoor Borough Council and will issue the policy as soon as we can.

8. Who will be maintaining the new properties?

The contractors for the new buildings will deal with any maintenance issues for any new build property during the first 12 months after completion. After that Wessex Property Services will be responsible for maintenance. Wessex Property Services, like Pavilion Housing Association, is part of First Wessex Housing Group.

9. Will the rents on the new properties be higher?

Once we know what size of properties we are building we will be publishing the expected weekly rents although because of the length of the renewal process these amounts will be subject to review depending on when a property is actually built. At current levels and as a guide the weekly rent on a 2 bedroom flat will be in the region of £90–£120. A 2 bed house will be in the region of £102–£120 per week and a 3 bed house in the region of £115–£127 per week. In addition, weekly service charges may be applicable to cover the costs of grounds maintenance and communal cleaning/lighting.

10. Will the new properties have broadband/digital TV connections?

Yes. All properties will have broadband and free view facilities. We are exploring the option of providing communal satellite dishes to flats. Individual satellite dishes for houses will be subject to appropriate planning consent.

11. Can I take my pets to the new or temporary accommodation?

Yes. However, we will not allow dogs and some other animals in flats that do not have a separate entrance.

Questions about existing properties

1. How will you maintain repairs on the estate during the life time of the project?

The maintenance of the flats in the My North Town renewal area is carried out by Wessex Property Services (WPS). Both Pavilion Housing Association and Wessex Property Services are part of the First Wessex Housing Group.

WPS will continue to provide a full repairs service. Tenants should continue to report their repairs in the normal way. WPS will continue:

- Normal maintenance and safety checks
- Replace boilers that are unusable or unsafe
- Repair roofs where there might be a risk of water coming in
- External painting or decorating where there is a risk of water ingress
- Ensure that door entry systems function properly to maintain security
- Repairs to external doors and lighting etc.

WPS also aim to repaint all communal areas every five years and they will continue with this programme. The exception to this is that they will not redecorate blocks which are expected to have less than 12 months until demolition.

Because of the renewal programme WPS will also not be providing any new kitchens and bathrooms in the existing flats. However, they will make sure that all repairs are carried out so that all kitchens and bathrooms are fully functional.

2. I was going to decorate my lounge this year and put down new carpet. Should I still do this as I'm worried that the money I spend will be wasted if I may be moving soon.

We expect to announce the timetable for phasing of the works in the summer. You will then have some idea of when your home is likely to be affected and you can make your personal decision based on this. Remember that when you do come to move the homeloss payment is designed to compensate you for the 'loss' of your home and such issues as decoration. The disturbance payment meets the cost of a new carpet of similar quality if your existing carpet would not fit in your new home.

3. What will happen with the empty properties on the Estate?

We hope that there will be very few empty homes at any time because we will be using homes that are vacated to provide temporary housing for tenants being moved from areas that we are working on. However, when a property is empty we will usually disconnect all the services such as gas, water and electricity and drain down the central heating system to ensure that there are no leaks or burst pipes that could cause damage to neighbouring properties.

We will not leave residents isolated with empty homes around them. We will have continual security and safety checks and we will prevent unauthorised occupants. Security of any empty buildings and safety of residents will always remain a very important priority.

If you would like this information translated into any other language or made available in large print, Braille or audio format please contact our Enquiry Line on 0800 358 0459



my Enquiry Line
FREEPHONE
0800 358 0459
www.mynorthtown.net

My North Town is a regeneration project delivered by Pavilion Housing Association



Part of the First Wessex Housing Group



In partnership with Rushmoor Borough Council

