

**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 Brian Ham

dated 26 January 2024

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1 Introduction

1.1 I, Brian Ham, am the Project Director of the Scheme for Clarion and have held this role since 1 March 2023.

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 as the **Scheme**).

2 Clarion's duties in respect of the estates

When Clarion acquired the Council's housing stock in 2010, it took on an obligation to improve all stock to at least the Decent Homes (Merton) Standard by 2015. This obligation, in addition to the Government's Decent Homes Programme and Home Standard set out Clarion's duties in terms of the management of the homes on the Estate. In consulting with the Council over a number of years, Clarion found that its long-term duties for improving the quantity and quality of residential accommodation would be best achieved through the proposed Scheme.

3 The evolution of the Scheme and engagement

3.1 Initially, three options were considered for the whole of the Estate:

3.1.1 Refurbishment to Decent Homes (Merton) Standard;

3.1.2 Refurbishment to an enhanced standard involving; or

3.1.3 Full Redevelopment.

3.2 A 'Case for Regeneration' for each of the three Estates concluded that in the case of the High Path and Eastfields Estates there was a strong case for comprehensive regeneration, and a partial regeneration in the case of the Ravensbury Estate.

3.3 The Case for Regeneration fed into the Council's adoption of an Estates Local Plan to ensure there was a solid planning process to guide the regeneration of the three Estates.

4 **Overview of the Scheme**

The Scheme aims to transform the quality of housing on three former Council owned housing estates; raise the quantity of homes; overcome acute overcrowding problems; and provide exemplary Low Carbon homes which will comply with the UK commitments to 2050. Two of the Estates, High Path and Eastfields, are proposed to be comprehensively demolished and rebuilt at higher densities, whilst the third Estate, Ravensbury, is to be partially demolished and rebuilt.

5 **Overview of the CPOs**

5.1 The land comprised within each of the CPOs includes:

- 5.1.1 Phase 1 of the Eastfields Estate;
- 5.1.2 Phases 2 and 3 of the High Path Estate; and
- 5.1.3 Phases 2 to 4 of the Ravensbury Estate.

6 **Improvements to be delivered by the Scheme**

6.1 The benefits of the Scheme include, but are not limited to:

- 6.1.1 An increase in the number of homes on each Estate across all phases, as follows:
 - (a) High Path increases from 608 to 2,269 homes;
 - (b) Eastfields increases from 466 to 800 homes; and
 - (c) Ravensbury increases from 192 to 200 homes.
- 6.1.2 All homes on the three Estates will be built to an energy performance of at least EPC B rating which is significantly better than their current performance (ranging from EPC C to E across the three Estates); and
- 6.1.3 New homes, across the three Estates, will be larger, to meet contemporary space and Lifetime Homes standards.

7 **The Scheme's contribution to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Council's area**

7.1 The most fundamental benefit is to the aggregate housing numbers. The Scheme will make a significant contribution to meeting housing needs over the next 15 years in Merton. This will improve affordability, reduce over-

crowding, and provide the opportunity for more residents to stay in the Borough as their households develop and grow.

7.2 The improvements to the condition of the homes across the three Estates will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the residents.

7.3 There are also significant environmental benefits as new accessible public space is created. Leisure space is improved throughout the Estates and places will be developed with improved connectivity and pedestrian and cycle movements. Local job and training opportunities are also being provided and new commercial and community floorspace is being developed, leading to new opportunities for both existing residents and new ones.

8 **Current status of the Scheme**

8.1 The Scheme will be delivered in accordance with a phased construction programme.

8.2 Work has completed on Phase 1 of the High Path Estate (providing 134 new homes). High Path Phase 2 will comprise 113 homes in two separate buildings, respectively replacing Lovell House and Marsh Court. Both of these existing buildings contain just one property on which we have been unable to secure vacant possession by negotiation.

8.3 Work has commenced in late 2023 on 'sub-phase 1A', part of Phase 1 of the Eastfields Estate which is taking place on land in Clarion's ownership and adjacent to the Estate and will provide 32 homes. Whilst interests remain to be acquired to deliver the remainder of Eastfields Phase 1, none of the owners or occupiers are objectors to the Eastfields CPO.

8.4 Work has completed on Phase 1 of the Ravensbury Estate (providing 21 new homes). The works on Ravensbury Phase 2, which will provide 54 homes, will recommence, after some delay, in January 2024 with the intention to complete 2 of the 3 sub-phases in December 2024, and the final sub-phase in August 2025.

9 **Clarion's experience**

Clarion's history can be traced back to the early 1900s and today is the UK's largest affordable housing landlord with over 125,000 homes and 350,000 residents. In the last financial year, it had a turnover of £1bn, liquidity of £1.02bn, had invested £605m in new and existing stock, and delivered 2,032 new homes, of which 78% were affordable. It has a development pipeline of almost 21,000 new homes which it will be developing over the coming years. The Merton Estates Regeneration Programme is one of three major

schemes around the country that warrant their own Project Director reflecting the priority placed on it.

10 **Deliverability of the Scheme**

To date Clarion has invested £204m in the Scheme and a further £34.5m has recently been committed on Phase 2 of Ravensbury and Eastfields Phase 1A. The cost of completing the Scheme covered by the CPOs is a further £401.3m which is covered as a commitment in the current business plan, as confirmed by the Development Director of Finance in a letter dated 25 January 2024 and as anticipated in a Board resolution of 30th January 2024.

11 **Conclusion**

Clarion has dedicated a huge amount of resource to the Scheme to date and has the resources in place to afford delivery of the Scheme. Clarion are fully committed to the successful implementation of the Scheme; securing the CPOs is the next essential step.