

The London Borough of Merton (Eastfields No. 1) Compulsory Purchase Order 2022 (APP/PCU/CPOP/T5720/3303017)

The London Borough of Merton (High Path No. 1) Compulsory Purchase Order 2022 (APP/PCU/CPOP/T5720/3303018)

The London Borough of Merton (Ravensbury No. 1) Compulsory Purchase Order 2022 (APP/PCU/CPOP/T5720/3303020)

Summary Proof of Evidence of Tara Butler

dated 26 January 2024

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2	EVOLUTION OF THE SCHEME	1
3	THE ORDER FOR EACH ESTATE AND THE PURPOSE OF THE CPOS	2
4	PLANNING POLICY	2
5	OUTLINE OF THE PLANNING HISTORY OF THE ESTATE REGENERATION.....	2
6	HOUSING NEED IN THE BOROUGH	3
7	EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS	3
8	RESPONSE TO OBJECTIONS WHICH RAISE TOWN PLANNING ISSUES.....	3
9	CONCLUSION	3

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 My name is Tara Butler and I have worked for the Council on the Merton Estates Regeneration Programme since it started in 2013/14, leading on the planning policy side and supporting its delivery.

1.2 This summary proof of evidence is made in support of the London Borough of Merton (High Path No 1) Compulsory Purchase Order 2022 (the **High Path CPO**), the London Borough of Merton (Eastfields No 1) Compulsory Purchase Order 2022 (the **Eastfields CPO**) and the London Borough of Merton (Ravensbury No 1) Compulsory Purchase Order 2022 (the **Ravensbury CPO**) (referred to collectively as the **CPOs**) in connection with the wider Merton Estates Regeneration Programme (also referred to in this proof of evidence as the **Scheme**).

2 EVOLUTION OF THE SCHEME

2.1 In Section 2 of my Proof of Evidence, I explain the evolution of the Scheme since it started, setting out how the Council worked with Clarion on the case for regeneration, considering assessments for each estate based on energy performance, urban design, socio economic factors and housing needs.

2.2 At the start of the project the Council and Clarion signed 10 Commitments to ensure that residents interests were kept at the heart of the project. My evidence also sets out the background to and evolution of the Council's Estates Local Plan; how at the very start of considering this project we consulted residents on all three Estates about options on delivering Decent Homes through refurbishment or regeneration. Clarion published and consulted on Clarion's Offer across all three Estates in parallel with the production of the Council's Estates Local Plan, so that existing residents could have a clear idea of the masterplan for their Estate, how the Estate would be enhanced should regeneration go ahead, and what options they would have for them and their household as part of the regeneration.

2.3 I explain the Council's ongoing working relationship with Clarion over planning, programme delivery, risk management and monitoring. My evidence describes the Council's decision to suspend elements of the 2010 Stock Transfer Agreement between the Council and Clarion, to provide additional support to the Scheme, as long as the programme is being delivered and is in a programme-level deficit. My evidence summarises the route to the current 2022 CPOs, with reference to the Core Documents such as the Statements of Case and Reasons for each CPO on each Estate.

3 THE ORDER FOR EACH ESTATE AND THE PURPOSE OF THE CPOS

3.1 As noted above, this summary proof of evidence relates to three CPOs. The Order Land pursuant to the CPOs include:

3.1.1 Phase 1 of the Eastfields Estate;

3.1.2 Phases 2 and 3 of the High Path Estate; and

3.1.3 Phases 2 to 4 of the Ravensbury Estate.

3.2 My evidence sets out the path to these CPOs, how the Council resolved to support the delivery of the Scheme by approving these CPOs in principle in early 2018, alongside the adoption of Merton's Estates Local Plan as the linked planning framework. Cabinet then, on 21 March 2022, resolved to make the CPOs.

4 PLANNING POLICY

4.1 In Section 4 of my Proof of Evidence, I explain the planning policy position and how, in accordance with the CPO Guidance, the Scheme is consistent with planning policy having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Development Plan as a whole. The Scheme will make effective use of the land as well as meeting other national and development plan requirements.

4.2 The Estates Local Plan, adopted in 2018, in particular sets a clear planning policy framework to guide how each Estate will look and feel to its residents, the amenities that will be improved and how it will integrate with the surrounding neighbourhoods post regeneration. From the start of the regeneration project, the premise has been that all three Estates should come forward together and that all are interconnected through the wider programme delivery, with High Path Estate helping to fund Eastfields and Ravensbury Estates.

5 OUTLINE OF THE PLANNING HISTORY OF THE ESTATE REGENERATION

5.1 I explain in Section 5 of my Proof that outline and detailed planning permissions for all three Estates have already been granted for the Scheme. The three extant outline permissions for the redevelopment of Eastfields Phases 1 to 3, High Path Phases 2-7 and Ravensbury Phases 2-4 are bound by a single section 106 agreement binding the Estates together in terms of delivery and viability.

5.2 In the Council's view, there are no planning impediments to the regeneration. My evidence explains that High Path Phase 1 and Ravensbury Phase 1 are already built and occupied by existing residents on the Estate, with Eastfields Phase 1A in progress.

6 HOUSING NEED IN THE BOROUGH

6.1 In Sections 6 and 7 of my Proof, I give a comprehensive account of Merton's housing needs. In simple terms, Merton is constrained, there is a lack of additional development land; and therefore, where large sites are brought forward, these sites drive overall housing delivery. Merton's Strategic Housing Needs Assessment concluded that there is a considerable need to provide as much affordable housing as viably possible, in part because of historic challenges in delivery.

6.2 The regeneration of the Eastfields, High Path and Ravensbury Estates will make a significant contribution to meeting the housing need in Merton, in particular the affordable housing need. The proposals also ensure that these large brownfield sites are optimised for their housing potential. The needs of current residents are addressed by providing them with new homes that meet the Decent Homes standard and are appropriate for their requirements.

7 EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

7.1 I explain in my Proof at Section 7 how the Council has had regard to its public sector equality duty and to human rights in respect of the CPOs, as well as a justification of the Scheme in relation to human rights legislation. My evidence clarifies the Council's commitment to equalities and human rights and compliance with the public sector equality duty throughout planning and delivery.

8 RESPONSE TO OBJECTIONS WHICH RAISE TOWN PLANNING ISSUES

8.1 The final Section of my evidence responds to CPO objections which raise town planning issues. I conclude that Merton's largest regeneration project significantly contributes to housing needs, is backed by extensive consultation and a commitment to benefit both existing and future residents.

9 CONCLUSION

9.1 The Development Plan as a whole supports the whole regeneration of the Eastfields and High Path Estates and the partial regeneration of the Ravensbury Estate. The overarching strategy for the development of each Estate is supported in the three Outline Permissions and these have been informed by residents' feedback and accord with the objectives of the Estates Local Plan and London Plan 2021.

9.2 The Council is satisfied that there will be no planning impediment to delivering the relevant phases for each of the CPOs. Clarion has demonstrated substantial investment into the Merton Estates Regeneration Programme and is committed to its delivery.