

The Future of Heygate Estate

Postal Survey

Research Study Conducted for
London Borough of Southwark and
Heygate Tenants and Residents
Association



April 1999

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INTRODUCTION

This report contains findings of research conducted by Market & Opinion Research International (MORI) on behalf of Southwark Council and Heygate Tenants and Residents Association.

Background and Objectives

Heygate Estate comprises a total of 1,194 units. The specific aim of this survey was to assess residents' attitudes towards the future of the Heygate Estate. Issues covered were:

- overall satisfaction with Heygate Estate and the area in general
- preference for each of the four options being considered by Southwark Council for the future of the Estate
 - Option 1: Repair and improve the whole estate
 - Option 2: Demolish and rebuild whole estate, with fewer homes on the same space
 - Option 3: Repair and improve the maisonettes, but demolish the high rise blocks to make way for new properties
 - Option 4: Demolish the estate and do not build any new homes
- preference for type of housing, council or housing association/ trust home on the Estate, elsewhere in Southwark or outside the area altogether.

Methodology

In total, 1,191 questionnaires were despatched to all residents of the Heygate Estate, of which 571 in total were returned between 8-26 April 1999, giving an overall response rate of 48%. All questionnaires were returned, directly by post to MORI, for analysis.

Each address received a letter from Southwark Housing explaining the nature of the survey, and a leaflet explaining the nature and implications of the four proposed options in detail.

SUMMARY

- A small majority are satisfied with living on Heygate Estate, but a significant minority are dissatisfied, including a fifth who are very dissatisfied. The area as a whole has a slightly better rating among residents.
- There appears to be no clear consensus on which of the options for future development should be pursued; first choices are fairly evenly split between the three options which involve homes remaining on the estate (options 1-3).
- Second choices favour demolishing and redeveloping either the high rise blocks or the whole estate. *a high proportion of respondents think they will achieve this*
estate not being redeveloped, may be detected
- There are clear relationships between current satisfaction with the estate and preferred development options; those who are satisfied are more likely to want the estate to be refurbished rather than demolished, and want to remain living in Council housing on Heygate.
- These differences are also clearly related to the type of respondents; in particular, men and older residents are more satisfied and more likely to favour refurbishment of Heygate Council property.

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Bobby Duffy
Rachel Williams

Preferred Options for the Future of Heygate Estate

Among those who responded, opinion is fairly evenly divided between three of the four options being considered for the future of Heygate Estate:

- a third say their preferred option would be to demolish and rebuild the whole estate, with fewer homes on the same space (Option 2)
- a similar proportion say they would prefer repairs and improvements to the whole estate (Option 1)
- a quarter say the maisonettes should be repaired and improved, but that the high rise blocks should be demolished to make way for new properties (Option 3).

The idea that the estate should be demolished altogether and no new homes built (Option 4) is clearly only favoured by a minority.

Q Which one of these options would you most prefer?

And what would be your second choice?

	First choice %	Second choice %
Repair and improve the whole estate	29	10
Demolish and rebuild whole estate, fewer homes on the same space	32	32
Repair and improve the maisonettes, but demolish the high rise blocks to make way for new properties	25	37
Demolish the estate and do not build any new homes	5	7
Not stated	8	14

When asked to choose a second option this ranking alters somewhat, and demolition of some or all of the Estate is favoured:

- 37% say repair and improve the maisonettes but demolish the high rise blocks (Option 3)
- a third (32%) say demolish and rebuild the whole estate (Option 2)
- repairs and improvements to the whole estate are mentioned by just a tenth (Option 1)

Q Which one of the following options would you most prefer?

And which would be your second choice?

	First choice %	Second choice %
Council home on Heygate Estate	63	7
Housing Association/ trust home on Heygate Estate	7	31
Council home elsewhere in Southwark	11	26
Housing Association/ trust home elsewhere in Southwark	5	11
Move out of Southwark altogether	13	10
Not stated	2	16

While all are in agreement that a council home on Heygate Estate would be their preference, men are significantly more likely to want this than women (70% men versus 59% women). Similarly, residents of all ages say they would prefer to stay in a council home on Heygate Estate, but this preference is stronger among those aged 55+ (71%) than those below this age, particularly 16-24 year olds (54%).

The opinions of tenants and leaseholders are fairly similar. However, leaseholders are significantly more likely than tenants to say they would prefer to move out of Southwark altogether (25% leaseholders versus 13% tenants).

The majority's desire to continue living on the Heygate Estate is evident in the 52% who disagree that no matter what improvements are made they'd rather live elsewhere; indeed a third strongly disagree. However, a third (28%) agree with this statement and 19% strongly agree.

Split leaseholders & tenants info

→ 74%

Sample Profile

	Number	%
Total	571	100

Gender

Male	265	46
Female	303	53

Age

16-24	31	5
25-34	116	20
35-44	131	23
45-54	73	13
55-64	77	14
65+	141	25

Tenure

Tenant	527	93
Leaseholder	41	7

Household Composition

One adult under 60 years	143	25
One adult 60 or over	102	18
Two adults both under 60	70	12
Two adults, at least one 60 or over	60	11
Three adults or more, all aged 16 or over	63	11
One-parent family with children, at least one aged under 16	67	12
Two parent family with children, at least one aged under 16	58	10

APPENDIX C

Heygate Residents' Feedback Form

290 Heygate residents came to see the display about the Elephant & Castle regeneration plans, which was at Heygate between 17 July and 2 August 2003. 259 completed the feedback form, representing 255 households (21%) of the total number at Heygate.

Here is what they said.

What do you think of the plans for the Elephant and Castle?

The majority of residents who saw the display (60%) liked the plans for Elephant and Castle. A further 28% were neutral about them or did not have an opinion, and a minority (13%) disliked them.

What do you think of the proposals for rehousing Heygate Estate?

A marginal majority (52%) liked the proposals for rehousing Heygate Estate residents. A further 31% were neutral about them or did not have an opinion, and 18% disliked them.

Have you found the display today useful?

The great majority of those who saw the display (79%) thought it was useful. Those who did not find it of use, would have liked to have seen more concrete information.

What aspects of your housing are important to you?

Security (81%) and space (76%) were claimed to be the most important aspects of housing by most, followed by modern facilities (69%), close to where I currently live (69%), good lighting (65%), maintenance (62%) and storage (54%).

What lifestyle factors are important to you about where you live?

Good transport links (82%) and safety (78%) were stated to be the most important lifestyle factors by most, followed by shops and restaurants nearby (70%), parks and play spaces (53%) and proximity to schools (46%).

What terms of tenancy are important to you?

Rent level was stated by the majority as an important term (72%). Right to buy (49%) was an important term for nearly half of the residents and for a significant minority involvement with decisions (44%) and formal tenant representation (34%) were also important terms.

Which forms of communication would you find most useful to keep you updated about the Heygate?

Monthly newsletter update proved the most popular method for most (86%). Half of the residents (50%) also find meetings useful.

Who do you like to receive information from?

The great majority (76%) would like to receive information from both the Council and the TRA.

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(1-5)

Heygate Estate Topline Results

Results from 571 returned self-completion questionnaires among residents of the Heygate Estate
All figures are in percentages; where these do not add to 100 this is due to computer rounding

Q1a Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with living on Heygate Estate?

	%	
Very satisfied	28	} 55%
Fairly satisfied	27	
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8	} 29%
Fairly dissatisfied	10	
Very dissatisfied	19	
Don't know	1	
Not stated	7	

Q1b Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with living in this area in general?

	%
Very satisfied	32
Fairly satisfied	26
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8
Fairly dissatisfied	8
Very dissatisfied	10
Don't know	2
Not stated	15

Q2 Which one of these options would you most prefer?

	%
Repair and improve the whole estate	29
Demolish and rebuild whole estate, with fewer homes on same space	32
Repair and improve the maisonettes, but demolish the high rise blocks to make way for new properties	25
Demolish the estate and do not build any new homes	5
Not stated	8

Q3 And what would be your second choice?

	%
Repair and improve the whole estate	10
Demolish and rebuild whole estate, with fewer homes on same space	32
Repair and improve the maisonettes, but demolish the high rise blocks to make way for new properties	37
Demolish the estate and do not build any new homes	7

raft

Q4 Which one of the following options would you most prefer?

	%
Council home on Heygate Estate	63
Housing Association/trust home on Heygate Estate	7
Council home elsewhere in Southwark	11
Housing association/trust home elsewhere in Southwark	5
Move out of Southwark altogether	13
Not stated	2

Q5 And which would be your second choice?

	%
Council home on Heygate Estate	7
Housing Association/trust home on Heygate Estate	31
Council home elsewhere in Southwark	26
Housing association/trust home elsewhere in Southwark	11
Move out of Southwark altogether	10
Not stated	16

Q6 To what extent do you agree or disagree that no matter what improvements are made to Heygate Estate, you would rather live elsewhere?

	%
Strongly agree	19
Tend to agree	9
Neither agree nor disagree	10
Tend to disagree	17
Strongly disagree	34
Don't know/no opinion	7
Not stated	4



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Our Ref: HSG/RI/SEI
Your Ref:
1 April 1999

Dear Residents

SOUTHWARK ESTATES INITIATIVE - THE FUTURE OF HEYGATE ESTATE

You will probably recall receiving a letter from your Neighbourhood Housing Manager dated 4 February 1999 that informed you of the decision taken by Housing Committee to consult on four options for the Estate. It also mentioned that a postal survey of residents was to be undertaken by MORI.

I am now writing to invite you to take part in the survey. You will find enclosed:

- a survey questionnaire
- a leaflet that provides background information about some of aspects that you are being asked to comment on
- an envelope to send your questionnaire direct to MORI.

MORI will analyse the results and report to the Council and the Tenants & Residents Association jointly. Your questionnaire will not be seen by the Council. You will note that there is a reference number on the corner of the questionnaire. This is so that MORI can report on the preferences of people in different parts of the Estate, different property types etc, and not to trace your questionnaire back to you.

I do not think I can over-emphasise the importance of completing the questionnaire and sending it back. The Council have important decisions to make about the Estate, and it is crucial that they are made with your opinions being known. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your Neighbourhood Office.

Please return your questionnaire to MORI by Monday 19 April 1999.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Yours faithfully

Michael Irvine
Director of Housing

Switchboard: 0171 525 5000

Director of Housing

WHAT DO THE OPTIONS MEAN FOR RESIDENTS?

DISRUPTION

All the options will involve substantial building works. Even refurbishment works on other blocks will have some impact eg noise and dust, temporary change to parking arrangements, other estate facilities out of use for a time etc.

Obviously as we move towards one of these schemes becoming reality we will continue to keep residents fully involved in the process and agree for example how the works will be phased and advise what the implications are.

REHOUSING

All of the options involve works that cannot be done with the properties occupied. This means that you will need to move home.

FOR TENANTS

Demolition - options 2, 3 (for high rise) and 4

The possibilities are:

- Move to other Council properties in the Neighbourhood
- Move to other Council properties outside the Neighbourhood
(If you are currently underoccupying you may be offered an extra bedroom above your assessed need)
- Being nominated to move to another borough
- Move back to newly built homes
- Move to Registered Social Landlord (Housing Association) property - more information included below.

Refurbishment - options 1 and 3 (for maisonettes)

Here the possibilities are:

- Move to other Council properties in the Neighbourhood and move back when the work is complete - it will take about 18 months
- Move to other Council properties outside the Neighbourhood and move back when the work is complete - again about 18 months

- Move permanently to other Council properties either in the Neighbourhood or outside (If you are currently underoccupying you may be offered an extra bedroom above your assessed need)
- Being nominated to move permanently to another borough
- Move permanently to Registered Social Landlord (Housing Association) property.

If you move permanently because your home is demolished or adapted so that it no longer meets your needs, you would be entitled to a Home Loss payment of £1500 and a disturbance payment to adapt carpets and curtains. The costs of removal and disconnection / reconnection of services would be paid by the Council.

If you move temporarily, you would be entitled to the disturbance payment when you move out and when you move back; the other costs would be met by the Council for each move. Home Loss is not for temporary moves.

The Council will make every effort to ensure as many people as want to will be able to return to the area, but guarantees cannot be given at this stage. This is because the numbers able to return will depend on the amount of housing available, which for options 2, 3 and 4 will be less than there is currently on the Estate, and the housing need of individual households.

FOR LEASEHOLDERS

Demolition - options 2, 3 (for high rise) and 4

Your property will be bought back at market value and you will qualify for a Home Loss payment of 10% of the value. This process would be the subject of detailed individual negotiation with the Council. If you were left with insufficient means to buy another property you would be given the same rehousing options as tenants.

Refurbishment - options 1 and 3 (for maisonettes)

You will have the same temporary rehousing opportunities as tenants. One possibility is that your lease obligations would be suspended and you will have a short term tenancy for your temporary home.

You will have to pay a contribution for the repair element of the refurbishment, but not for works that are classified as improvements. The difference is that repair or replacement of part of the building eg. new window frames or lifts would be a repair, but the provision of a new play area or entryphone would be an improvement. It is also likely however that your future service charges would increase for things like the running costs of entryphone installations. Before any refurbishment commenced, you would be consulted in detail on the costs and procedures involved.

Also there is a possibility that we may need to purchase some leasehold properties if for instance they are substantially changed during the refurbishment.

HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

What are they?

Housing associations which are now called Registered Social Landlords or RSLs for short, are non-profit making organisations that own and manage homes all over the country. Many are registered charities. They are independent of the Council and are controlled by volunteer management committees. There is a Government organisation called the Housing Corporation that oversees their affairs.

Why would they be involved?

If an option that involves demolition and new build is chosen, the Council may well form a partnership with Housing Associations. The Associations would be able to bring their own and private money into the partnership, and as a result we would be able to build more homes for the funds available. They have also developed a lot of useful expertise over the years in building new properties.

Would my tenancy be less secure than it is now?

If you were rehoused by a Housing Association, you would no longer have a Council Secure Tenancy; instead you would have an Assured Tenancy with the Association. They are similar to your current tenancy but there are legal differences. The Associations that the Council would choose to work with would need to demonstrate that tenants transferring across would have no worsening of tenancy conditions.

So what are the main differences between Housing Associations and the Council?

- The two tenancies are based on different Housing Acts. This makes the grounds on which an association can seek possession of a property slightly different from those available to the Council.
- Rents are set in line with the Association's own rent policy, and rent increases are not generally linked to the Council's increases. The Housing Corporation limits Associations' rent increases to the rate of inflation plus 1% in any year.
- Rents tend to be higher than Council rents, but Associations make a point of seeking to charge affordable amounts. Rents charged for newly built properties are subject to a rent 'cap' or maximum applied by the Housing Corporation.
- Associations charge for services like lifts and caretaking separately from the rent, but only for properties that get the service. The service charges are subject to the rent cap for new properties.
- The right to buy for charitable Associations only applies to properties built after April 1997.
- Generally, Housing Associations do not operate from Neighbourhood Offices, but many have offices within the Borough.

And what is the same?

- Housing Associations can only evict tenants by first going to Court and getting an Order for Possession.
- If you receive Housing Benefit as a Council tenant, you will receive it as a Housing Association tenant. You can also arrange to have it paid directly to the Association.
- Repairs responsibilities are determined by the same area of law, and most Associations make their repairs priorities known.
- Nuisance and harassment are as important a part of most Association's tenancy agreements as they are for the Council's.
- Associations are required to operate a complaints policy and are covered by the Ombudsman service.

Where can I find more information about RSLs?

We have produced an information booklet; you can get a copy from your Neighbourhood Office.

ELEPHANT AND CASTLE REGENERATION

You will know that the Council are developing plans to carry out a major regeneration of the Elephant and Castle area which will include improvements to transport, retail and leisure facilities as well as housing. Although the Option Appraisal Study of the Estate and the Southwark Estates Initiative that developed from it are separate from the Elephant and Castle regeneration, it is clear that they will each have impact on the other. The proposals for the Elephant and Castle will be published in September 1999, and you will continue to receive consultation information from the Project Team. However, the enclosed questionnaire is seeking your views on the future of Heygate Estate not the wider area.