



Tower Hamlets Affordable Self-Build Programme

Consultation document: October – November 2019

Have you ever thought of building your own home?

What could you deliver with your community?

Are you aware of the support available to do this?

The council is consulting residents on plans to release land for affordable self-build schemes on the land it owns.

The purpose of this document is to seek your views on these proposals and to raise awareness of the opportunities open to community led groups and individuals to build their own homes.

Through the Affordable Self-Build Programme, the council aims to make it easier for potential community led housing groups and individual self-builders to access the land they need to deliver more affordable housing in the borough.

Details of the consultation

The council welcomes comments on two draft documents setting out its proposals: the *Affordable Self-Build Policy and Affordable Self-Build Guidance* documents. Summaries of these documents and links to the full articles can be found in the following pages.

To comment on any of the information provided in this document you can respond to the consultation at towerhamlets.gov.uk/self-build, or you can address any questions to self-build@towerhamlets.gov.uk

A public open day will be held on **Saturday 9 November from 10am to 4pm** at **Idea Store Whitechapel, 321 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BU.**

The open day will provide an opportunity for anyone interested in self-build and the contents of this document to speak to council officers and learn more about how the Affordable Self-Build Programme will work.

What is Affordable Self-Build housing?

The following summarises the council's self-build policy and guidance documents. The full documents can be found at www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/self-build

What is self-build housing?

Self-build housing is where individuals or groups of individuals directly organise the design and construction of their own homes.

As a community led group or individual self-builder you will be actively involved in acquiring land, getting planning permission, designing, building and managing your own home(s). You could do all the work yourself, or you can commission an architect to design the building and appoint a builder to build it.

Anyone can start a community led self-build group. You might be a group of friends or family, neighbours with similar interests or values, or members of an existing community group who want to build affordable housing to meet your needs.

As a group you might be interested in cohousing or other ways to live together collectively, or in providing secure, affordable housing for you and your community, for example by starting a housing co-op. There are lots of different options for how you might design and manage a self-build housing project, whether as a group or an individual household.



The Older Women's Co-housing group (OWCH) completed their project of 15 homes in Barnet in 2016. Image: OWCH Ltd



RUSS are building 33 affordable homes in Lewisham and recently started on site with the construction of their community hub. Image: Warwick Sweeney

What do you mean by affordable?

To ensure the homes built through this programme are genuinely affordable to borough residents, the council will apply the following measures:

1. A requirement for prospective bidders to demonstrate their eligibility for affordable housing in line with existing council policy.
2. A weighting system in the bid scoring methodology that prioritises applications that deliver homes at London Affordable Rent, London Living Rent or other intermediately affordable levels, or contain allocation policies for residents whose income is closer to the average household income in the borough.

Tower Hamlets Self-Build Register and Self-Build Forum

The council hold a regular Forum for everyone on the Self-Build Register. Through the Forum the council offers support and advice to those on the Register, including facilitating workshops and meetings with other stakeholders interested in self-build.

You can add your name to the Self-Build Register at: www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/self-build

How will the Affordable Self-Build Programme work?

Sites

Sites will be released through a competitive bidding process open to locally-based community groups. Where sites can only accommodate a single housing unit, bids will also be opened to individual self-builders.

The disposal of the land for self-build will be by way of a grant of a long lease (250+ years). The disposal will also be subject to planning permission and the availability of finance to the self-builder.

Land will be sold to the highest scoring bidder, with bids scored 80% on quality (value for money, community benefit, deliverability, design innovation and energy efficiency) and 20% on the financial offer for the site.

The council will prioritise self-build proposals that

include the provision of affordable rented homes over affordable ownership. The council will also prioritise proposals that optimise the density of housing on council land, in line with planning policy.

The diagram on page four describes how the process will work. Further details on the proposed Affordable Self-Build policy can be found at www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/self-build

Permanently affordable

Proposals will have to demonstrate how they will provide affordability for all the homes they want to build, in line with the measures set out on the previous page.

This affordability will then be protected in perpetuity for any future sales or lettings through the Section 106 agreement and leasehold covenants on the property.

What support is available to aspiring Self-Builders?

Tower Hamlets Self-Build team

The Mayor of Tower Hamlets is committed to supporting self-build housing in the borough. To promote this initiative we have created the position of Co-Housing and Self-Build Projects Manager whose job includes being available as a first port of call to assist anyone interested in self-build or co-housing in the borough. To get in touch contact self-build@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Community Led Housing London Resource and Advice Hub

The Mayor of London is making funding available to support community-led housing through the Community Housing Fund.

If you are interested in joining or starting a self-build project, Community Led Housing London are

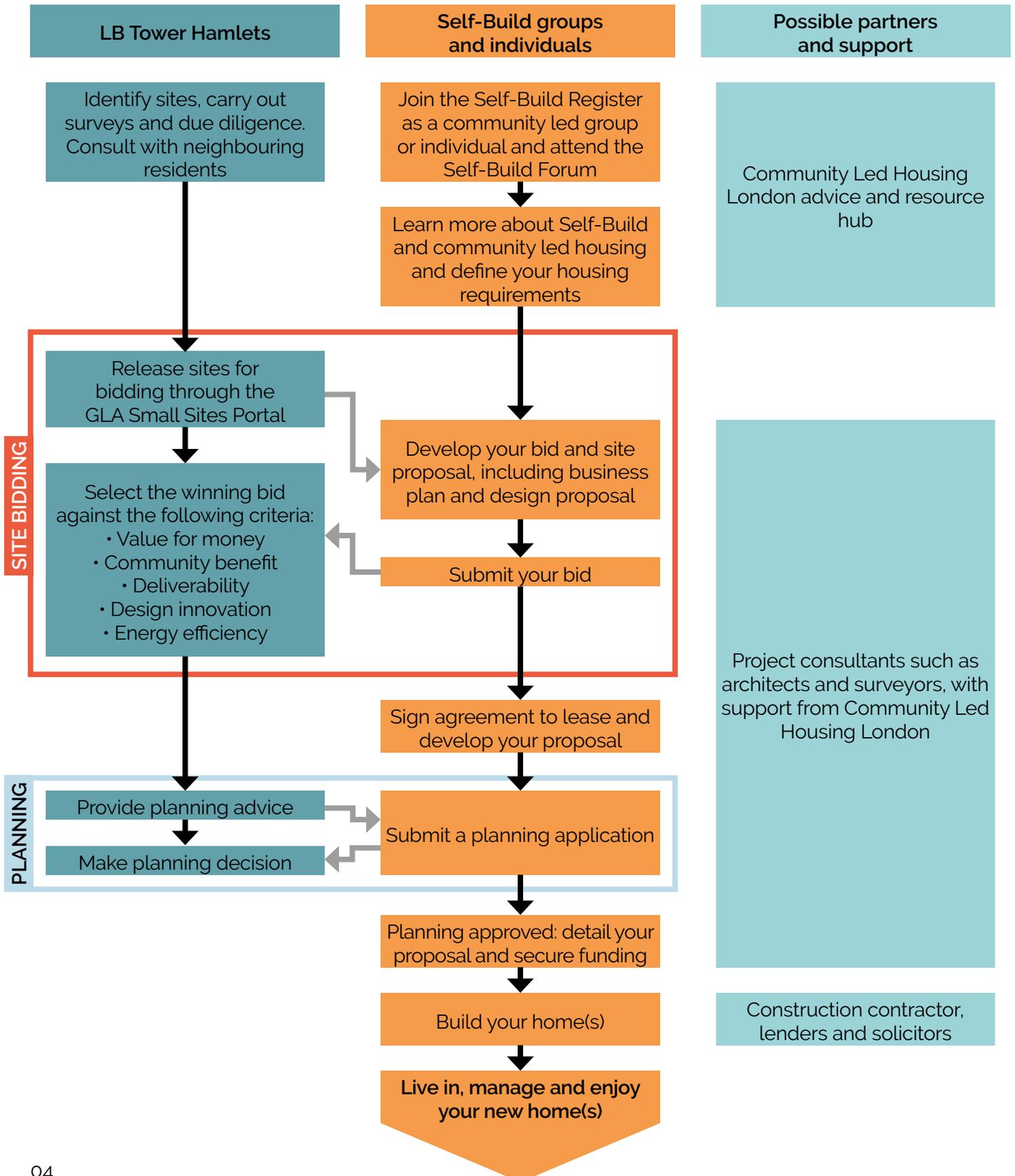
available to guide, mentor, and support groups at an early stage. This might include help thinking through various legal and governance structures, ways to develop the homes, accessing funding and finance and long-term management.

Groups can also apply for funding to commission business plans, architectural designs, development appraisals or legal advice to secure a site, as well as setting up and training costs.

www.communityledhousing.london



Indicative process for prospective Self-Builders



What sites are being made available and when?

The council is planning to release council owned sites for Affordable Self-Build from 2020.

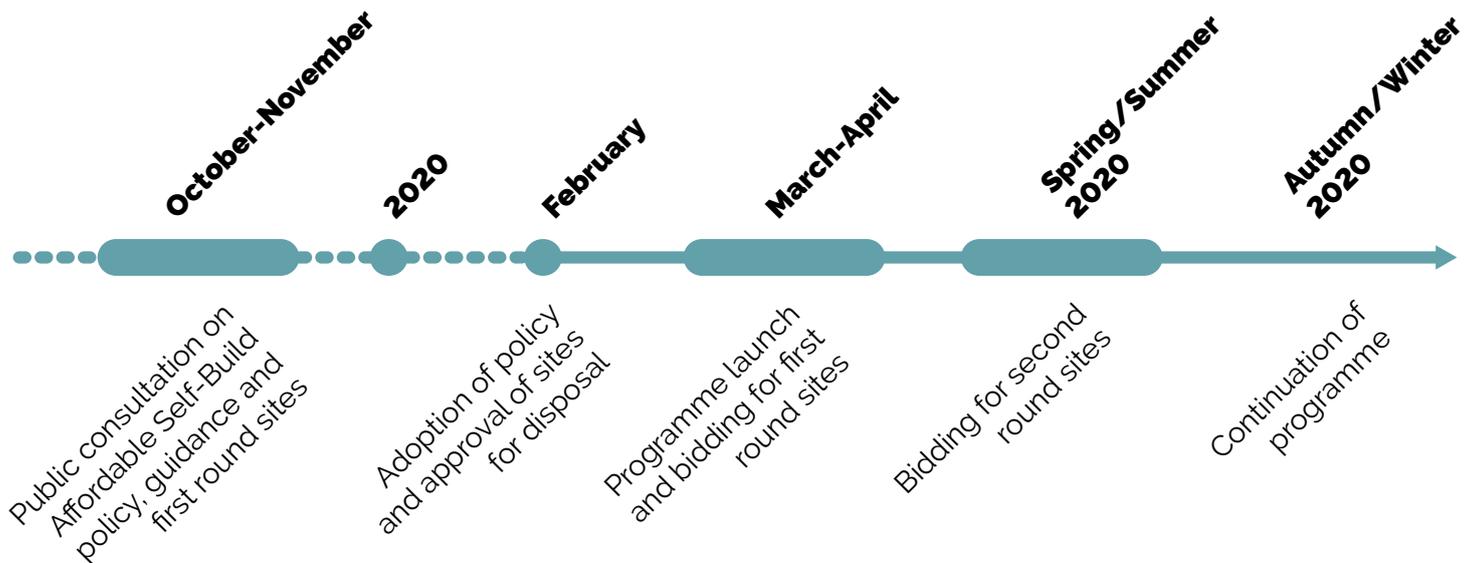
Subject to the outcome of this consultation the first four sites will be released in 2020, with further sites planned for release later in the year.

Details of the first four sites to be released are provided in the following pages. The council has carried out initial due diligence on all four sites to assess their suitability for housing and neighbouring residents were notified of the council's interest in developing this land for housing in March and July 2019. Due diligence information will be made available to prospective self-builders once sites are opened for bidding.



Co-housing Harrow are planning to build a supportive, mixed tenure cohousing community in their borough.

Proposed Programme Timeline



Disclaimer:

The following site information is provided for information only and is subject to change.

Any development proposed through the Affordable Self-Build Programme will be subject to planning permission and expected to comply with all relevant planning policy.

Site 1: Lark Row, E2 9JA



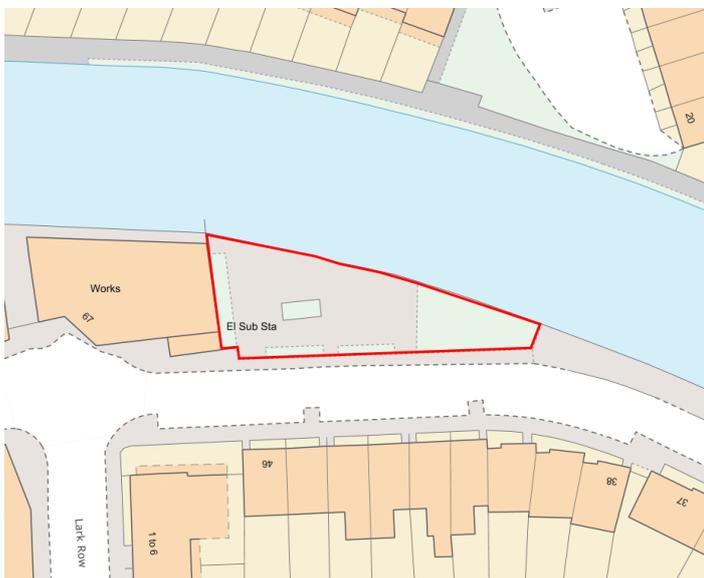
Description: Triangular plot adjacent to Regents Canal and ex-industrial building with terraced houses opposite.

Land owner: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Site area: Approximately 346sqm

Planning summary: Development should step down from the consented building height (four storeys) at 67 Vyner Street transitioning down to relate to the three storey building height of houses across Lark Row.

The site benefits from good public transport accessibility and should achieve a high density within appropriate building heights mentioned above.



Site 2: Christian Street, E1 1AY



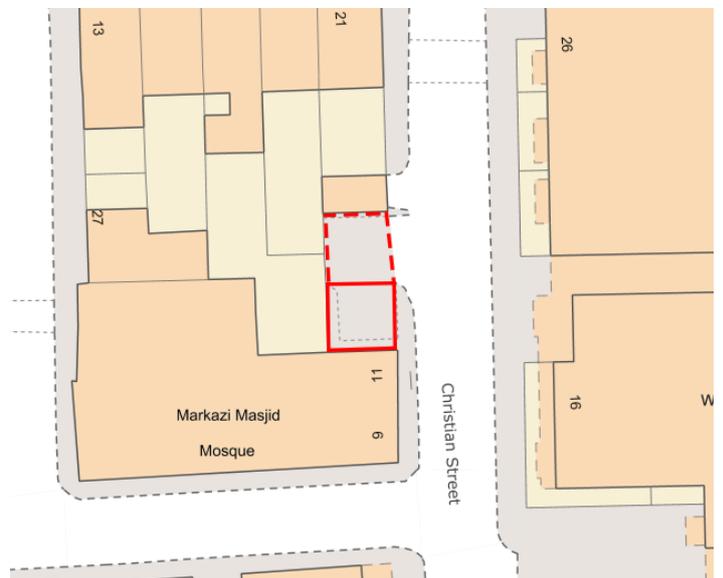
Description: Rectangular plot in Whitechapel adjacent to the Markazi Mosque and on street of two to seven storey houses and blocks of flats.

Land owner: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Site area: Approximately 33sqm at ground level, increasing to 65sqm on upper levels

Planning summary: Right of access to adjacent plot restricting ground floor development on approximately half of the plot area.

Previously approved scheme consisted of a three storey building with a rear dormer in the pitched roof. This provided a commercial unit at ground floor and residential accommodation over the first, second and loft floors.



Site 3: Pigott Street, E14 7DN

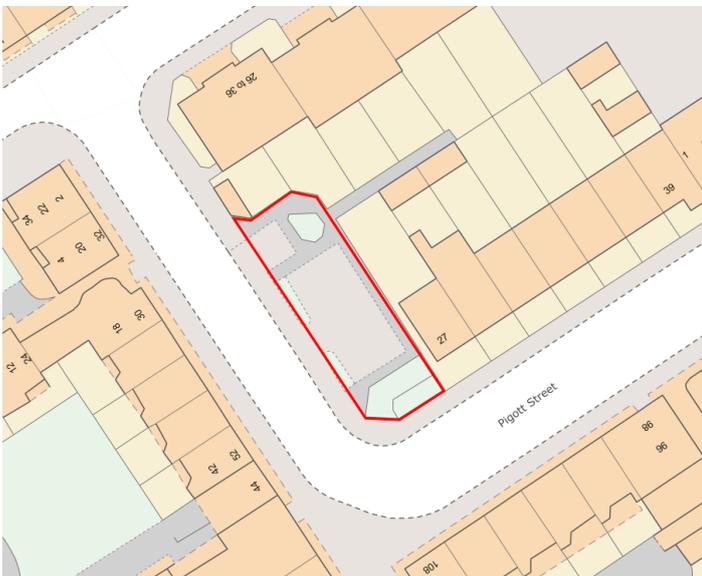


Description: Rectangular corner plot on street of four storey blocks of flats. Previously used for parking, the site is currently fenced-off and redundant.

Land owner: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Site area: Approximately 260sqm

Planning summary: The potential number of units will depend on the tenure mix within the recommended building envelope – 6-7 units appears to be reasonable.



Site 4: Smythe Street, E14 0HD



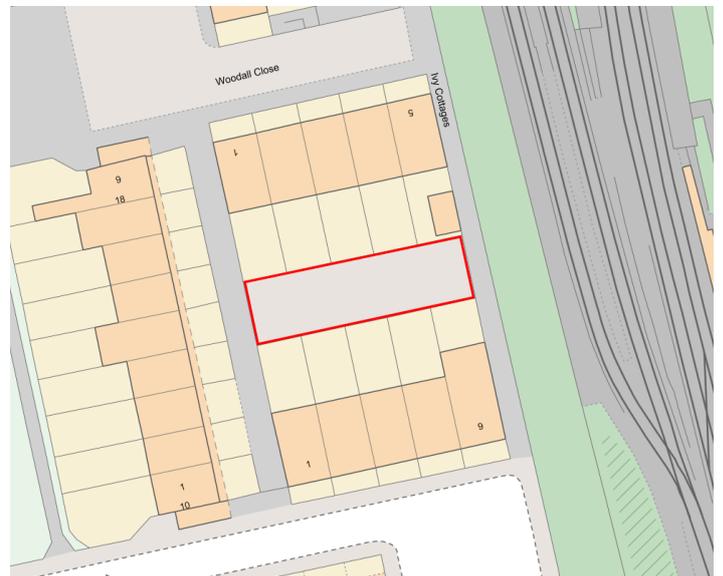
Description: Rectangular plot between two rows of terraces with pedestrian access to the west and potential for access to the east.

Land owner: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Site area: Approximately 243sqm

Planning summary: Taking into account the likely separation distances necessary and the preferred orientation of a proposed building, it is considered that the site could possibly accommodate one or two units. A third unit seems difficult to achieve.

The site was previously developed as housing which was demolished between 1950 and 1962.



Get in touch

Whether you're an interested resident, a community group with an idea or would just like to know more, we'd love to hear from you.

You can comment on the Affordable Self-Build policy, guidance document, proposed sites or any other matters related to the Affordable Self-Build Programme at www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/self-build

For enquiries related to this consultation or self-build housing in the borough, please contact self-build@towerhamlets.gov.uk

For further information on Community Led Housing you can visit www.communityledhousing.london or call the Community Led Housing London Hub on **0203 096 7769**

