

IF THERE ARE SOLAR PANELS WILL ELECTRICITY OR HOT WATER BE CHEAPER?



If solar panels are used then it's likely that these would be serving communal areas so would not provide any direct benefit to individual homes. This is because additional components or parts are required to convert, and then supply, the electricity and this is not practical or economical to have for individual homes. It is likely that the solar panels will be placed in a central location to maximise the quantity that can be installed and this may be located further away from some of the properties making it harder to supply homes directly from the solar panels.

Using the electricity generated by solar panels for communal areas has the benefit of reducing landlord energy costs and thereby reducing service charge costs so residents will benefit.

CAN WE USE THE ROOF SPACES FOR GARDENS AS WELL AS SOLAR PANELS?



The roof spaces will potentially be used for a combination of outdoor space and the installation of low carbon technologies such as solar panels. The installation of these can also be provided on the same roof but from experience it is important to separate areas of solar panels and outdoor space to prevent damage to the technology.

WILL THE RADIATORS BE THE SAME? WILL THERE BE UNDER FLOOR HEATING?



It is likely that radiators will be used to provide heating, but under floor heating may be an option under certain circumstances based upon buildability and cost.

The final means of heating will be assessed during the current design stage, which will be completed at the end of January.

The new homes will be highly energy efficient and therefore residents would not need to use their central heating as much to keep their homes warm.

WILL I GET TO CHOOSE MY OWN SUPPLIER?



If a central, communal system is used to provide heating and hot water then you will not have a choice about your supplier for this. There will however be a choice of electricity supplier. Communal systems can only be operated by one operator; often this is through a long term contract whereby the operator recovers the large upfront installation costs with a guaranteed, although controlled, income stream over the contract period.

Any energy or heating provider will have clear and regular targets to make sure that wherever possible, costs are checked against comparable market costs. This is to ensure the best value for residents.

WHERE WOULD THE ELECTRICAL ENERGY FROM SOLAR PANELS GO?



The electricity generated from the solar panels may be used to serve what is called the 'landlord's system', which is all of the electricity required in the communal areas. This will help to keep the service charges as low as possible and would include electricity used for the lifts, lighting and some smaller machinery such as fans, motors and pumps. These will all depend on the final design and the method of funding this type of technology.

The electricity, which is generated will serve the communal areas and then individual homes or go to the central grid. The central grid is a system by which electrical power is distributed throughout the region.

WILL I HAVE A BOILER IN MY NEW HOME?



It is unlikely that there will be individual boilers in homes as government legislation favours a central system. A central heating system would be connected to individual homes through local units such as a 'Heat Interface Unit' (HIU). These units perform like a boiler but take the energy from the central system, which is like a large boiler room. Units within the home would come complete with a thermostat and local controls so that residents can have control of their own individual system.

WESTBURY ESTATE HEAT & ENERGY QUESTIONS

HOW DOES A CENTRAL HEATING AND ENERGY CENTRE WORK FOR ME AS AN INDIVIDUAL?



A central heating and energy centre houses all of the main machines and installations required to generate energy for your heating and hot water.

These machines are all kept in the same location in order to group the items that need regular maintenance. From here, heating and hot water is distributed across the site, to each individual home, so it can be supplied to you whenever you need it.

The primary function of the energy centre is to meet the residents' needs for heating and hot water, not to supply electricity, however, if the site uses a Combined Heat and Power (CHP)* approach then the energy centre will also supply some of the electricity for the site.

IS IT SAFE TO HAVE ALL THE POWER IN ONE PLACE?



The risks of having all machines and installations in a central location are no greater than if they were in individual homes.

The risk of failure is unavoidable with all heating systems, but the systems will be designed to ensure they can continue to operate during periods of servicing and repair.

***COMBINED HEAT AND POWER (CHP)** plants generate electricity whilst also capturing usable heat that is produced in this process. The heat captured is used for heating and hot water. When incorporated correctly, CHP can result in lower carbon emissions.

WESTBURY ESTATE

HEAT & ENERGY QUESTIONS

At the October Public Drop In some residents raised important questions about the heat and energy supply to their new homes and we have provided some responses from the Development Management Team.

Government legislation requires all new developments to consider low carbon solutions for providing heating and hot water in new homes and some of these solutions also generate electricity. Although the types of systems for the Westbury Estate have not yet been confirmed, these responses are to provide an explanation about some of the low carbon solutions for heating and energy, which will be considered.

ARE WE GOING TO HAVE GAS AND ELECTRIC?



It's unlikely that gas will be supplied to the new homes. This is due to a decision by Lambeth Council, which is based on the complexity, risk and cost of gas installation in the new homes. With a central heating system there is no requirement for a local gas connection because there are no local boilers in each home.

The only requirement for gas would therefore be for cooking. If provided, a gas cooker would require a separate metered service to each unit, which would mean additional installation and space as well as a possibility of maintenance and compliance issues. Installing gas can also have increased safety risks to residents and buildings.

It is also worth noting that not supplying gas to each separate home will reduce service charge costs.

WILL I PAY MORE FOR MY ENERGY?



The cost of energy will be dependent upon the type of system that is used and how efficient it is. Without knowing how all of the charges are currently calculated and what you pay now it is difficult to predict whether this will cost less, but the system will be as efficient as possible and the energy demands will be lower due to better performing buildings.

We are currently investigating construction methods and technology that could allow residents heating costs to be less than half of what they are at the moment.

WHAT SORT OF COOKER WILL I BE ABLE TO HAVE?



Due to the reasons described above, gas is unlikely to be an option and therefore it is likely that cookers will be electric.

If gas is provided for cookers, there will be the cost of annual gas safety checks for all residents added to service charges.