

## **High Path Draft Estate Local Plan Feedback**

Any housing regeneration project in the name of a greater good must be holistic in nature and no one should suffer adversely as a result of such an exercise/be worse off in terms of their current housing facilities, financial security and family stability.

Although this is a so called independent plan, it is an instigator for a major life changing housing regeneration project via Circle Housing and therefore the issues raised by the **unfair housing offer made to the true financial stakeholders/freehold resident house owners, must be fully addressed and not simply the physical aspect of the Estate Plan which has no meaning if we are cleansed out of the area by design or omission or forced into unsuitable houses with inferior facilities than we are enjoying now.**

Part 01 page 6 : “a great place to live and call home \_ \_ \_ \_ “ can only happen if individuals’/real financial stakeholders’ views are taken seriously regarding house types and property ownership rights to maintain a balance against the majority communal rights of a housing association or property developer, which are detrimental to Merton’s individual citizens’ rights, who aspired to improve their life chances only to be turned into debtors again by ways of new covenants, or be cleansed out of their home area by design or omission in the name of ‘common good’.

This is particularly true for the residents who bought Council terrace houses under Right to Buy and are 100% freehold resident owners, without any service or administration charges and in their 60’s are suddenly faced with an ultimatum from a housing association to accept their terms and conditions, however unfair or else, when there is nothing wrong with their property. No one must suffer adversely as a result of this regeneration exercise in name of common good and the Council must protect all families’ rights as their legal and moral duty and not only conveniently protecting the majority only, who are social housing tenants. They have an extremely favourable housing offer when they are not true property owner stakeholders in financial terms.

Page 9 1.12: Councillors canvassing in favour of the housing association against individual house owners’ rights, must not be allowed to vote/persuade officers to make changes/recommendations on any item related to this housing regeneration.

Page 12 2.2: The Housing Association has not maintained its properties to realise their long term strategic plan to increase its housing portfolio by any means. The London Mayor’s housing strategy is in their favour and suits the council as well to meet their housing quotas. The Council inadvertently is hurting its constituents, by not taking into account the Housing Offer made to resident freehold house owners, by Circle Housing Association.

The Housing Association’s consultation is a farce and a one way process. All the views and suggestions from leaseholders, freeholders and some tenants, have been totally ignored and facts manipulated to suit their own plans and you can verify it by checking Mitcham Eastfield residents’ and Ravensbury residents’ blogs and twitter sites.

Page 12 2.3: The good quality housing cannot be good if it takes away your current high housing standards and facilities and legal ownership rights and financial independence and

replaces it with inferior housing designs/facilities and imposes new restrictive covenants to turn your 100% freehold property into a leasehold property or introduce new service charges by deliberately designing houses to attract service and administration charges and holding senior citizens to ransom by introducing an 11 year claw back clause on the property when they are totally debt free at the present time. All these are meant to discourage freeholders to stay and forces them indirectly to be cleansed out of the area by design or omission. Even the Government's Right to Buy Scheme has only a 5 year, tapered profit claw back clause.

A housing association must not be allowed to become a monopoly for High Path housing designs and tenure and a non-elected body to impose their will on Merton's independent residents by manipulating the housing crisis and coercing Merton council for their own benefits against its residents' interests.

Page 12 2.4: To live on a construction site for 10-15 years or in a temporary housing is an extremely long time and unsettling for anybody and certainly detrimental to senior citizens who may not even see the new property.

It must not take longer than a maximum of 5-6 years to build new houses, as it is done by all major developers except sink councils/housing associations, who sees their residents as numbers and not human beings.

Page 14 2.6: "a great place to live and call home \_ \_ \_ \_" cannot be achieved by using a one size fit all approach in name of common good, by ignoring the genuine, specific housing needs of a freeholder with an overcrowded house and their existing property rights. It must build houses where one would like to live and call a home. Merton Council is the original owner and therefore must safeguard such owners' rights because the housing association is not treating them equally, which is clear from their housing offer made to lease and freeholders.

High Path is not for apartments only and current varied house types must be provided in the new plan and residents must be given the same choices of house designs given to Ravensbury. The new housing must be inclusive for every type of household, as well as house types and not only to meet high density criteria, which will never become a good place to live and work unless the foundation is right for everybody to feel at home.

Please also refer to Part 01 page 6.

Page 14 2.8: You cannot bridge the gap of east and west by cleansing out the long standing residents and turning the area suitable for commuters only, who have no long term interest in the area.

Page 15 2.9: Minority house owners' views and rights must not be ignored in favour of just building the flats in High Path and promoting the housing association's and Merton Council's wellbeing in the name of majority common good, against the wellbeing of its longstanding resident house owners, who are in a minority in numbers and cannot protect its rights against such almighty powers mentioned above.

Page 15 2.12: Health improvement including mental health, cannot be achieved by ignoring individuals and extended families' housing standards and ownership rights and financial wellbeing which is threatened by the housing regeneration on High Path.

Page 16 2.13 and 14: Must build at least some, bigger, 3 double bedroom houses, 4/5 bedroom houses with suitable facilities to accommodate overcrowded freehold house owners and offer them upgrade options as a priority to meet their specific housing needs. They must not be disadvantaged due to the majority decision of more housing units not suitable for the above families.

Page 17 2.19: This plan must not be used to lower the current high standards of some terrace houses with garages and gardens and big loft spaces, to minimum low standard specifications for housing, which is meant for sink estates and low standard housing.

The Mayor's plan is to make the maximum use of unused land for more housing but is not meant to use that opportunity to destroy good housing or grab freeholders land by cleansing them out of the area or by inappropriate designs and new restrictive covenants and removal of current property rights by systematic means.

Merton must protect all residents' rights irrespective of their house ownership rights. Majority are housing association tenants and that majority figure should not be used to disadvantage resident leaseholders and freeholders housing needs and current ownership rights.

Page 18 2.23: There must be a positive outcome for freehold resident house owners and not just the tenants and flat owners.

Page 20 2.25: There is no justification to knock down perfectly good well build terrace houses in Pincott Road to turn it into an open area or to use that space for building site vehicles until appropriate alternative suitable housing is offered to current freeholders when a pub next to it will still remain standing .

Housing regeneration is about improving people's life and not meant to destroy our high standard housing facilities and ownership rights in the name of greater good at our peril.

Merton Council must safe guard our rights and existence which is threatened by this regeneration plan. Not a single family must adversely suffer by this housing plan.

Page 20 2.26: This is applicable to some flats on high Path but do not apply to terrace houses or town houses and freeholders and leaseholders of these houses must not be disadvantaged in any way whatsoever in their future replacement houses and current property rights.

Page 20 2.27: As per 2.26

Page 20 2.28: As stated under several heading residents freeholders house owners' rights and property standards and facilities must be fully protected by the Council and must not be left to the housing association to cleansed us out of the area by design or omission.

Page 20 2.29: Resident freeholders are in a minority and their view must be heard and respected and be incentivised to stay rather than cleansed out of the area in favour of housing association as well as the Councils eagerness to build more compact housing units rather than family homes.

Page 20 2.30: Replacement houses offered to resident freeholders must be of a suitable type for their housing needs including upgrading for overcrowded families and there must not be any strings attached to their current housing rights (e.g. no service or other charges of any description, no tapering clawback clause should they wish to sell their property at any time etc.).

It is imperative that the above resident house owners' rights are fully protected from adverse effect of this housing regeneration as their housing and financial existence is threatened.

Page 26 2.33: Living standards can only be improved by offering equally good houses and current ownership rights to all types of owners (not just social tenants) and not by taking it away under different pretext in name of greater good.

Page 30 2.46: Must be flexible in allowing some type of garages to be built with some houses/corner houses to meet specific housing needs where appropriate.

Page 80 3.106: We need access to these master plans of 1956 to fully understand the site.

We would appreciate more pictures of Pincott Road, as well as Nelson Grove Road and full history of both the roads, as very little is stated about houses in these roads.

Page 97: Issues and Opportunities: - The new development should not have any reference to the following words "High Path, Estate, Courts, Community Centre" in street names, documents and maps for 100% positive image of the area and total inclusion with the rest of Wimbledon.

Also anti-social tenants and others must be given strict and legally binding new contracts to stop them ruining the new development by their unchecked antisocial and so called low level crimes and intimidation of numerous types. If there is no will to stop these antisocial elements from ruling the nest, then there is no point in regenerating the area. All tenancy agreements must be such that there is no room for any antisocial resident/family to remain in the new housing.

Page 98 3.136: Must have all types of houses including traditional terrace type houses, such as the traditional houses in Abbey Road, for an inclusive society. Please do not just turn High Path into a new housing association tower block estate which will need another regeneration in a few years' time, if only a limited type of residents are attracted by limited property types.

**All properties must have ground level access** and houses must have traditional V or A shaped tiled, pitched roofs and not flat roofs.

Page 98 3.138: To create any extra open space, you must not knock down perfectly good resident freehold terrace houses in Pincott Road, without first securing/ring-fencing equally good, suitable houses with current ownership rights and upgrade options for any overcrowded families.

Page 102 and 104 EP H2 and H3: The existing Nelson Grove Road and Pincott Road must remain Public High Ways and must not fall under the monopoly housing association's property rights or management at any time, under any circumstances.

Page 104 F: Must allow some garages with bigger houses as appropriate.

Page 104 3.155: Vehicle movement route from High Path into Morden Road must continue as per current arrangements.

Page 105 3.169: Must have some integral garage of some type, with houses to meet all types of housing needs. Only such varied facilities can make the area desirable for living and working.

Page 108 3.170: All properties must have ground level access and be of Life Time Standards and of good quality material.

Page 108 3.173: You must build all types of houses, with all types of housing ownerships to attract and retain law abiding families of all sizes, not just tower blocks and flats to meet the housing quota only.

Page 170 4.4: The Master Plan must show actual designs and sizes of all types of space in a house in **length, width and height** and not just total square metres, which is extremely misleading when comparing any type of accommodation and the same applies to a garage, loft, roof and a garden (length x width).

(e.g. A 16 square metre living room can be 2 metres wide by 8 metres long or 4 metres wide by 4 metres long, or several different measurements in width and length and without the above length x width measurements, as well as the ceiling height, one cannot decide what size furniture will fit in the room or not, and cannot compare the replacement house size.

Without the above material facts and the property ownership terms and conditions details, one cannot provide feedback and accept any house replacement offer, which is totally vague and generic in nature.

Page 170 4.8: 2 double bedroom terrace houses in Pincott Road are bigger than 3 bedroom houses and 2 of them have original large garages, front and rear gardens and plenty of storage and loft space and every inch is in practical use. Such high standards must be maintained in any replacement houses with an upgrade options for any overcrowded families.

Page 170 4.9: At least some houses must have a separate ground floor living room and separate kitchen, a garage and totally independent mains utilities dual fuel, gas central heating etc. and free from any housing associations management to maintain a balance of different tenures and property ownerships and freedom of choice.

Page 171 4.11: Nelson Grove Road and Pincott Road must remain Public High Ways and must not fall under the control of any housing association.

Page 171 4.13: Each house must have its own bin storage in the front/rear garden and not linked to any communal bins or under street bins.

Page 171 4.14: Please see page 170 4.4

Page 174 5.1: 100% freehold resident house owners are in a minority number and their specific housing needs and ownership rights are severely threatened by this regeneration and they should not be subject to any new covenants or service charges.

Page 174 5.3: To live on a construction site for 10-15 years or in temporary housing, is an extremely long time and unsettling for anybody and certainly detrimental to senior citizens who may not even see the new property.

The Housing Association must proactively identify such families whose properties are to be in later phases and ring fence those properties for stability and peace of mind for the families concerned.

It must not take longer than a maximum of 5-6 years to build new houses, as it is done by all major developers within this time frame, except by sink councils/housing associations who appear to see their residents as numbers and not the human beings.

It is also important to note that hardly anybody would like to buy even a new property on a building site, which is going to last more than a couple of years and you want be able to attract early purchasers if their money is tied up for such a long time, except foreign investors which will just add to the empty properties in Merton.

Finally, a building site next to several busy junctions would cause a major traffic headache which cannot be sustained for such a long period.

Page 174 5.4: If this housing association is not financially sound then the project must not start at all and new owners must be sought straight away.

The Housing Association was given more than 9,000 properties and several acres of land almost free of charge by Merton's Tax payers. It has hardly used any monies to maintain any of the free properties it has received. It does not cost much to bulk build new properties as claimed, or publicised. The Housing Association will be building more than double the properties they have now, on extra prime site, free land and those houses will be sold on an open market. There is nothing but profit for the housing association and the Councils well as tenants but the freehold house owners are at a total loss as the offer stands at the present time.

**Re: High Path Draft Estate Local Plan/ Regeneration and its adverse effect on a freehold house owner in Pincott Road** and some other roads.

Regeneration is about improving the life chances of all local residents and future residents not only the Circle tenants. It includes housing living conditions, jobs, education, 24 hours multiple transport links, access to major hospitals/treatment, **financial wealth and general wellbeing, including preservation of local roots which we have established in the area**. All these factors are part of better environmental health and not a separate entity.

**Draft Estate Local Plan for High Path should not be just about buildings, streets, open spaces and surrounding areas and visual appearance.**

Draft Plan do not include questions relevant to lease and freeholders adversely affected by these exercise. All tenants remain unaffected due to a fair resident offer to them but not to other group as stated above.

**Our existence on High Path is threatened by these proposals and therefore resident offer from Circle to freehold house owners and others must be addressed directly as well as indirectly and our rights must be fully protected.**

**Draft Estate Plan feedback becomes null and void if the real financial stake holders living on High Path are totally excluded from raising their legitimate concerns raised by this exercise interwoven with Circle Housing High Path regeneration proposals.**

**This is to inform all Councillors that the Circle Housing High Path resident offer (except tenants offer) is not a fair offer, but without raising various points in that offer, I am extremely concerned about the following points because it immediately threatens our survival as a family.**

We are long standing Merton residents and Merton Council has a legal and moral responsibility to protect all its residents from the Circle Housing monopoly position on our housing rights due to the housing stock transfer without our consent or safeguards.

Please do not permit 'Clean Title on High Path' and planning permission to Circle Housing until and unless a long standing South Wimbledon residents 100% freehold terrace house owners' **rights granted by Merton Council are fully protected** by the Circle Housing **on a case by case basis** in the new project.

We are a true 100% freeholder resident house owner in Pincott Road and not subject to charges of any description and this position must continue in new development because it is paramount for our financial security and survival when we are at the end of our life cycle.

Circle must not use this development opportunity to deprive us of our long standing freehold rights conferred by Merton Council a long time ago. (i.e. no charges of any description).

Circle must not be allowed to design, develop master plan and build properties in such a way to indirectly introduce management and service charges and remove our existing rights.

*Also Circle must build at least some houses with suitable facilities with upgrade rights to ease our overcrowding situation.*

**Merton Council did not use blanket service charges and management charges on High Path properties and Circle must do the same as there is no justification to change it other than greed and profit motive at our cost.**

**Circle must provide a written guarantee that the 100% freehold rights enjoyed by some resident owners who choose an appropriate type of house, in an appropriate location in the new development will continue to maintain their current rights in the replacement house, on a case by case basis if necessary (i.e. no charges of any description), as without these rights our dignity, physical and mental health will be destroyed due to the new financial burden imposed by Circle unfairly.**

**As a local authority your Office has a variety of powers to safeguard our interests and we depend on your good offices for the same.**

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,