



<b>Report to:</b>	Housing, Economy and Business Committee	<b>Date:</b>	15 December 2015
<b>Report title:</b>	Petition – Home for Heroes Wallington		
<b>Report from:</b>	Mary Morrissey, Strategic Director, Environment Housing & Regeneration		
<b>Ward/Areas affected:</b>	Beddington and Wallington Local Committee area		
<b>Chair of Committee/Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Jayne McCoy		
<b>Author(s)/Contact Number(s):</b>	Rick Martinez, Regeneration Manager 020 8770 6804		
<b>Corporate Plan Priorities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Open Council</li> <li>• A Fair Council</li> </ul>		
<b>Open/Exempt:</b>	Open		
<b>Signed:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	2 December 2015

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 To consider a petition referred to the Housing Economy and Business Committee and determine a course of action for the project

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To consider the petition.
- 2.2 To agree that the Council should facilitate a drop-in/housing advice day early in 2016, as detailed in paragraph 5.1
- 2.3 To agree that officers continue to explore options to develop a deliverable scheme that meets the aims of the petitioners as far as possible and within Council priorities.
- 2.4 To agree that officers should continue to keep petitioners involved in the project



### **3. Background**

- 3.1 A petition bearing 1554 names has been submitted and the petition prayer is set out below:
- 3.2 “We have been inspired by the DIY SOS TV programme that saw the renovation of homes to be used to house ex-servicemen and women. We, the undersigned would like to see a similar project in our area (London Borough of Sutton) to provide homes and a community for the ex-servicemen and women who have served our country selflessly and of whom we are so proud. We call on Sutton Council to look at sites and help us make this happen”.

### **4. Issues - Response to the petition from Officers**

- 4.1 An initial meeting was held on 18 November 2015 to establish what the petitioners were seeking in terms of Council assistance, the type of housing required and some preliminary work on identifying the needs of ex service personnel locally.
- 4.2 The Council has agreed to consider the options available to it and to continue its engagement with the Homes for Heroes Wallington group.
- 4.3 The Group originated from within the local community in Wallington and has designated itself as the Homes for Heroes Wallington Group. Although it has drawn support from the wider Borough and beyond, its preference is to locate any potential project/site within or near to the Wallington area.

### **5. Options Considered**

- 5.1 The Council has agreed to facilitate a drop-in/housing advice day in Wallington early in 2016. This will be specifically for ex service personnel and will help inform the Council's evidence base on the level of demand for housing from this needs group. Details are to be jointly worked up with the Homes for Heroes group and other relevant advice agencies and charities.
- 5.2 In order to conclude what the best option may be further information is required on the housing needs of ex service personnel in terms of the mental as well as physical challenges they face. In addition, more information is needed on the likely household composition. The Homes for Heroes Wallington group has agreed to establish links with relevant organisations and individuals and work with the Council to compile the evidence base. The Council has information available from the Housing Register and a summary analysis is appended to this report (Appendix A)
- 5.3 The current preferred model for a housing project from the petitioners is based on the recent DIY SOS television programme. This concentrated on the refurbishment of a number of run down street properties in Manchester to provide adapted housing, as well as a local drop in/office/community space. The refurbishment was supported by



volunteers from the local community and trades companies. Current indications are that for this model to be

effective and practical the housing delivered needs to be for at least 5/6 households (ideally up to 10 to 12 households) clustered together for mutual support. The council has agreed to consider what potential sites/properties could be identified, preferably in the Wallington area (see 4.4 above).

- 5.4 The Council will explore what scope there is to use its recently established housing development company, Sutton Living Ltd, to help with this project and will also explore the potential of considering a self-build initiative as a viable option.
- 5.5 Subject to the level and type of housing needs that are identified, the Council has indicated that it will consider local lettings arrangements giving priority to ex service personnel for a proportion of homes built on a new development (possibly in the Wallington area or nearby). This might, for example, include the Richmond Green development when completed.
- 5.6 The Council's Housing Allocation Policy already enables some additional preference to be given to current and ex service personnel and also the implementation of a local lettings arrangement as set out in the extracts from the policy document appended to this report (Appendix B).

## **6. Impacts and Implications**

### Financial

- 6.1 It is too early in the process to ascertain what financial support may be required for any one or all of the options to be considered. The initial exploratory work required can be covered within existing resources.
- 6.2 The costs of implementing any or all of the options and any funding available will be identified, alongside the development of the options.

### Legal

- 6.3 There are no legal implications of the proposed options at this preliminary and largely exploratory stage. Any more detailed options which may come forward to address the objectives of the Petitioners will need to be considered including the necessary governance and legal arrangements. In particular to confirm the role of the Homes for Heroes Wallington group and the responsibility for coordination and project management should a refurbishment option materialise. What might ultimately be proposed may well be subject to various legal considerations and/or constraints but, at this stage, it is not considered practical to set these out.



## 7. Appendices and Background Documents

Appendix letter	Title
A	Summary analysis of ex-service households on the Housing Register
B	Extracts from the Council's Housing Allocations Policy covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional preference given to armed forces personnel</li> <li>• Local Lettings Plans</li> </ul>

### Background documents

Petition submitted on 2 November 2015

### Audit Trail

Version	Final	Date: 2 December 2015
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### Consultation with other officers

Finance	Yes	Sue Hogg
Legal	Yes	David Fellows