

WENSLEY ROAD ESTATE IMPROVEMENTS

Newsletter | August 2023



WENSLEY ROAD
live. play. grow



Dear Resident,

I hope you are enjoying your summer despite the lack of sunshine we've had so far. We're already thinking ahead about how we can improve the estate for you for when good weather lands in the future, with work continuing on two new parks and recreation areas on site which will be completed over the winter.

It may seem a long way off, but winter will be an exciting time with the first block of new homes scheduled to be ready towards the end of this year. Don't forget that if you wish to apply for one of the new homes, you need to have an active Homechoice application in place – details are on page 4 of this newsletter. You'll also find floor plans for the 3 and 4 bed homes on page 2.

We also have a list of summer holiday entertainment on page 3 that you can enjoy with your families over the next few weeks, so do get along to some of the events and make the most of the holiday time before the schools go back!

Kind regards,
Zelda Wolfe

Reading Borough Council
Assistant Director of Housing & Communities

PHASE 2 UPDATE

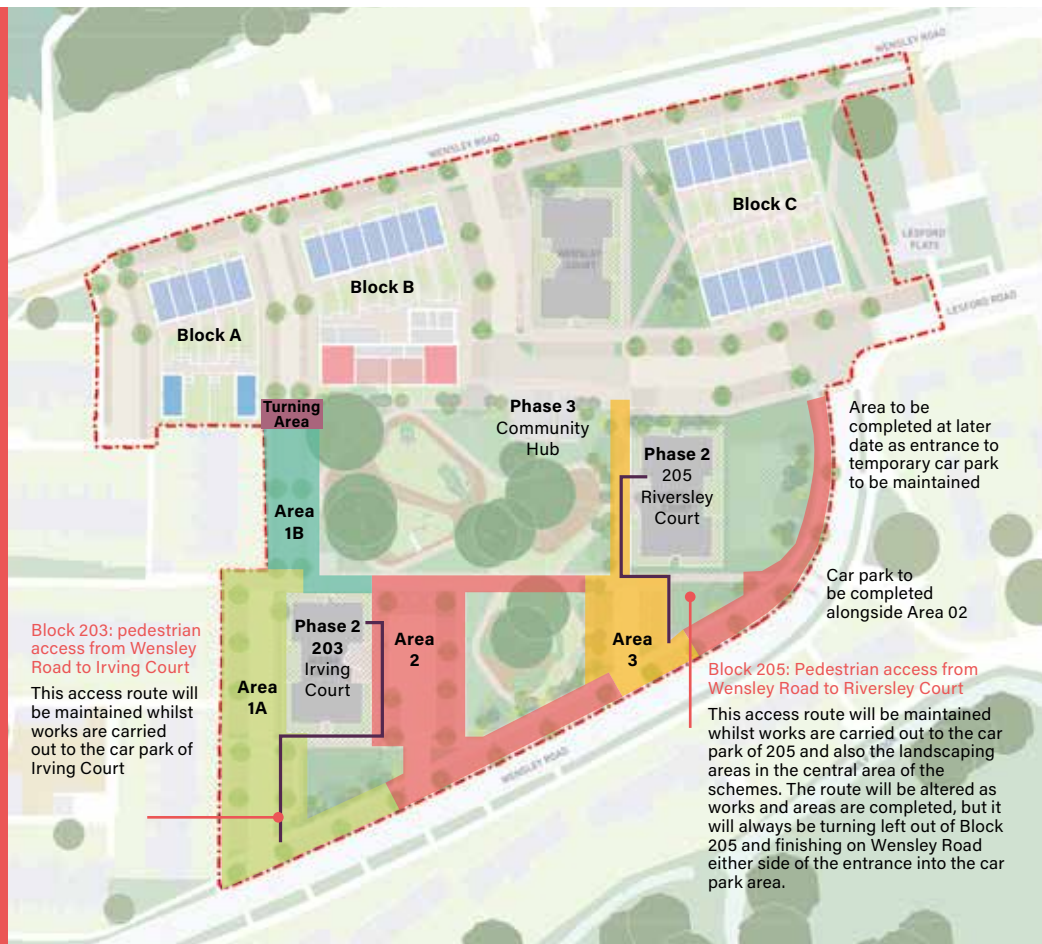
Unfortunately the work to improve the existing blocks through new triple glazed windows in all flats, new entrances and drying rooms, and new external wall finishes and insulation, has had to be delayed. This is now likely to begin early next year. The good news is that this means there will be less crossover with the Phase 1 work to build the new homes which is currently taking place. We will do everything we can to minimise disruption as much as possible on site.

PARKING UPDATE

Earlier this month we opened up new parking bays by Irving Court (203 Wensley Road) and around the south of the Wensley Road loop. These are now available for all residents to make use of.

You may also have noticed that the Riversley Court (205 Wensley Road) car park has now been closed until Christmas for refurbishment work. This will help create space for the new park. Replacement parking, around the perimeter, is already available to you.

Work is continuing on the new access road and bus route running between Wensley Court (193 Wensley Road) and Riversley Court (205 Wensley Road) which we hope will be completed by the end of winter.



UPDATE ON THE NEW HOMES

You'll have noticed real progress being made on the new homes, and they are getting nearer to being ready for occupation.

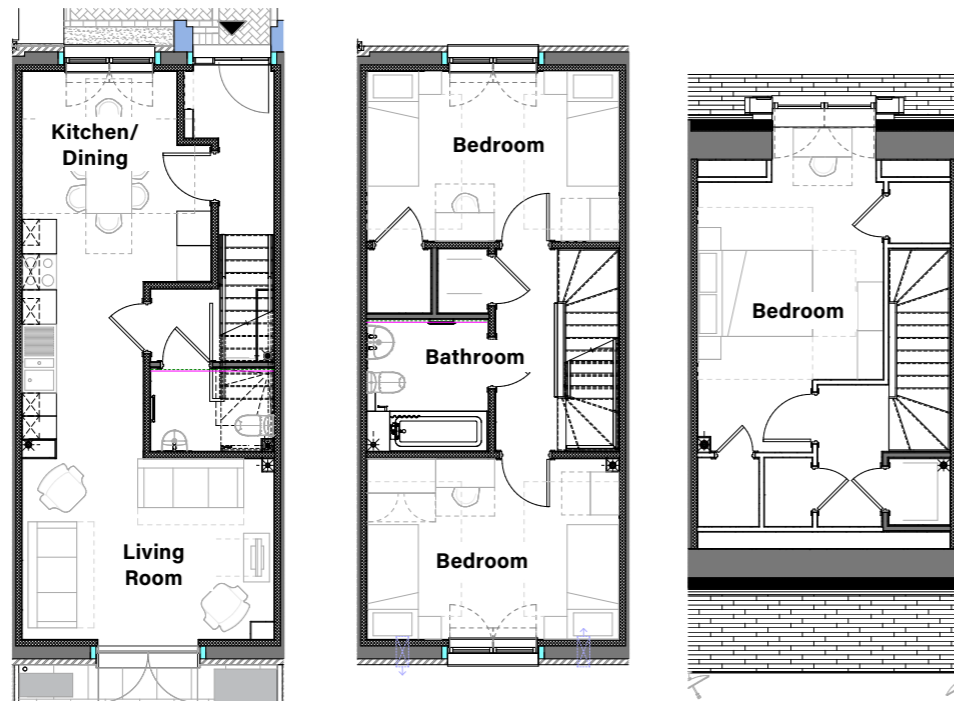
The first homes that will be completed – twelve 3-bed homes and two 4-bed homes across four blocks – are in the process of having their roofs, windows, stud walls and pipework installed.

Three other blocks are also coming along and are undergoing block and brickwork to their upper floors, which is helping to progress the remaining 32 homes which should be ready for tenants to move in before the summer next year.

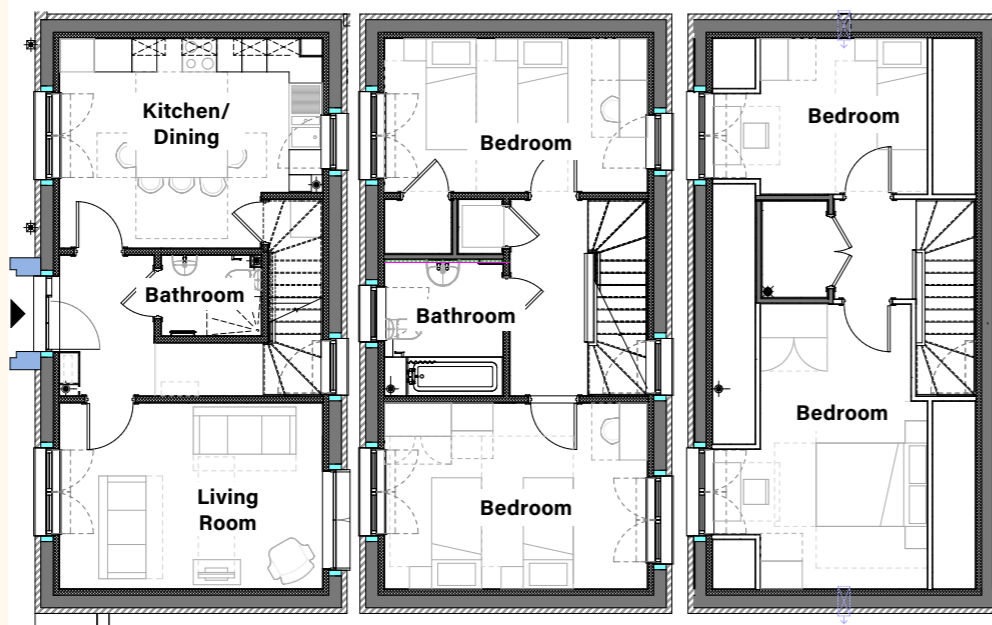


Progress on site

3 BEDROOM / 6 PERSON HOUSE - INDICATIVE FLOOR PLAN



4 BEDROOM / 7 PERSON HOUSE - INDICATIVE FLOOR PLAN



Examples of floor plans for two of the new homes can be seen above

SUMMER HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

With a few weeks left of the summer holidays, there are some exciting local family events to keep children entertained until they go back to school. These include...

Pop Up Play Village at Coley Park Community Centre

These are taking place on Wednesday mornings from 10am – 11am on 16, 23 and 30 August, organised by Brighter Futures for Children.



Diabetes UK Community Day at Coley Park Community Centre

Saturday 19 August, 11am – 3.30pm

Coley Park Community Centre, 140 Wensley road RG1 6DW



Diabetes UK will have refreshments available, local service providers on hand, activities for children in the garden and free resources about diabetes, healthy eating and getting moving. At 12.30pm Get Berkshire Active will run a taster seated exercise session with Kate Wiggins, and will have a dedicated corner for tea and a chat about everything related to diabetes – from managing diabetes to healthy eating, diabetes technology and preventing type 2.

Family Fun Day at Courage Park

Friday 25 August, 12pm-4pm

This event is open to all families and young people.



HOUSING MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Update around the blocks

Waste and recycling

Recycling has improved on the estate, with less contamination of the large bins. We're not there yet but thank you to residents who are recycling correctly, and please try to do all you can. If you are in doubt what to recycle the bins are clearly marked up with what you can/can't recycle. Please ensure you dispose of your general waste using the chute rooms on the landing you live on. Little and often must be placed down these chutes, please do not attempt to place large bulky items down the chutes as they block them, causing problems for other residents and also the Housing team to then have the chute area unblocked. Let's all work together to ensure chute rooms are used effectively and correctly.

Rats

We're continuing to successfully reduce the number of rats on the estate, and baiting continues to stay on top of this. Ongoing treatment continues on the estate, and Block 205 is being monitored regularly. We apologise for the smell that has been coming from this area, and are in the process of investigating so we can take action to solve the issue.

Fly tipping

Some people are still bringing bulky furniture items to the front entrance of all three blocks - please do not do this, as it is fly tipping and also a fire risk to yourselves and your neighbours. Instead please use the bulky waste collection service the Council provides. We will continue to monitor those who are fly tipping and take the appropriate action against their tenancies. This includes an official warning and a rechargeable fee against your housing file.

Litter being thrown from block windows

Unfortunately despite letters to all tenants this continues to occur, especially from Block 193. This isn't acceptable, and is a breach of tenancy. It also encourages rats. We're asking for your help to stop it - if you know which flats are doing this please report to us immediately.



Community Engagement

It was great to meet with residents at our drop in on Wednesday 26 July. These events give you a chance to meet with the team and raise any questions or concerns about the development.

The next drop in will be held at Coley Park Community Centre on Wednesday 27 September, 4pm - 6pm.

If you have ideas for what you would like to see covered at the next session, please contact Mary Hull on 0118 937 2730, text 07834 335309 or email Mary.Hull@reading.gov.uk.

Tenant Panel Update

The Tenant Panel is enjoying a break over the summer months, with meetings due to start again in the autumn.

If you would like to find out more or attend the next one, please text or call Mary Hull on 07834 335309 or email Mary.Hull@reading.gov.uk



How to be considered for a new home at Wensley Road estate

The new homes on the Wensley Road estate will be allocated via Homechoice at Reading. If you would like to be considered for a new home, you must have an active application. If you have not already done so, we recommend you apply as soon as you can.

You can apply online (just google 'Reading Council find a home') and follow the register for housing link. Alternatively you can request a paper form is sent to you from the same webpage, or by contacting the office on 01189 372172 or emailing allocations@reading.gov.uk.

If you require any assistance with this process, please make contact with the team either by phone or email to discuss.

Key features of the Local Lettings Policy for new homes at Wensley Road are:

- First priority will be given to tenants living in the Towers on the Wensley Road estate. Allocations will be made through the usual process of priority bands and registration dates. If all of these dates are the same, the longest serving tenant will receive priority.
- The Council can refuse any applicant who has been in breach of their tenancy agreement within the past 3 years including those with a history of ASB, significant substance abuse, serious rent arrears and property neglect. All tenants applying will be subject to a pre-termination inspection of their property and a rent review.
- If there are not enough bids from tenants living in the Towers to fill all the new homes, second priority will be given to local residents in Coley Ward (of any tenure). The Coley electoral ward comprises wider Coley, old Coley, and the part of West Reading bounded by the Bath Road, Tilehurst Road and Parkside Road.
- In the absence of bids from those listed above, the properties will be let through the usual allocations process of priority banding and registration date.