

Written Testimony – Terry Redpath, Heygate resident 1974-2008



Like so many other residents, my Heygate experience was a feeling of being totally duped, misled and lied to.

Many like myself, are perplexed by the so called independent survey which inferred that the majority of the 400 people surveyed wanted the estate to be demolished.

I had lived on the Heygate estate since 1974. Contrary to the council's press statements and media hype there was in place a great community living on the estate. I was an active member of the Heygate Tenants & Residents Association for a considerable number of years up until I relocated in December 2008. Crime was relatively low in stark contrast to the stories put out by the council and the media. The general feeling was that the council was systematically running the estate down.

I was coerced into participating in many forums and stakeholder groups in the belief that myself and others would have an input into the Heygate regeneration. At the end of ten years of consultation I felt I had wasted hundreds of hours by taking part in these groups. Consultation was a sham.

The council valuations of leasehold properties bore no resemblance to what outside surveyors were advising they were worth. I finally moved out when I was advised by my surveyor that his fee was capped, and that his company did not have the resources to continue battling my case with the council.

I very reluctantly sold my property to the council as I was being pressurised into settling. I felt really intimidated. I had to move 15 miles from Southwark into a property that was smaller, and I had to spend my life savings of £40,000 to add to the paltry amount the council forced me to accept for my home.

In doing so, I had to move away from friends and family and lose my social life and other interests. My son who was living with us in a three bedroom maisonette was unable to relocate with us and had to seek rented accommodation to stay in central London because of his job.

In my opinion, leaseholders were picked off one by one. I know of many who suffered as much myself, both mentally and financially. Our promise of retained equity options on the new homes to be built on the Heygate was another broken promise alongside the expected replacement social housing and all the other public benefits of the scheme that have since been dropped.

We have been forced to give up our central London homes at a totally unrealistic price, in order to enable a private developer to build luxury private properties that none of us will ever be able to afford.