

1. Why did the council decide not to do proceed with the current refurbishment proposal?

We decided not to proceed with the Mears proposal for the following reasons:

- Firstly, as the proposed works would have involved significant disruption, inconvenience and noise over a prolonged timescale we felt it would be unreasonable to expect residents to remain in the building whilst the work was carried out;
- Secondly, the costs of refurbishment increased significantly due to additional works deemed necessary to complete the project to an extent that we felt that the proposal was no longer viable.

2. What is the council proposing to do now?

An option appraisal is underway which will analyse options for the Highways with a focus on two options: to refurbish the vacant blocks; or, to demolish the blocks and build new council housing on the site. Both options would require all residents to move out of the blocks.

3. What if I don't want to move?

Unfortunately everyone will have to move. Please be reassured that we will provide support and assistance for everyone. All residents' wishes will be taken into account when rehousing arrangements are being made.

4. Will the blocks be demolished?

The decision on the future of the Highways site has not yet been taken. Whilst we now know whichever option we take will require empty buildings, we are still looking at costs and options for the site. We are not planning any changes to the low-rise flats.

5. Will I be able to return to the Highways?

Once a final decision on the future of the site has been made, residents will either be offered a return to a refurbished property or will be considered for one of the new builds.

6. When will the rehousing process begin?

Following a formal decision, we will be working with residents to find new homes. The process will happen over a number of months, it may take some time to rehouse everyone. Everything will be done to make the process as smooth and convenient as possible.

7. What help will I get with moving?

We can give you advice about your rehousing options, including moving to another council home, renting from a housing association or from a private landlord.

A drop in centre will be set up within number 66 Highways to ensure that support is accessible as possible. This will be open from Monday 11th March and will remain open until we have seen all residents.

8. How will I find a new council home?

We can help you find a new home through Leeds Homes. Once you are registered on the Leeds Homes Register, you can make expressions of interest in available properties advertised at www.leedshomes.org.uk

You can bid on up to three properties a week.

9. Will I get a priority for rehousing?

Our intention is if you are a council tenant you will be awarded Band A to move. We will also look to make you a direct offer of accommodation in a suitable home.

Similarly, if you are a leaseholder or a private tenant, once you (or your landlord) have agreed to sell your flat the intention is you will be given similar priority for rehousing on the Leeds Homes Register.

This will be subject to a formal decision.

10. Will I be rehoused in the local area?

You can make expressions of interest in advertised properties anywhere in the city. Some local areas may be 'ring fenced' to give preference to customers moving from the Highways blocks – this will be included in the Leeds Homes property advert.

11. Can my priority be extended?

All priorities are only awarded for 180 days. After six weeks we will write to you to remind of when your priority is due to expire. If you have not been successful in obtaining rehousing by this time, you can request an extension of your priority from the housing office holding your papers.

12. How long will it take to find a new home?

It depends on what areas you choose and the type of property you want, but you can check average waiting times for your household at <http://imactivate.com/housing/>

13. What if I have additional needs?

We will assess all your housing needs, for example, for adapted, accessible or sheltered housing.

You can search for an adapted property on the Leeds Homes website, or we may be able to arrange for adaptations in your new home.

If you are 60 years old or over you can apply for Retirement Life (sheltered) council housing. The age limit for housing association sheltered properties is usually 55 years.

We will also ensure your new home meets your medical requirements, for example, if you need a ground floor property.

14. What if I have rent arrears with the council?

You should make an arrangement to repay your arrears as soon as possible. Any outstanding housing debts will be deducted from your Home Loss payment.

15. How do I get a home with a housing association?

You can apply for housing with our partner housing associations on the Leeds Homes Register when you complete your membership form. Their details are available on the Leeds Homes website.

16. How do I get a home with a private landlord?

You may prefer to rent a property with a private landlord. We have details of accredited private landlords who are part of the Leeds Rental Standard.

You will normally need to pay a bond or deposit to your new landlord.

17. What if I make my own arrangements?

If you decide to make your own temporary arrangements, for example moving in with friends or family on a temporary basis, you can retain your priority on the Leeds Homes Register for up to six months. During this time you should continue to make bids on advertised properties. After this time we will consider your application for rehousing in line with the lettings policy.

18. I'm a leaseholder, what help will I get to buy another property?

If you are a leaseholder and you want to buy another property you will need to contact estate agents and find a property you want.

You can look for a new home knowing you have a guaranteed offer for your current home from the council. The sale will not be held up by surveys, and you will not have to pay estate

agents for selling your current property. You also benefit from not having to deal with prospective buyers viewing your property.

19. Will I be compensated for losing my home?

If you are a tenant you will qualify for a Home Loss payment of £6300 if you have lived in your property continuously, for a minimum of 12 months from the tenancy commencement date to termination date.

Please note that the home loss compensation will only be paid when you have handed in your keys for your current property. Keys must be handed in at the Housing Office or rent will be charged.

Please note any current rent arrears or previous lapsed tenancy accounts owing to the Leeds City Council will be deducted from the Home Loss Compensation.

You may also be able to claim reasonable disturbance expenses incurred in moving from one property to another. This is refundable subject to the approval of the council and you will need to keep receipts of your expenditure.

20. Will I be entitled to a further Home Loss payment if I move back to the Highways site?

No. The decision to move back will be yours so no additional payments will be made.

21. If a decision is taken to demolish the flats, does that mean you won't be doing any planned maintenance?

We will make sure the current standard of repair is maintained until all residents have moved out.

22. Will I lose my garage?

Yes. We will look into alternative garaging when arranging new accommodation.

23. Where can I get more information?

This leaflet is not intended to be a guide to your individual situation or a substitute for legal advice. If you want more information on your legal rights you should seek advice from a qualified person such as a solicitor or the Citizen's Advice Bureau.