

Received
15.03.2016

Consultation questions

Tell us what you think of the council's draft Estates Local Plan

1) Having read and considered the council's draft Estates Local Plan and supporting documents please indicate your preference at this stage for regeneration.

Please tick **one** of the following options:

Option 1: Demolish and redevelop the entire Estate

Redeveloping the whole estate would mean demolishing and replacing the existing buildings to provide well-designed energy efficient new homes and general improvement to the neighbourhood, including connections to the surrounding areas.

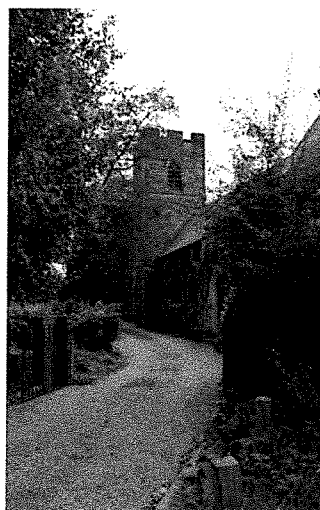
Option 2: Partial redevelopment

Retain some buildings and redevelop the majority of the estate to provide a number of benefits, such as well-designed energy

efficient new homes but with fewer benefits to the neighbourhood.

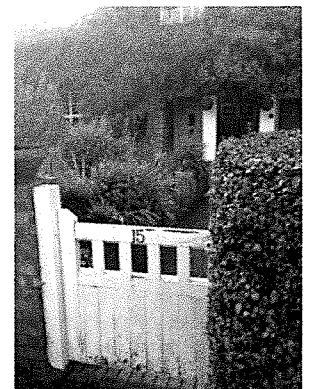
Option 3: Invest in existing properties to bring them to minimum modern standards

Refurbish all Circle Housing Merton Priory and leasehold properties to ensure they meet current minimum housing standards and have reasonable kitchens, bathrooms, windows, wiring and insulation. All leaseholders would have to share the costs of this work. This would not include changes to the outside areas.



2) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following aspects of the council's draft Estates Local Plan? Please select one of the following ratings for each topic area:

Draft Estates Local Plan	Ratings				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Townscape - How your neighbourhood looks and feels				✓	
Street Network - Where the streets will go					✓
Movement and access – How people will move around				✓	
Land use – What uses can go in the new neighbourhood				✓	
Open space – How much and what sort of open space will there be				✓	
Environmental protection - How design will help to achieve a sustainable e.g. reduce flooding, encourage wildlife and provide energy efficient homes					
Landscape – How open space, trees and planting should be provided		✓			
Building heights – How high buildings should be					✓



3) Please tell us if you have any other comments about the council's draft Estates Local Plan?

(Please include details of the page number(s) and paragraph number(s) of the council's draft plan to which your comments relate. Please continue on a separate sheet and attach to this form clearly indicating the question you are writing about.)

See Appendix

Tell us what you think about the council's consultation

4) How did you hear about this consultation?

Please select one or more.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Email | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Letter | <input type="checkbox"/> Other
(please specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Website | _____ |

5) How well did you understand the council's draft Estates Local Plan?

Please select one

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very well | <input type="checkbox"/> Not very well |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reasonably well | <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all |

6) Do you have any other comments about the council's consultation process that you would like considered?

Appendix

I have lived on High Path for over 35 years. One of the reasons some of the tenants/leaseholders/freeholders have stayed on the estate is because they are happy with their properties and the community in which they live - which are not substandard. The beauty of High Path is that we are not all on top of each other and closed-in by rows and rows of tall buildings. Therefore, I do not believe there is any need for full regenerate of High Path and am totally against the proposed regeneration. There is simply no justification to get rid of well-built properties and have rows and rows of 6+ storey flats. I believe this is going backwards and would just create rows and rows of concrete. This view is shared and is criticised by many, including Prince Charles, as a historical mistake being repeated by associations and developers who are building high rise, higher density properties, at the cost of individual and families and the environment. After choosing to live in a three storey building it only right and fair that this should be an option to me, if Merton/Circle is really thinking of its residents.

Should it go ahead the limit should be 5-store buildings and with a lot more two-bed houses. There is enough space on High Path for additional properties to be built and green/play areas improved and created without demolishing those properties already there.

Circle has not listened to the residents and have they own agenda for full regeneration. In the original plan we were told by the architects that the flats along Merton High Street will be 6+ storeys in line with the buildings on the opposite side of the road. There are 3 storey buildings and terrace houses on the opposite side of the estate along Merton High Street yet their revised plan remains the same. I should mention that Circle dropped leaflets for one of their workshops being held Wednesday 18 March on Monday 16 March 2015, which was totally inappropriate and shows their lack of regard for the residents and what they think of the residents' views and/or contribution. I have always felt that their workshops were mere formalities after the residents spent many hours discussing and making suggestions very little or nothing changes – they are still planning on full regeneration and a park, neither so which, I believe, is needed.

Merton has also proposed full regeneration, my views remain same. What is worse is that Circle is at present planning for 1,200+ and Merton is planning 1,800+. There is no consideration given to the supporting services. For example, travelling on the Northern Line into Central London at peak times, I sometimes have had to go back to Morden in order to get a seat at South Wimbledon (the second station). It is unbearable on the Tube with so many people travelling at this time and there are times when some passengers have panic attacks with the volume of people. How could this be better? There are also problems with doctor appointments, etc.

Circle made promises to the tenants that they would give them new bathrooms and kitchens, which no doubt swayed some of the tenants' decision for the transfer of the properties, knowing full well they intended a full regeneration. My property was built in 1967 and there are other properties on the estate which were built later. One of the reasons Circle gave for regeneration is that there are structural problems with the properties. Yet in a later brochure they stated they were carrying our surveys. We need to see the results of those surveys as I believe the existing properties are of much better quality than anything they intend to provide (which was confirmed by negative feedback from visits to new built properties arranged by Circle). As far as I am concerned, there is no reason for Circle/Merton to get rid of good properties but there is every need for improving the one already there and the surrounding areas.

There is a lot of scope to improve the estate and add some more properties as Circle/the Council obviously want to have more properties on the site. Both the Council and Circle have allowed the estate to fall below standard but the properties are well made. It is difficult to make a decision as to partial regeneration as we do not know the specifics. If it involves getting rid of the tower blocks and bringing the other properties up to the required standard and improving the surroundings, then I am all for partial regeneration. By letting the properties fall below standard they are reducing the value of the properties which is not fair and equitable for the leaseholders and freeholders who have long leases and bought the properties in good faith.

Other reasons Circle have given are a better transport system and a park. We have an excellent transportation system and access to Morden Park, Colliers Wood Park, Haydons Road Recreation and also a recreational area on Merton Road – which are all in very close proximity. A park in the centre of

the estate would be used by all local residents. There is anti-social behaviour on the estate and this would only increase it further, moving it into the park and thereby increasing numbers from the surrounding areas. Also, by putting a park where they are suggesting is trying to justify Circle destroying the newer well-built properties.

Circle/Merton plans show new streets and extension of some streets. On the opposite side of Merton High Street most of the residential streets are blocked off to prevent the flow of traffic through those streets, why it is that it is fine to have traffic diverting from the high street through High Path. This would cause more pollution for the residents and less safe for children living in the area.

Basement parking is also proposed. Returning home late at night how safe would anyone feel using a basement car park? Is this going to be monitored and how much will it cost the residents? Circle is already trying the charge for visitors parking instead of having the estate monitored properly.

Merton mentions replacement of the shop on Pincott Road, with what is it to be replaced? Even though residents in Mychell House were against the shop, it went ahead and the surrounding area is always littered with rubbish.

At present, most residents do not pay service charges for lift services, this will be an extra cost for those residents living in high density properties.

The rooms in the properties are good sizes and the owners have invested in a lot of time and money in their properties and have also furnished them appropriately. Feedback from the properties visited has been very negative and, in fact, the word horrible comes up quite a lot. I am not prepared to leave a home I am happy with to start all over again or move into a property with smaller rooms where I will not be happy. Again, Circle has not listened. For the 2-bed 4-person flat they based the size on Ramsey House which is 61 sqm. [REDACTED] House is 72 sqm excluding the outside cupboard. Why not use the bigger property as a basis?

During meetings the residents expressed their preference to have independent dual fuel energy supply of their own and not to be linked to any energy centre. This has completely been ignored. Residents should not be linked to any Energy Centre.

The Offer

Circle is planning to put a lien on the properties for 11 years, this is immoral. No one should be in a worse position. It should be a straight like for like for residents and if not, residents should be better off not worse considering Circle will be making a great surplus at our expense. No account has been taken with regard to residents who have lived on the estate for many years and who are in their 60s and 70s. With the various stages of the development and each taking 18-24 months to complete, to add an 11 year lien on the property is an injustice to those residents who have lived on the estate for over 30 years. Should anyone die, get married or end up in a residential/nursing home, the effect on their family, beneficiary and loss of inheritance/legacy is not a simple matter and should be taken seriously – at present the lien is not transferrable, a resident's family/beneficiary should not be placed in this position.

No consideration is given to negative equity. If for instance Circle places a lien of £100,000 on my property for 11 years and the property falls into negative equity why should anyone have to repay Circle £100,000.

Circle's reason for imposing an 11-year lien is that they do not want residents selling and moving on. This is an insult to residents who have stayed because they are happy with their property, enjoy living and having various commitments in the area (i.e. doctor, church, dentist, friend, family, work, etc.). They need no encouragement from Circle to stay. Why would Circle have this view unless once they regenerate they are planning to make it unbearable for residents. If it were the case that a resident does not want to stay under Circle, he/she should be free to move on. Circle is imposing the regeneration on us not the other way round. They will be making a great surplus at our expense.

I am coming to the end of my working life, have already paid for my property and have a long lease still remaining, why should I now be placed in debt, have a share ownership or live in a property part-

owned by Circle? Why is it in order for them to break my long lease and destroy a perfectly good property which I have invested a lot of time and money. It is unjust and morally wrong.

People are not against improving the areas in which they live but it is time the Government/Council/landlords stop treating lessees, freeholders and tenants unfairly. They should be heavily compensated for unfavourable plans/developments enforced on them. This is very stressful, emotionally, physically and financially. To permit Circle, with such a reputation for repairs and maintenance, to go ahead with this regeneration is to show total lack of regard for the rights of the residents who have lived on the estate and enjoy living on the estate of many, many years, it is in fact immoral.

Valuation of Properties

How could Circle's open market value be genuine and just. The valuation will be carried out by an independent RICs professional, where there is no completion to buy our properties from the general public, due to regeneration news publicised in the Media, the length of time to the rebuild not to mention property repair and disrepair issues. The value will not be based on what a buyer is prepared to pay for our property on an open market which is not competitive. However, Circle will be selling us the new properties on an open market based on what a buyer is prepared to pay. How is this fair and equitable. Surely, Circle's failure to keep the property in good repair is a breach of the residents leases/agreement? Circle should be made to bring the properties and surrounding areas up to standard so it reflects a true market value (a value which a buyer on the open market is prepared to pay as if regeneration has never been mentioned). Property prices should be comparable to other prime site developments in South Wimbledon and Wandsworth and properties near main tube lines.

No consideration has been given to the freeholders and leaseholders who bought their properties in good faith. Many have lived on the estate for 25+ years. If this regeneration is allowed to go ahead, there will be a difference in the value paid for our properties and the new properties which we will have to be met. No one should be worse off. If anything, we should be better off for the stress, ill health, disturbance and inconvenience they are enforcing upon us plus the amount of surplus they will be making at our expense and the general trauma suffered by the residents.

I along with many other residents am so disheartened with Circle. Since Circle took over, the estate is always filthy, there is always litter around the estate. Neighbours are allowed to leave rubbish on the stairway, etc. The doors to the outside sheds are left with the paint falling off. Their repairs and maintenance record is ridiculous. It takes years to solve problems for some residents. MPs have had to force their hand for some repairs to be carried out. If Circle cannot manage this and Merton seem to have no power to enforce Circle to carry out their obligations, how could they manage a 10 -15 regeneration.

During several of meetings with Circle it was stated by Paul Quinn that the aim was to try to reduce the cost of the new homes to Residents by selling at cost price. This is obviously not the case, again, considering the surplus that will be made by Circle on the 600+ other properties, at our expense.

If Circle/Merton has all residents' interests at heart, they should not go ahead with full regeneration. They should improve the estate by bringing all properties and the surround areas up to standard.