

Better places to live: high quality residential areas

1 Should all the homes on the Eastfields Estate be redeveloped?

As part of the transfer of homes from the London Borough of Merton to Circle Housing Merton Priory in 2010, a commitment was made to ensure all transferred homes met the Merton Standard. This included new kitchens, bathrooms, doors and windows where required.

When Circle Housing Merton Priory began to plan for the Merton Standards upgrades for Eastfields, their investigations and studies raised doubts on whether these improvements alone could bring the homes and the neighbourhood up to an acceptable, modern standard.

The Merton Standard works would not address issues such as poor insulation, dampness and condensation in the homes, overcrowding, parking, community safety and issues concerning the open and green spaces. Only homes owned by Circle Housing Merton Priory will be eligible for the improvements and leaseholders would be expected to pay for at least some of the upgrades. Any external issues on Eastfields would not be included.

Please select **one** of the following.

Option 1: Demolish and redevelop the entire Eastfields Estate

Redeveloping the whole estate would mean demolishing and replacing the existing buildings to provide a number of benefits, such as 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.

Option 4: Other, please state

Please note that the following questions relate to partial or full estate redevelopment. Should you decide to select the third option at Question 1, we would encourage you to respond to all the questions within this questionnaire as receiving all your feedback is important to us.

2 What size of homes should be provided within the Eastfields estate?

Please select **one** of the following.

Option 1: Mix of different sizes of homes

Provide a mix of different sizes of homes consisting: around 33% one bedroom, 32% two bedrooms and 35% three or more bedroom homes. This option reflects Merton's current policy to encourage a mix of dwelling sizes.

Option 2: If you do not agree with this mix, how would you change it?

3 What type of homes should be provided across the estate?

If the regeneration plans go ahead the existing homes will be replaced and additional new homes built. What type of homes do you think Eastfields will need in the future?

Please select **one** of the following.

Option 1: A mix of mainly houses and flats on different parts of the estate

Option 2: A wide range of homes including a mix of houses, flats and maisonettes

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Option 3: Mostly flats

Option 4: Other, please state

5 Are there any other issues or options we should consider regarding new homes?

Please feel free to continue on the sheet provided at the end of this questionnaire.

4 How should building heights be distributed through the Eastfields estate?

Currently the heights of the buildings on Eastfields are all 3 storeys. If the regeneration goes ahead, agreeing the height of new buildings will be important. That decision will need to take into account the relationship between Eastfields and the surrounding areas, local opinions, planning policies, how many homes are to be built and how to ensure there is enough open and green space for Eastfields to be a pleasant and attractive place to live.

What do you think about building heights?

Please select **one** of the following.

Option 1: Evenly across the estate
Buildings should be broadly similar height across the estate.

Option 2: Taller buildings around the edges

Please select **one or more** of the following

Taller buildings fronting the cemetery to the south east

Taller buildings fronting the school to the north

Taller buildings towards Eastfields train station

Option 3: Variety across the estate

Please select **one** of the following

Some taller buildings evenly spread across the estate in general, amongst mainly lower buildings.

Taller buildings towards the centre of the site.

People and spaces

6 What type of outdoor space would you prefer to see within the estate?

Should regeneration go ahead, all new homes will be required to have some private space: all flats with balconies and all houses will have gardens. In addition, new flats must have access to communal gardens. A regenerated estate would also need parks, playspaces and open spaces to serve its residents and the surrounding area. As there is a limited amount of space available, a balance therefore needs to be struck between the provision of private outside space for residents and public open space for everyone.

Please select **one** of the following.

- Option 1: Concentrate on providing communal space for flats**

This would be secure communal gardens available for groups of flats and not available for the general public.

- Option 2: Provide a single public open space for everyone to enjoy**

This This would be open to the general public. Communal gardens for groups of flats would remain, but may have to be significantly smaller to accommodate land for public open space.

- Option 3: Other, please state**

7 What types of play areas and open space would you prefer to see?

Please select **a maximum of two** from the following.

- Sports pitches** such as grassed areas suitable for kick-about and picnicking.



concordsportscentre.co.uk/football

- Multi-use games areas** such as fenced, hard surfaced areas for 5 a-side football, netball, tennis or similar sports.

King Georges new ball court - 10/05/06



- Communal gardens** such as areas with planting and seating suitable for picnicking and where ball games might be prohibited.



girlings.co.uk/development/100517-nemb.../re-...

- Children's play equipment**



thehills.nsw.gov.au/defaultImageLibrary

- Other, please state**

People and spaces

8 What do you think is important in deciding the layout of buildings, spaces and streets on the estate?

Please select **a maximum of two** from the following.

- Making easy connections within the estate and to the surrounding area**

Creating convenient and safe routes across the estate making it easy to walk or cycle to neighbours and move between places like Tamworth Lane, Grove Road, Acacia Road and Woodstock Way.

- Create traditional street forms**

Traditional street forms are streets that usually have buildings facing on to the street, on-street parking in front of properties and with street trees helping shape its feel and character.

- Retaining a feel similar to the current character of the estate**

Nearby streets outside the estate consist mostly of semi-detached houses with large back gardens, whereas the estate currently consists mostly of terraces with small gardens. This type of development could enable retention of much of the generous open space within the estate.

- Creating a mixture of types of buildings and spaces**

Providing greater mix of building heights and forms that give the estate a different character from its surroundings, but in a different way than the current uniform layout of buildings.

- Other, please state**

9 Are there any other issues or options we should consider regarding the estate's open spaces and streets?

Please feel free to continue on the sheet provided at the end of this questionnaire.

Local facilities and economic opportunities

14 Should new community facilities be provided within Eastfields estate?

Community facilities cover a range of uses such as health care, schools, children's playing fields and services for older people and the disabled.

Please select **one** of the following.

- Option 1: Yes, we need more community facilities such as:**
please state

- Option 2: No, the existing local community facilities are enough.**

15 How could refurbishment or regeneration support existing and new employment?

Please select **one or more** of the following.

- Provision of space for businesses on or near the estate**
- Employ local businesses and apprentices through the refurbishment or regeneration process**
- Other, please state**

16 Are there any other issues or options we should consider regarding social and economic opportunities?

For example employing local people, supporting local businesses, providing training for local people, improving local facilities and services.

Please feel free to continue on the sheet provided at the end of this questionnaire.

25TH October 2014

FUTURE MERTON
London Borough of Merton
Merton Civic Centre
London Road
Morden SM4 5DX

Dear Sirs,

**HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE FUTURE LOOK OF EASTFIELDS ESTATE
ISSUES AND OPTIONS
STAGE ONE QUESTIONNAIRE**

I am responding to the above Questionnaire, unfortunately not in a way that I would have expected. Once again, I don't think that as a Freeholder on the estate I am yet in possession of sufficient information to enable me to respond properly to it.

I attended the public meeting on 23rd July and handed a letter addressed to Stephen Alambritis, Councillors Walker, Stanford and Akygyna giving my views on what it was like to be a Freeholder on Eastfields Estate at that time. I attached to that letter a copy of my letter I had addressed to Merton Priory Homes of 19th September 2013 before their initial decision to regenerate had been made. These letters set out exactly the position of a freeholder on this estate, rather than a tenant of CHMPS. Incidentally I have never had a response to either of these letters. I am attaching a copy of the letters to this one, just so your records may be complete.

However, lots of my questions have since been addressed by CHMPS in their various booklets etc since that public meeting. However, only ONE of the most important decisions, so far as I am concerned, has been revealed, after seeing the first draft Masterplan last week, and that is of the phasing. When they will want my house at it's decant stage. I now know, if regeneration goes ahead, for me personally, its likely to be about 2016 BUT and this is a huge BUT as far as I am concerned, I need to know the detail of the Residents Offer which will not be forthcoming until after the second draft Masterplan in January 2015. Details of the both incentives, the shared equity scheme etc., so that I may involve my family. That detail that would enable me to discuss this huge decision with my family, consider financial planning and legal advice etc. Then and only then once I am in full possession of all the facts would I be able then to envisage a new Eastfields and look forward to it.

Once again, it would seem that the cart has been put before the horse.

Having seen the first draft Masterplan that has been prepared essentially for the Tenants of CHMPS on this estate I am sure it will be fantastic for them, but not at my expense.

So you are asking me what I think of the roads, the estate, the local businesses, the transport etc., etc., and because I don't know how I am going to be able to budget for a future regeneration not of my making, the upheaval, the distress, that detail is vitally important to us, obviously I still don't want it to go ahead and have chosen 1. Option 3.

The fact that you have put a date of 28th October for completion of this first questionnaire is not helpful. I am not in possession of all the facts as yet to enable me to answer your questionnaire properly.

Yours faithfully,

23rd July 2014

Mr Stephen Alambritis
Councillor Peter Walker,
Geraldine Stanford
Agatha Akygyna
London Borough of Merton
Merton Civic Centre
London Road
Morden SM4 5DX

Dear Sirs,

**Changes to Eastfields Estate
Public Meeting Wednesday 23rd July
St Marks Academy**

I am writing this letter to you as I will have been at the public meeting this evening, but I wanted the opportunity to put my views to the Council in writing about the proposed regeneration of our Estate and to let you know how life really feels as a Freeholder living here after the decision was made last year.

Just imagine if someone were to knock on your front door and say they wanted to have a conversation about “regenerating” the estate and that your house would be demolished. Can you imagine the shock and distress you would feel when you thought you had your home for life . This was one day last July in 2013 and to this end, I am enclosing a copy of the letter I wrote to Merton Priory homes on the 19th September at the end of the “conversation” and before the decision was to be made whether “regeneration” was going to go ahead. You will note the contents and my distress then. You will not be surprised that I did not receive a reply to this letter. I would ask you to please read this letter as it sets out our history here in Mitcham.

I have attended every meeting with regard to “estate planning” and can you imagine what it’s like talking to architects about what homes we would like on this estate, what sort of houses we would like built, when in actual fact the house I live in is my home and is perfect for our needs, as we made it that way during the last 36 years as we never thought we would have to leave and we certainly spent some money over the past few years keeping it in good repair for our retirement and for the rest of our lives, including a new kitchen only two years ago, new toilet and plastering of the hall and landings and new ceiling in the lounge.

Recently we visited two estates built by the architects a few weeks ago, on the coach with CHMPS and the architects to look at the designs of the houses, balconies etc., one estate in Chatham and the other in Kidbrook and came away feeling even more depressed when we realised that the smallest flat in Kidbrook would cost £390,000 with service charges of £200 per month that's without the ground rent and maintenance charges. This too had been a Council estate sold to Berkeley Homes.

However, my main worry is the fact that life has stopped. There is no point in doing the garden, it will be ripped up. No point in maintaining the property. Nowhere to go for any sort of clarity for me to try and work out how we will cope. The team at CHMPS are very patient, very kind and answer all my questions as much as they can, but they are doing their job, which is to provide better and decent homes for the tenants who will stay here. Unfortunately at my expense. That's where the problem has arisen that all their questionnaires and meetings are tailored for the tenants, not the freeholders or leaseholders. It is very difficult to try and answer questionnaires that are not relevant to me as a freeholder and I am paying the ultimate price by having to give up my home.

There are some interesting incentives that will be available if we stay at Eastfields, shared equity, shared ownership etc., However, the devil will be in the detail and there is no detail, nowhere I can look to see what option would be best for us if we have to leave. Nothing I can take to obtain financial advice right now. It's all in the future. It's horrifying.

It's the same with the "decant" stage. The rebuilding, rather than re-generation, will take place over the next 12 years if it goes ahead, but no-one can tell me when my house will be required. It could be 2016 when the project may start or it would be 2026. My husband is 80 years old.. In 12 years time a lot of water will have gone under the bridge and we may not even be here, but not to have any sort of control over our future, just a knock on the door one day and a Surveyor saying out of the blue – we are having a conversation about re-generation – it could work to your advantage. I can't see that it does at all. Since last July property prices have rocketed around here and even a maisonette in Woodstock Way cannot be bought for the price we will be paid for our property. We would lose the amount of space, an integral garage and modest service charges and cannot even afford to buy outright with what we would be paid.

I am not prepared to end up with massive service charges, maintenance charges and ground rent, all things I don't have now. I don't intend to end up on Benefits either for the first time in our lives when we have struggled to buy our property on a 15% mortgage and looked after it, only for it to be snapped up for a low price and for us to be in debt for the rest of our lives.

Not to have the basic information is crucial to our wellbeing and ability to totally change our lives in readiness for this huge upheaval, not of our making.

Obviously this is an emotional letter, but I hope you glean from this, if it was not apparent from the public meeting this evening, the other side of the coin.

Yes, regeneration will make a decent estate but it all comes at the highest price for us.

Yours faithfully,

PROPOSED REGENERATION OF EASTFIELDS ESTATE MITCHAM

After attending all of the drop-in events and “conversation” during the summer on Eastfields regarding the considered regeneration, I am writing to you to put my views on record, none of which will come as a surprise to the Team, as although the contents of each drop-in were interesting, and some of the proposals certainly attractive, the resulting questionnaires upon which the ultimate decision will be made did not necessarily target freeholders and leaseholders, but more the MPH tenants on the estate, and despite the patience of the Team in answering my many many questions with regard to regeneration, I feel this “conversation” has been handled lightly and the team have underestimated the devastation we now feel at the blight placed upon our home and our future.

Now that this has all been mentioned in the local Press on the front page this week, a copy of which I attach, a private sale now would now seem to be out of the question and it almost seems that the decision has already been made although the “conversation” ends at the end of this month.

We have lived on Eastfields estate for 36 years, which was built in 1971 as a Council estate and it was a very popular estate indeed where people got together as a community, the children played together, we had carnivals, fancy dress, barbecues etc., and a Residents Association which has long gone.

We took advantage of the Right to Buy and in 1988 we purchased our home on a 15% interest rate mortgage over 25 years. Since that time, we have maintained our property as freeholders with modest service charges for the surrounding areas and over the last two years have spent a considerable amount of money installing a new kitchen and toilet, plastering the walls and bringing our house into a good state of repair ready for

the rest of our lives. My husband is almost 80 years old. This was our expectation. Mortgage free and modest service charges and with space, should any of our family need to be here with us to assist or even to help them onto the property ladder.

If this estate is regenerated, I do not believe that I will be in the same position as I am now. I will not have parity with my current position, being mortgage free or peace of mind. I have looked around Mitcham and there is nothing of a similar size and space that I would be able to purchase now and although apparently I will have options to stay and purchase on the estate, the details have not been made transparent but I believe with the rising prices, I will be lucky to get a one bedroom flat with my money but will inherit ground rent and service charges that may be beyond our reach and we will live the rest of our lives in penury and maybe dependant on benefits for the first time in our lives. I cannot see a three bedroom house with garden and garage, which I have now, in Mitcham or on the new estate being an option. Again, only vague promises of help and compensation. No details. If we have to move out of Mitcham far away from our families, this is at a time when we are more likely to need support.

My history is in Mitcham. Apart from living in Streatham Vale before I moved here, my parents lived in Mitcham, my brothers and sisters all went to Lonesome School and Rowan Secondary School, my own children too to Lonesome and Tamworth. I like the fact that I can walk down the road and see familiar faces and if I had wanted to leave Mitcham, I probably would have done so many years ago, but chose to stay. It has taken us years to get a decent bus service and indeed the Mitcham Eastfields railway station and now that these things are in place and many of the social issues have been sorted on the estate, it is now planned to regenerate.

My main issue is the way in which the “conversation” has been handled and I would have expected as freeholders that if Merton Priory Homes had intentions to regenerate the estate, then an approach to the freeholders and leaseholders with a package of all possible outcomes should have been made available right at the very beginning showing all possible options to, in some part allay our fears for the future and to show properly the benefits to us. I should not have had to winkle every last piece of information from the Team about what could happen if I chose not to have the upheaval of leaving the estate and these things are still unclear because they have not been made known to us.

No doubt there are plans in place should the decision to regenerate go ahead, but full disclosure of this should have been made available to set our minds at rest for the future, right at the very beginning not ambiguous scrappy colourful leaflets about this “conversation” and questionnaires clearly targeted to MPH tenants. Freeholders and leaseholders have put money into the estate and taken care of our homes and of course we care about our surroundings and yes, certainly there are areas of the estate that could do with improvements. There is no question of that, but to demolish, the real word to use, well that’s a different story and it’s a bombshell to our plans and expectations to a comfortable and peaceful retirement.

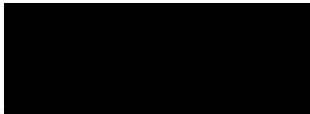
None of my comments or observations will come as a surprise to the Team as I have made them known at every event and to each Team Member who have been very

pleasant and have gone to great pains to try and explain everything, within their remit, but without actually giving any detail and I therefore remain shocked and worried for the future. The sort of problems I envisage happening to us is contained in the Evening Standard article dated 2nd August this year and has happened at various other estates in London where people have had to move many miles down the line because a mortgage or finance is not available and I enclose a copy and which amounts effectively as a “land grab” at our expense.

I do not feel that this “conversation” has been a true consultation of the wishes of freeholders and leaseholders because of the lack of transparency of the information which **no doubt will be available once a decision has been made**, but which should have been provided **before the decision is made** by MPH to improve or regenerate so that these decisions are not made only by MPH tenants who naturally want their properties improved. Everyone should be made properly aware first with every question answered **before the decision** is made

I make no apology for the emotive content of this letter because this is how all this has affected me and MPH need to know this. I think a proper consultation should have come first before the decision is made.

Yours faithfully,



P.S. Today, 11 days before the end of the “conversation” a leaflet entitled “Your Questions Answered – shaping the future of Eastfields” has been hand-delivered and **how useful that would have been on day 1**. There is still a long way to go.