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1. Introduction

The Council is committed to the regeneration of the North Taunton Woolway Estate in order to build new energy efficient and quality homes which meet our residents' needs alongside providing new and improved facilities for our communities in order to provide as many opportunities as possible for our residents to fulfil their potential.

As part of this process, we need to demolish the existing Woolway properties in Phases A (yellow); B (orange); C (red) and D (green) and refurbish the existing Woolway properties in Phase E (blue). Please see the phasing plan below.



We appreciate this may be a difficult time for some tenants, but we are determined to make this process as smooth for you as possible.

As a Council tenant, you will be required to move from your current property during the project. The Council is offering a number of rehousing options for our tenants and providing assistance for each tenant's move either into a new build within the project area or a property outside of the project area. All tenants within each Phase will be eligible to move into one of the new build properties and tenants in Phase E (Refurbs) have the option to return to their previous home, once all works are complete, if desired.

This guide provides you with the most up to date information about the process involved for rehousing your household. Please take the time to read this information carefully and we hope that the information set out here will reassure you about the process and the rehousing options available to you. Our officers are on hand to explain the process in more detail and answer any questions you might have.

[If you are a Somerset West and Taunton \(SWT\) Council tenant in Phase E, there is a separate Information Guide for Phase E Tenants only.](#)

Whichever your preferred rehousing option is, we aim to make the possession of your home as straightforward as possible. Tenants make up the majority of the community and it is, therefore, the aim of our policies to encourage tenants to remain in the local area, if they so wish, in order that they can benefit from the changes that the regeneration will bring. The options set out in this document seek to ensure that:

- All tenants have the offer of a suitable housing option either on the estate or, if possible, in the local area.
- Tenants are not financially disadvantaged, or advantaged, by the regeneration.

The principles within this Guide provide all North Taunton Woolaway Project (NTWP) Phase A – D tenants with details of the general approach in obtaining possession of your current property and rehousing options available, but any case falling outside of this standard approach will be considered on its own merits on a case by case basis.

2. Rehousing Options

The rehousing options available for SWT Council tenants occupying properties in Phases A – D are:

- Move straight into one of the new properties built within the regeneration area.
- Move to a new property outside of the regeneration area via Homefinder. High priority gold band status will be awarded to each household 12 months prior to when their property is required to be vacant for demolition.
- Become a home owner through a low cost home ownership scheme: Tenants will receive top priority for new low cost home ownership such as shared ownership or shared equity homes built in the regeneration project area which help households get on the housing ladder;

- Accept a temporary re-housing offer but have the option to return to a new property when construction is complete: If it is not possible to complete a new property before you move out of your old home, we will re-house you into a temporary property until construction is complete.
- Convert their temporary decant property into their permanent home if decanted outside of the regeneration area and would like to remain.

2a. Temporary Decants

When your phase is due and you are required to move from your property, you are able to move on a temporary basis if you would like to return to a new build. If you decide to move on this basis you will sign a Transit Agreement to acknowledge you are in a temporary and not a permanent home. As stated above, if your temporary decant is a refurbished house or outside of the project area you can opt to turn your temporary home into a permanent home. If you decide to do this you will be required to sign a Secure Tenancy Agreement, in doing this your existing length of time for Right To Buy initiatives will not be affected.

Temporary Decants will be entitled to reasonable Disturbance payments for each move but will only receive one Home Loss Payment.

Please note, if any tenant requires assistance on their Homefinder application or bidding process; or require any further information on Low Cost Home Ownership please contact the Project Team who will be able to arrange this for you.

3. When will I have to move from my property?

The redevelopment of the estate is organised on a phased basis, which means that properties are redeveloped in accordance with a programme. The NTWP has been divided into five Phases, Phases A - E. The programme is subject to change and the Council will endeavour to keep you as up to date as possible about any changes to the rehousing programme as and when any changes occur. As a tenant you will not be required to move until vacant possession of your phase is needed in order for demolition or refurbishment works to take place. However, the Council understands that some tenants may wish to move prior to their phasing.

The Council will also assist all tenants who opt to move into private accommodation or who make alternative housing arrangements, outside of the regeneration area or via Homefinder. These moves will not be affected by phasing.

3a. Moving into a New Build in the Regeneration Area

If your household has been allocated a new build property, you will be able to move into this property once the works have been completed and the property released back to the Council from the contractor.

A move from a Woolaway house into a new build property is not dependent on phasing. A household will be able to move into their allocated new build property regardless if their phase is due or not.

If your household has been temporarily decanted, as the Council has required vacant possession of your Woolaway home, you will be able to move into your allocated new build once the property is available.

3b. Moving out of Phase

In order that any tenant does not miss out on moving to the forever home of their choice, which may be available now, the Council is actively allowing tenants to move as normal via Homefinder outside of their phase on the Project area. If you move outside of your phase this will be a one move only. You will not have the option to return to the regenerated area through the project, as the Council is not requiring vacant possession of your property at that given time.

If you do not wish to move to a new build property within the regeneration area and are not active on Homefinder, your household will need to register to allow you to move to a property outside of the regeneration area.

3c. Moving within Phase

The Council will endeavour to give you notice of requirement for vacant possession of your property 12 months prior to your phase's demolition start date. Once this notice has been given your household will be placed into gold band status on Homefinder. This will allow each household, within phase, up to a year in gold band status to move via Homefinder to your forever home or to a temporary decant if you would like to return to a new build within the regeneration area.

If you do not wish to move to a new build property within the regeneration area and are not active on Homefinder, your household

will need to register to allow you to move to a property outside of the regeneration area.

4. What is the process of moving from my current property?

When your household has found another property to move to, whether that is a new build within or a property outside of the regeneration area, the Project Team will be in direct contact. The Project Team will advise you on the moving process and offer support and information to your household to ensure your move goes smoothly. Throughout your moving process the project team is available to contact and assist where possible.

For information of Home Loss Payments, Disturbance Compensation and the Council's Assisted Moving Package, please see separate Information Factsheet: Home Loss Payment and Disturbance Compensation.

4a. Verification and Tenancy Sign Up

Verifications and tenancy sign-ups will be completed by the Lettings and Estates team. These will follow the normal process and be arranged with each team respectively. A one move only letter will be provided to sign for households moving out of phase or those within phase who do not wish to return to the regeneration area.

4b. Moving Day

On the day of your move SWT Council can organise the disconnection and reconnection of your cooker in line with your removal company, there will be a recharge to you for this service, alternatively you can arrange for this yourself and provide the required certification to the Council for this. Your removal company should disconnect and reconnect your washing machine – if not please ensure you have this organised from elsewhere.

4c. After your move

Once you have moved and returned your keys back to the Project Team you will be entitled to your Home Loss payment, please see separate Disturbance Compensation and Home Loss Payments Factsheet for more information. The Project Team will arrange with your household a post move visit or phone call a month after your move (whichever the preference of the household). Your household's estate officer will also arrange to visit you at your new property.

5. Tenancy Type and Conditions

Business as usual will continue throughout your move from your Woolaway property to your forever home. You will be expected to abide by your tenancy conditions and will not be exempt from standard practice if you break these.

When you move to your forever home, if this is another SWT Council property, you will resume the same tenancy type and conditions which you have now. If your household has a secure tenancy this will

continue with any SWT Council property. If your household moves into a temporary decant property you will be required sign a Transit Agreement until you move into your permanent home, as mentioned in **2a. Temporary Decants**.

If you move to a property on Homefinder which is owned by a Housing Association we are unable to guarantee the same tenancy type and conditions which you have now. If you would like to know more about what your tenancy type and conditions will be if you move to one of these properties, please contact the housing association who is letting the property.

On Homefinder you can see rent prices for each property and include this factor in your decision making. We are aware that households have concerns about rent levels for the new build properties in the regeneration area. The NTWP can assure that all new build properties within the regeneration area will be on social rent levels for our returning SWT residents.

Glossary

Home Loss payment

An additional sum of money that tenants, who have lived in their property for more than a year and are being displaced from said property, receive as compensation for losing their home.

Disturbance payment

Disturbance payments are made to compensate for reasonable expenses incurred in moving home during a regeneration process, for

example removal expenses, cost of altering soft furnishings, reconnecting movable fixtures and fittings, telephone reconnection charges and additional costs incurred.

Housing Association

Also referred to as Registered Provider (“RP”) or Registered Social Landlord (“RSL”) Landlords who provide social housing and are registered with Homes England as providers.

Low Cost Home Ownership Scheme

Schemes which provide support and opportunities for first time buyers and social housing tenants to buy their own homes. The three main types of schemes are Help to Buy, Shared Ownership and New Buy.

Shared Ownership

This is a part-buy, part-rent scheme under which you own a share of the property and pay a rent on the unowned share.

Secure Tenancy

A secure tenancy is a lifetime tenancy. The Council may offer you a fixed-term tenancy called a flexible tenancy - a type of secure tenancy that lasts for a specified period. You won't be a secure tenant if you are a new tenant and have an introductory tenancy.

Vacant possession

The Council can proceed with works on your property once it has been cleared of any furniture, belongings and anyone in residence of your property has left.

Contacts

The Project Team

The Project Team are happy to help with questions related to the project. You can contact the Project Team via Facebook, email, phone or come and visit us during office open hours. We will be happy to answer all questions.

Please find our contact information below:

- 🏠 Community Office at 27 Rochester Road, Taunton, TA2 7LB
Tuesdays 13:00-16:00 & Thursdays 10:00-12:00 and 13:00-16:00
 - ✉ northtauntonwoolawayproject@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk
 - ☎ 01823 219 159
- Facebook: North Taunton Woolaway Project Group

Non-Project Related Questions

We welcome any queries that you may have as residents, however, at times the Project Team will only be able to advise which department within the Council, you will need to contact.

For any questions not related to the NTWP you should contact our Customer Services, where you will be directed to the appropriate team:

Customer Services contact number: 0300 304 8000

Alternatively, you can visit the SWT website to find relevant guidance or submit your enquiry online via our new online forms.