

West Gorton Council Tenants and Leaseholders Independent Tenants Advisor

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Important Information for Council Tenants and Leaseholders

Manchester City Council is proposing to transfer ownership and management of all Council properties in the West Gorton area to a not-for-profit housing association. The Steering Group have chosen Open Communities as your Independent Tenants Advisor.

Our role is to:

- Give independent and impartial advice to all tenants and leaseholders on what the proposals mean.

If you've received this newsletter this means you!

- Work alongside all Tenants and Residents Associations in the area.
- Train and support tenants on the Steering Group and those wishing to play a part in the proposed new landlord.
- Give clear information about the proposals and what they mean to all tenants and leaseholders so that you can make an informed choice about the future of your homes.
- Give you the opportunity to discuss any aspects of the proposals in the detail you require.
- Arrange visits to other areas where similar schemes have taken place to see what has worked well and what could be improved.

Look out for future newsletters / fact sheets.



Open Communities' role is to help you to make an informed choice about the future of your home. Please contact us if you want to find out more.

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What is happening about the regeneration proposals for West Gorton?



The West Gorton Neighbourhood Regeneration Masterplan proposals involve the building a range of new homes; improvement of existing homes; development of a replacement primary school and health centre; new shops; and major improvements to the local environment.

What happens next?

- BASE will submit Outline Planning Application based on the Neighbourhood Plan in Autumn.
- Funding Applications to support the Regeneration proposals to be submitted in late summer.
- A "Regeneration Update" newsletter will be delivered to your homes in late summer.

If you want to find out more, or have any questions, about the regeneration proposals please contact

Pete O'Brien - New East Manchester - contact on 0161 234 1494 or by e mail on p.o'brien@manchester.gov.uk

Call Open Communities on freephone 0800 073 1051

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Some key questions and opportunities to find out more...

What is Housing Transfer?

The Government has issued a new standard for social housing, the Decent Homes Standard, and has told all local authorities that properties must meet this standard by 2010. The Council has looked at options for raising the finance needed to get properties up to and beyond the standard and decided that stock transfer is the best way forward for homes in West Gorton.

The council is proposing stock transfer as it believes this is the most effective way to raise the money to improve your home. This means the ownership and management of council properties would transfer to a new not-for-profit landlord. This does NOT mean that you would have to move out of your home.

Manchester City Council has therefore decided to consult all tenants in West Gorton about the possibility of transferring your home to a not-for-profit housing association.

What is a registered social landlord?

The City Council will be asking you to consider a housing association (also known as a registered social landlord) to take over ownership and management of your properties. The proposed new landlord will



be a Registered Social Landlord, registered with the Housing Corporation, part of the Government, who will oversee its work. The proposed new landlord will also be a Not for Profit organisation.

Who are Open Communities?

Open Communities is a housing consultancy that is completely independent of Manchester City Council or any other landlord. When a local authority consults tenants about stock transfer, because it is such an important decision, the Government requires the council to provide tenants with an Independent Tenants Advisor. West Gorton Steering Group selected Open Communities after interviewing a number of organisations to carry out this role.

Open Communities has a staff team with a vast range of experience of working alongside tenants on some of the country's most challenging housing and regeneration projects. Our qualified team will provide you with impartial advice about all aspects of the transfer proposals.

Our staff have been working in Manchester and the North West on a range of projects for a number of years. We will use our experience to provide you with the best possible advice.



For further information please contact Open Communities:

Freephone: 0800 073 1051

Email: enquiries@opencommunities.org

Website: www.opencommunities.org

What Happens Next?

Over the coming months the Council and resident representatives will be working together to discuss the details of the proposed housing transfer and developing this with an appropriate housing association. There are strict guidelines laid down by the Government about what the Council must tell you about the proposed transfer and new landlord.

When all this information has been agreed you will be presented with a formal offer document from the Council and asked to take part in a secret postal ballot. Only if a majority of tenants who take part in the ballot vote yes, will the transfer go ahead. The ballot is expected to take place later in the year.

Open Communities' role is to help you to make an informed choice about the future of your home. Please contact us if you want to find out more.

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