35% CAMPAIGN

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Campaigning for community inclusion in the Elephant & Castle regeneration.



After 15 years of ambitious plans for regeneration, the final masterplan has been submitted and local residents are up in arms.

It has emerged that nearly all of the original public benefits of the scheme have now been scrapped.

The new library, new theatre, new school and new council offices have all been dropped.

The new leisure centre is being funded in most part by the council, and plans to demolish the shopping centre in order to reduce the car-dominated layout of the area have been shelved.

The groundbreaking MUSCo that was part of the Bill Clinton green energy initiative has been ditched, and the final plans propose no renewable energy whatsoever.

Only half of the 'early housing' sites designed to replace the social housing on the Heygate have been built, and the planning application submitted proposes less social housing than negotiated in the partnership agreement.

Former Heygate residents will not be able to return to new homes on the site as they had been promised.

Excessive density has led to the new public park being smaller in size than Bloomsbury Square. It will be surrounded by tower blocks and be privately managed.

The Elephant's tube station entrances are at bursting point, and will need major works in order to support the new high-density development. But the developer is offering to pay just 10% towards the costs of this work. The council is being forced to make up the £100m funding gap with public funds.

Calls for a local jobs target have gone unanswered, and there is no guarantee that any of the jobs created by the development will go to local people.

Reasons given for the scheme's shortcomings are 'financial viability issues'. But the council refuses to publish the viability assessment and won't say how much it has sold the Heygate site for.

The local community most be shown these financial details if its representatives want to claim to be accountable.

OBJECTIONS MEETING - 11 DEC

We are inviting local objectors to a meeting at 7pm on Tues 11 Dec at the Crossway church on New Kent road. The meeting will enable us to organise proceedings for the hearing of the planning applications in the coming New Year. This will involve discussing how best to approach the hearing and ensure that we make best use of the time allocated for voicing our objections.



The application proposes 15 years in which to build the development's 2,400 homes. This is excessive, the Heygate took just 3 years to build. This slow development is part of a process known as 'land banking' by the developer and will lead to the long-term blighting of the area.

Furthermore, a recent report by the Smith Institute shows that over 60% of new homes in central London are currently being bought by overseas investors, and that a high proportion of these are kept empty.

We need to ensure that this regeneration benefits local people.



HOUSING

Despite assurances of 25% affordable housing, there will be no 1-bed or 2-bed social rented homes in the Heygate development, only so-called 'affordable' rent units at between £140 - £200 per week.

This fails to respond to local housing needs, and will create a private gated community with local people excluded. We are calling for the application to conform to the policy minimum of 17.5% social rented homes.

TRANSPORT



The original masterplan proposed to demolish the unattractive shopping centre to create a civic square and integrated public transport hub.

This would have connected up the train & tube stations while creating a pedestrian precinct annexed to the northern roundabout, which is one of the worst accident blackspots in the country. Around 300 people have been killed or injured at this junction during the past 2 years.

These plans have now been dropped. The public transport hub has been scrapped and plans to 'redevelop' the shopping centre are going to culminate in a fresh lick of paint with the addition of a residential annexe.

Meanwhile, the current planning application proposes to reduce the size of the roundabout in order to increase the flow of traffic.

The application also proposes 725 new parking spaces on the Heygate site, and fails to provide a crucial cycle-route connection (CS6).

We are calling for the original promises of a car-free, cycle-friendly development to be honoured.

SUSTAINABILITY



The original plans promised an 'energy centre' which would supply 10,000 homes in the area with renewable energy. This was part of the much-celebrated 'zero carbon' growth initiative endorsed by Bill Clinton.

The energy centre has now been scrapped and the application proposes no renewable energy whatsoever. The new homes on the Heygate will be heated by gas boilers.

We are calling for the application to conform to the minimum policy requirement of 20% on-site renewable energy provision.

TREES

Despite assurances that 124 of the 450 mature trees on the Heygate site will be retained, the application's smallprint contains a caveat that this is subject to "more detailed studies at later design stages".

We are calling for the number of trees retained to be increased and the caveat removed to guarantee that no trees earmarked for retention will be removed at later stages.

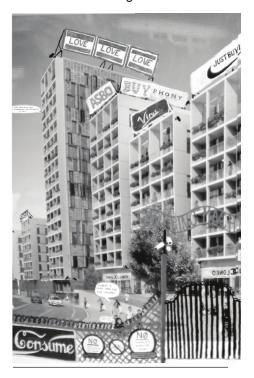


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MASSING

The application proposes a cluster of tall monolithic buildings, which is wholly discordant with the surrounding area.

The grid layout, high density and un-neighbourly building typology of the proposed blocks, will create an inward-facing fortification that is physically and socially segregated from its surroundings.



PRIVATISATION

The current application proposes that the entire 25 acre Heygate footprint is released from the council's ownership and jurisdiction.

All of the streets in the new development and the new 'public' park will come under the exclusive control of a private company, patrolled by a 'Town Centre Security Team'.

This raises questions about accountability and developer 'Lend Lease' doesn't have an unblemished track record: its Bluewater retail and leisure centre in Kent has banned shoppers who swear or wear hooded tops or baseball caps. Smoking, leafleting and canvassing have also been outlawed on the 240-acre Bluewater site.

We are calling for the park and all streets in the new development to remain under council control.