Telford Court - Consultation

**Things You May Wish to Know**

**Why is the Council proposing to close Telford Court? Would I have to move?**

Council staff and councillors have looked carefully at the options for Telford Court. We have concluded that the age and structure of Telford Court mean that some of the changes needed to meet the new building safety regulations will not be possible. The costs for leaseholders and the Council of doing this work would also be unaffordable. All round, we think it would be better to replace the whole site with new modern homes.  This would mean closing Telford Court (including the Tower block, and the maisonettes) completely.

**What is the Council consulting residents about?**

All councils consult council tenants when they are considering making major change to their homes. Specifically, we want to know what you think about the proposal to close Telford Court, and about what we propose to do to help Council tenants to move home, and leaseholders to sell their property.  Perhaps you have ideas for how to make it easier for everyone.

**As a Council tenant, how soon would I need to move home?**

This depends on lots of things, including where you would want to move to and any help you would need. If Telford Court closes, we would give Council tenants top priority when you apply for a new home, called band A.

We will talk to all leaseholders about your specific needs; if Telford Court closes, we will offer to purchase your property at the market rate (after independent valuation).

Overall, we are working on the basis that Telford Court would close within about 18 months to two years.

**What help would I get from the Council?**

We would give you all the information you need about what is happening and when. We would put in place lots of help, including money to help you move home.  As part of our consultation, we are keen to know what help you think you would need.

**Would the Council provide financial help?**

Yes.

**Council tenants:**

We would give all Council tenants two payments.

The Home Loss Payment is to make up for the fact that you would have to leave your home. The amount is set by the government every year and is currently £7,100. This payment would be made once you have moved home. If you owe the Council money, like rent arrears, we will take that off the payment.

A Disturbance Payment would also be made – this is provided to Council tenants in such circumstances to help you pay for the cost of moving, like a removal van, disconnecting and reconnecting your cooker, and so on. This would be based on quotes obtained (e.g. for removals), and receipts you supply for any expenditure (e.g., for redirection of post or alteration of curtains).

**Leaseholders:**

We will talk to leaseholders about your specific needs.

We would purchase your property at the market rate (that is, after an independent valuation).

Homeowners with a leasehold interest with a minimum unexpired term of 3 years are also entitled to a Home Loss Payment of 10% of the market value of the property, with the minimum payment being £7,100 and maximum payment of £71,000.

Resident leaseholders would also be entitled to a Disturbance Payment to help cover the cost of moving.

Such payments are made in recognition of the inconvenience and disruption caused by having to move or sell up.

**Would I get help to move?**

Yes. You can talk to us about what help you need.   The Council can supply practical help to our tenants such as a handyman service for putting up shelves and curtain rails or help with redirecting post, informing TV licensing and changing utility supplies.

**What sort of new home would I get as a Council tenant?**

You can talk to the Housing Team about your specific circumstances.

Council tenants can see the homes we have available at [www.stalbanshomechoice.co.uk](http://www.stalbanshomechoice.co.uk/). We update this list every week. You would be able to bid for properties on that website, which means you tell us which ones you like. You would be able to bid on any suitably sized property each week between Friday 9am and Tuesday midday.

**I have a garage/parking at Telford Court.  How would I know if parking would be available to me at a new property?**

Council tenants who are seeking a new home can see details of all the facilities provided at the homes we have available at www.stalbanshomechoice.co.uk**.**

We have several garage sites across the District, so you would be able to apply for a garage near your new home if one is available.

 **As a Council tenant, would my rent change?**

That depends on which home you were to move to. The rent for each property is on the website. You would pay the rent on your current property until you move. You would then pay rent on your new home from the date you start the tenancy.

**As a Council tenant, if I bid on a home would I have to accept it?**

No. You would be offered a viewing and have 24 hours to accept or refuse the property.  After this time, it would be offered to the next person on the shortlist.

**As a Council tenant, can I bid for a home without using the website?**

Yes. Bidding for a property is straightforward online.  But if you need any help, a member of our staff could help you find a home and bid for you.

**Would I get succession rights in my new home?**

You would get a new lifetime secure tenancy which means you would have full succession rights as set out in the Housing Act 1985.

**As a Council tenant, would I have the Right to Buy in my new home?**

In short, if you move to another Council-owned property there is no change, and you would continue to have the same Right to Buy as you had before. If you move to a property owned by a Housing Association, their tenants do not have the Right To Buy.  In such circumstances you may have a Right to Acquire if the home was built after 1997 with public funding.  Council officers can explain this in more detail – just ask.

**As a leaseholder, would I have to sell my flat at Telford Court?**

Yes. The Council would buy all leaseholder flats at the market rate, after independent evaluation, and provide money to help you move.  In such circumstances, we would talk to you about your specific circumstances and provide help if you need it.

**I rent my leasehold flat to a tenant, what should I do?**

If the Council closes Telford Court for redevelopment into new modern homes, all residents would need to move out by the time the building is closed.  We will talk to you about your specific circumstances.

**I am a leaseholder; would the Council buy my flat at the market rate?**

Yes.  We would buy your leasehold flat at the market rate (after independent valuation).

**Is Telford Court safe to live in now?**

Yes.  The Council has commissioned a fire engineer’s report, a structural report and a compartmentation report and we have met with Herts Fire and Rescue Service to make sure the block is safe.  In the light of regulations coming in soon, and to give additional reassurance to residents in the short term, we have put in place a few additional precautionary measures.  We are upgrading all flat entrances and communal doors in the block to 60-minute Fire Rated Doors and installing a new versatile alarm system in communal areas and making changes so that all flats will be linked.  The Council has also commissioned the repainting of the communal areas with fire retardant paint.

**What would happen to the site?**

New housing would be built in its place. We would ask a consultant to help determine what kind of housing it would be best to build.

**Why is the Council including both the tower block and the maisonettes in these proposals?**

The tower block and the maisonettes are integral to the site.   We would need the whole site to be available to have the best chance of developing homes for the future in a way that is practicable and affordable.

**I’m a Council tenant.  Will you still carry out repairs while the future of Telford Court is being considered?**

Yes. Day-to-day, urgent and essential repairs will continue in line with your tenancy agreement. We will make sure your home stays safe and comfortable. If any other kind of repairs or improvements need doing, we will have to look at whether it is sensible to do them.

**What about surrounding residential homes and business premises; how would they be affected?**

Just like any other building development, a new development at Telford Court would need planning permission and community consultation.  We would, or course, keep local people informed and updated about our plans.

**Who can I contact if I have a question?**

You can email telfordcourt@stalbans.gov.uk or phone Ella Malyon on 01727 819564 during office hours to make an appointment.

We will be meeting residents in the residents meeting room on the lower ground floor - these meetings will be by appointment only. Further meetings can be arranged if required.