INFORMATION PACK

REGENERATION OF ELIZABETH HOUSE SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEME
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1. Introduction.

This is a guide for you, as a secure tenant/s being rehoused as part of the regeneration of Elizabeth House Sheltered Scheme.

The regeneration proposals for the Elizabeth House Sheltered Scheme will provide new affordable homes and services for older people and vulnerable adults. The final details of the regeneration will not be agreed by the Council until it secures partners and funding to develop the site. The funding arrangements may well have to include other types of affordable housing and properties for sale to cross fund the scheme.

The regeneration will involve the rehousing of all the residents living in the Elizabeth House sheltered scheme (Elizabeth House, Park Lane, 1 to 32 Mickleham Gardens, 2 to 12 Pond Hill Gardens, 23, 25 and 27 Malden Road) and a number of other Council owned properties in the immediate locality.

The existing dwellings do not meet modern day standards and cannot be cost effectively re modelled to meet the needs of older people.

As a tenant/s you will need to be rehoused to suitable alternative accommodation as and when vacant possession of your part of the scheme is required. At this stage the date when the rehousing will start has yet to be agreed. The rehousing
programme for the whole scheme is likely to take 12-18 months, and will have to be kept under constant review.

Moving home is a difficult and stressful time. This pack aims to inform you of your rights and obligations and provides a general guide to your move. If the information provided needs further explanation or causes any concern, please make contact by telephoning 020 8770 6173.

This Rehousing Pack gives you more information on the assistance that will be made available to you when you are required to move.

As the rehousing programme will take a long time, it may be necessary to amend some parts of this pack to ensure it contains up to date information.

Sutton council will employ officers to support/assist you through this process, from assessing your housing need, right through to the actual move and administering the payments due to you after your move.

Please take the time to read through the pack as many of the questions or concerns you may have are very likely to be covered in different sections.
2. Assessing your needs.

A rehousing adviser will visit all the households within the scheme to assess their housing need, discuss their circumstances and advise on the rehousing options available. We will write to you before we visit to provide the name and a photograph of your adviser for security reasons.

On the first visit, the officer will complete a home assessment form. The visit will take at least an hour, as there will be a lot of information to gather and much to discuss. Please do not hesitate to encourage a friend or relation to come along.

The form will record details of the persons living at your property, their preferences for rehousing, and any background information needed to help you to move.

All information provided will be treated in confidence and only shared on a 'need to know' basis.

Our aim is that the same rehousing adviser will remain your personal contact until you have moved to your new home.

Staff members always carry an identification card, with a photograph. You should always check the caller’s identity before allowing them into your home.
All correspondence relating to your move should be addressed to The Renewal and Commissioning Manager, 3rd Floor, Civic Offices, St Nicholas Way, Sutton, SM1 1EA.
3. What the Council needs to do??

It is necessary for all the residents to move from their current homes to enable the redevelopment of Elizabeth House Sheltered Scheme to proceed.

The Council has to ensure it has arrangements in place should a tenant refuse to move. Therefore legal steps may have to be taken so that possession of the existing tenancy can be gained at the required time.

This means that the Council may have to serve tenants with a legal notice.

Please be reassured that if a notice is served, it is only a legal precaution and we will do all we reasonably can within our powers to arrange suitable alternative accommodation, in accordance with the needs and desires of every household.

If notices are initiated, they will be served on the tenant(s) in person and the rehousing adviser will be able to provide further information as required.

The notice will set out your legal rights, give advice on seeking independent legal advice if you so wish and the procedure for gaining possession should that prove necessary.
4. Your new home.

4.1. What size and type of home am I entitled to?

The Council undertakes to rehouse you to a property that meets your housing need under the terms of the Council’s transfer policy.

The Council’s ability to meet your individual need for accommodation will depend on:

- The availability of a property of the size and type you are eligible for at the time it is needed.

- Any medical or occupational therapy recommendation.

NB. Residents currently occupying bedsits and/or sharing facilities will be offered one bedroomed self-contained accommodation.
4.2. Returning to the new Elizabeth House Scheme or moving permanently elsewhere?

4.2.1. Residents wishing to return to the new development.

All tenant/s will have the option to return to the new development if they meet the assessment criteria for the new homes being built.

You do not need to say you want to return when you are rehoused because everyone will be contacted on completion of the works to see if they want to return. All offers of alternative accommodation will be made on the principle that they will meet your permanent housing needs.

If you do return, the Council will pay all your eligible disturbance payments for each of your moves but you will only be entitled to one Homeloss payment (see section 6.1).

4.2.2. Offers of accommodation.

The Council will secure you alternative permanent accommodation that will meet your housing needs, irrespective of whether you wish to return to the new development. We will also endeavour to meet your personal preferences; however, this may not be possible in every case.
(a) Offers of Accommodation within the Borough of a Council or Housing Association property will be dependent on suitable vacancies being available at the required time.

When you are visited to discuss your options you will be offered general advice on the availability of Council properties but no firm offers or commitment can be given until an offer of a tenancy is made.

If it is not possible or highly unlikely that the Council could help with what you want then you will be told.

The council will do what it can to meet your preference but if a property cannot be found in your preferred areas of choice within the deadline for your accommodation, you will be offered a permanent tenancy of a property elsewhere.

(b) If you wish to move out of the London Borough of Sutton then we will contact the local housing authority or a housing association in your area of choice and try to negotiate a move for you.

There is no guarantee that any other local housing authority or housing association will help or be able to do so within the time available, but every effort will be made to accommodate your request.

Please note other organisations are very unlikely to assist with offers if you have any rent arrears or other housing debt (e.g. Court Costs or Housing Benefit Overpayments)
4.3. Property standards.

This section relates to the standard of decoration, fixtures and fittings that can be expected in your new home.

4.3.1. A London Borough of Sutton property.

The Council’s normal policy is to complete minimum works to empty properties prior to lettings. However, all properties being made available to residents being rehoused from this scheme, will be of a good standard and redecorated as required.

Alternatively decorating vouchers can be made available, if the property is assessed as in need of decoration, when residents want to make their own arrangements for redecoration. An acceptable period for the works to be completed will have to be discussed and agreed with the Council.

4.3.2 Moving to another organisations’ property in or out of LB Sutton.

Any property offered by another housing authority or housing association would meet that organisation’s standards. The Council would not provide decorating vouchers or be able to decorate in these circumstances. However, we will negotiate
with the other party on your behalf to secure the best deal possible.

5. **When can I move?**

The regeneration of the site is at a very early stage and the order/phases that residents will be rehoused in has yet to be agreed. We will let you know as soon as a decision is made.

Offers of accommodation within each phase will be made on a tenancy date basis. This means once a property of the correct size and type is available, the tenant/s with the earliest tenancy date that matches the vacancy will have the opportunity to move first. However, there may be some exceptional circumstances, which will be discussed on an individual basis. Also, residents with large rent arrears may be bypassed for an offer or tenancy date, to enable their arrears to be reduced prior to their move. We will want to ensure particular areas/phases are vacated before others as part of the regeneration process. Therefore residents will not be moved out of sequence in these phases unless there are very exceptional circumstances.

Tenants of any phase can register on the housing transfer list if they would like to be considered for a move before the rehousing process starts in their area/phase. In these circumstances, the council will still assist with the cost of your
move and make a homelessness or disturbance payment. No guarantees can be given that any tenant who requests such a transfer will be rehoused earlier than planned.
LONDON BOROUGH OF SUTTON STOCK

Offers of Council accommodation will be made available on a choice-based lettings basis. This means you and other residents will be sent details of a vacant home to consider so that you can decide whether to register an interest in that property. The tenant with the greatest need and longest tenancy will be offered the property.

HOUSING ASSOCIATION STOCK

If another organisation can assist, then you will have to keep within their time limits as well as keeping to the regeneration timetable. We will give details on this at the time if the need arises.

5.1 Moving to a London Borough of Sutton property

Once a suitable property is chosen, a visit to view the property will be organised. If you accept the tenancy, the rehousing adviser will liaise with you to agree a tenancy date and ensure all necessary arrangements are made for your move with the minimum of delay.

A date will also be set for the termination of your current tenancy and the signing of a termination agreement. The rehousing adviser will explain this process in more detail when an offer of accommodation is made.
5.2 Moving to a Housing Association property.

Whilst the rehousing adviser will liaise with you in making arrangements for your move, the actual offer and signing of the tenancy will be undertaken by the other organisation.

Any tenant moving to another organisation will be supported throughout the process by the Council. However, residents will also need to ensure that they keep the Council advised of their situation. Adequate notice will be required to enable officers to arrange the move and your removal package.

The cost of clearing any furniture, household items or rubbish left in your property, regardless of where you move to, will be deducted from your Homeloss payment if you do not have our written approval to leave contents in your property.
6 Financial and other help.


Secure tenant(s) who are rehoused, as part of the regeneration, will be entitled to a homeloss payment (set by the Government from 1st September 2007 at £4,400), payable when you are required to move by the Council. There is only one payment per property; joint tenants do not get £4,400 each.

Any housing related debts will be deducted from the homeloss payment. These will include housing benefit overpayments, Court Costs, current and former tenancy arrears and household clearance. This list is not exhaustive. It will also include any costs associated with reletting the property (if appropriate) if the existing tenant has taken fixture or fittings with them.

Officers will be able to discuss this matter with you in detail at the time of the home visit.

The payment will be made either as:

(a) A single payment

This will be made after a tenant has moved from their current property. The tenant will have signed a termination of tenancy
form, vacated the property, and returned all the keys to the appointed officer.

Payment direct to the tenants bank or building society account can only be requested from the Council’s Finance Department once the move has taken place. Keys must be returned to the appropriate officer to enable a void inspection to take place and verify we have vacant possession.

(b) Two payments.

An advanced payment of up to £2800 can be requested, once you have signed a tenancy termination for your existing home and a new tenancy agreement for your future home.
However the £2800 will be reduced by any housing related debt outstanding at that time. (See section 6.1)

A form, requesting payment, will be given to you to complete when you sign your tenancy termination.

The remaining £1600 due will be paid (less any remaining debts) after your move as in (a) above.

Please have your bank account details available when you sign the tenancy termination. If you do not have a bank account, please let the rehousing adviser know.
6.2. **Removals.**

The Council will pay for the cost of your removals within the United Kingdom.

The Council has a removal contractor and once a date for moving has been agreed with you, the rehousing adviser will contact the contractor. The contractor will then contact you to make an appointment to visit and estimate how many packing boxes will be needed. Packing and any other general support will be arranged as required by the rehousing adviser.

Packing boxes will then be delivered in advance of the day of moving, see 8.1.

Alternatively you may make your own removal arrangements and claim re-imbursement for the sum we would have paid our removal contractor after your move. In these circumstances you will have to supply your own packing boxes.

6.3. **Disconnection and reconnection of services.**

We will arrange (at no cost to you) for the disconnection and reconnection* of your cooker, washing machine and dishwasher. The removal company will actually move the appliances.
*If you move out of the borough, you will have to arrange reconnection. We will reimburse you the sum we would have paid our contractors if you had stayed within the borough.

The Council will reimburse the telephone reconnection charge but you must arrange for the transfer to your new home. Once you have received your bill for the reconnection, please pass it to the rehousing adviser.

6.4. Redirecting post.

The Council will re-imburse the cost of the redirection of your post for one month after you move home. Your rehousing adviser will give you more details nearer the time you move.

6.5.1 Additional help

The Council will support and help tenants throughout the process of their moving as required. If you have supportive relatives or do not need any help, we will not interfere, but will always be there to help.
7. What you need to do.

You will need to tell a number of organisations where and when you are moving and you must have your service meters read. The rehousing adviser will liaise with and support you through the process if required.

You must also leave your current home in a clean and tidy condition and remove all your belongings including rubbish. (Refer to section 5.2).

7.1 Services.

Contact will have to be made with those organisations that apply to you from the list below.

- **Electricity**

  To read your meter and for a final bill to be sent to your new address.

  If you have a key meter or other instalment payment system, you will still need to advise your provider that you are moving.

- **Gas**

  To read your meter and for a final bill to be sent to your new address.
If you have a quantum meter or other instalment payment system you will still need to notify your provider that you are moving.

- **Telephone – Disconnection/Reconnection**

To advise them of your move and arrange disconnection and reconnection of the service.

Please remember you need a bill showing the reconnection charge and pass it to the rehousing adviser for reimbursement.

- **Contents Insurance**

To notify your current insurer of your move.

If you are currently insured through the Council and move to another landlord’s property, you cannot remain within the Council’s scheme.

If you are currently insured through the Council and moving to another Council property within the Borough, then you will need to liaise with the rehousing adviser to complete a new proposal form. Alternatively you can get one from the Insurance Section on 0208 770 5352.

If you are not currently insured, then you should consider taking out a policy to protect your belongings.
• Housing Benefit – if applicable

If you move to a Council property, an officer will complete a change of address form when you sign your new tenancy agreement. This is sent to the Housing Benefit office to allow a re-calculation of your benefit entitlement at your future home.

If you move to a housing association property, please ensure a new claim form is completed at the time you sign for your new tenancy.

The claim form must be received at the Housing Benefit Office before your tenancy start date.

7.2 Other organisations.

This is not a comprehensive list of those who may need to know about your move:

Your Bank or Building Society.
Council Tax
Housing Benefit
DVLC
GP
Dentist
7.3 Other things to think about.

7.3.1 What arrangements have you made for your pets?

You should bear in mind that arrangements will have to be made for transporting your pets to your new home. It may be better that they are cared for elsewhere on the day of the move.
8. Moving.

8.1 Packing.

Advice and support, as required, will be provided nearer the time of moving. If we are arranging your removal, packing boxes will be delivered prior to your move but you may want to start packing before using your own boxes.

Packing always take longer than you think, so we will need to ensure that planning and organisation is completed in advance and not left to the last moment. There will be enough to do on the day of moving without packing.

8.2 On the day.

If you need help, an officer will be present during the day of your move. You will need to be packed and ready to move on the day agreed. The rehousing adviser/removal company will advise you if your move will take place in the morning or afternoon and will want to start promptly.

Your appliances will be disconnected in the morning and reconnected at your new property in the late afternoon (if remaining within the borough).
8.3 **Settling in to your new home.**

If you are moving to another London Borough of Sutton property you can discuss anything you need to know about the property with the rehousing adviser, Neighbourhood Manager or Sheltered Housing Officer.

If you are moving to a property outside the borough, then you must liaise with the rehousing adviser or your new landlord if you are unsure about anything.
9. Any other questions?

9.1 Can I move with my current neighbours?

Tell us if you want to remain close to existing neighbours. Whilst we cannot guarantee this will be possible, we will do our best to help.
10. Timetable for moving tenants.

The decision to proceed with the redevelopment of this site has only been made recently and there are a number of steps that need to be taken before the timetable and phases for rehousing are agreed.

Initially all residents will be contacted to arrange for them to be interviewed by the rehousing adviser to discuss and record their housing needs. Once all the interviews have been undertaken and the information collated, officers will be able to make a more informed judgement about how long the rehousing process will take. This data will then be used in conjunction with other information including; the condition of the stock, best use of the vacated site and development plans to determine the phases and order of rehousing.

It is important to note that the complexity of the regeneration is such that there may, on occasions, be changes to the programme.
We will keep you informed of developments as they unfold.
11 Useful telephone Numbers.

L B of Sutton:
Housing Benefit and Council Tax  020 8770 5444

Electric:
All enquiries  - Contact Your provider

Gas:
All enquiries  - Contact Your provider

Post Office:
Redirecting Post  08457 740 740

Thames Water:
All enquiries  0645 200 888

Sutton and East Surrey Water:
Billing  01737 76444
Other enquiries  01737 772000

British Telecom:
150

Sutton Borough Citizens Advice Bureau:
0870 1288070

Benefits Agency:
Concord House  020 8710 5600
Television Licence:

Contact your local post office or
telephone 0870 5226666

Local Councillors:

Cllr Jonathan Pritchard
c/o Civic Offices, St Nicholas Way, Sutton, SM1 1EA.
Jonathan@cheamlive.com
Tel: 07855 432 350

Cllr Graham Whitham
5 Basildon Close, Sutton, SM2 5QJ.
Graham.whitham@sutton.gov.uk
Tel: 020 8770 5036

Cllr Misdaq Zaidi
66 Higher Drive, Banstead, SM7 1PQ.
councillorzaidi@zaidiandco.co.uk
Tel: 020 8767 2300

Surgery Details:
1st Wed in month excluding August.
6.30 to 7.30 p.m. – Cheam Library, Church Road, Cheam.

Member of Parliament:

Paul Burstow MP
312-314 High Street, Sutton, SM1 1PR.