

Paint it grey... council comes under fire for daubing over estate's 'welcoming' murals

We'll continue to cover over graffiti says Southwark

EXCLUSIVE

By Will Ackermann

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THE COUNCIL has come under fire after daubing over artistic murals on the Heygate Estate with grey paint.

Several artworks in the Elephant and Castle estate's community gardens were painted over last week, to the upset of many residents.

One of the pieces – a colourful pencil-case – was created by Créons, a noted street artist from Brussels. Belgian authorities are instructed not to remove his works.

Some angered members of the community gardening group have now teamed up to scrub off the council's messy brushstrokes and return the masterpieces to their former glory.

Adrian Glasspool, 38, who lives on the estate's Cuddington Block, said: "It's baffling why they removed this street art but left all of the offensive graffiti on the remainder of the estate."

"It's absurd. At a time of such hard-hitting budget cuts, that they're spending council resources on things like this is just beyond belief."

"It wasn't graffiti, it was proper artwork. It brightened the place up and made it look a lot more welcoming. I can't see why they did it."

Southwark Council currently employs sixteen graffiti-removal staff, who also handle other cleaning operations, such as dog mess

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Before and after pictures of graffitied murals on the Heygate

removal, at an annual cost of £440,000. The authority said it received more than 1,000 complaints about graffiti last year.

Councillor Barrie Hargrove, Cabinet member for Transport, Environment and Recycling, said the council would continue its course of action. He said: "Like most councils across the UK, it is Southwark Council's policy to remove all graffiti

where it occurs on council land, or with the landowner's permission, and to continue to maintain regeneration sites before demolition. This will include further graffiti removal across the site.

"Overall, we're really keen to get on with the serious business of the regeneration of the Heygate, which is what the majority of local people want to see happen."

