**Ebury Bridge**

(Objects) **Comment submitted date: Thu 27 Aug 2020**

I would respectfully ask the Planning panel to give due consideration to the following as they will have major impact, both in terms of volume and significance of the responses to what is being proposed:

* **Lack of transparency**: Throughout the consultation process, the project team have consistently failed to explain the major loss of light impact to the affected residents. So, they may not even be aware.
* **Ebury Bridge Estate residents**: Majority moved out. Remaining are worn down and pre-occupied, trying to negotiate best deal for themselves and their families (with ongoing construction works in the background). There must be a residents ballot as there was in 2013 to provide legitimacy for the erasure of the council estate.
* **Covid-19**: Carrying out the pre-planning application consultation during the pandemic meant, for example, residents who would normally go into the Regeneration office to look at the plans were not able/ willing to do so.
* **Confusion**: It has been very challenging trying to fathom out what's relevant in 200+ planning documents (each containing several different documents, with their own sections, often using the same numbering) and against a well-funded onslaught of technical-ese and PR that makes it generally sound so reasonable and considerate.
* **The disadvantaged**: The whole unbalanced situation makes it even more difficult for the digitally excluded residents or those with additional barriers to do with time, language, skillset and abilities.
* **Timing:** Due to planning application coinciding with summer holidays, it has been nearly impossible for people to access support to have their voices heard.  
    
  Kind regards

The consultation has not followed the policy requirements, including Government Guidance on making use of creative engagement methods to reflect Covid-19.

**Comment submitted date: Tue 25 Aug 2020**

I object to what is being proposed. Following are my key concerns:  
  
**A: The "big picture" - why the proposed development is wrong for the area as a whole**.

* There are many references to how sensitively it claims the considerations of neighbouring homes have been taken into account in the design stage, e.g. Point 5.2.3 of the Planning Statement ("respectful...particularly from a sunlight and daylight perspective.") and the Masterplan strategy ("...in a way that would not diminish the quality of the existing built environment.") Yet this is highly misleading.  
    
  In particular, proposed building height & bulk will cause potential light, privacy, and noise issues for people living nearby, because:

- Up to 19 storeys, *Buildings 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9* are much taller than existing building heights, dramatically altering the current view from east to west. This is not compliant with the Westminster Building Heights Study.  
- The illustration of new buildings proposed on the Ebury Bridge Road frontage *(Buildings 1, 2, 3 and 4*) suggests a relatively small increase in height, but completely obscures the fact that they extend much further east, covering roughly the area of Westbourne House, Victoria House, etc too; and the area in between, blocking the key corridor of daylight for residents of immediately adjacent buildings.(This is apparent from the figure 17 in Appendix B of the Planning Statement, p:111 where the two outlines are shown).

* Design quality -is not exemplary, yet blocks are being demolished that have won design awards and built to last.
* Need for more social & affordable rent homes - The amount of new social housing is not meeting housing need in Westminster and is not in keeping with protecting the character of the area. This should remain a council housing estate, with social rented housing the majority tenure.
* Play areas, green spaces, and community facilities - I object to these being for private use only. They must be open to all as the current amenities have been.
* Local infrastructure - No study has been undertaken of the cumulative impact of development in the area (i.e. Ebury Bridge together with Chelsea Barracks and Cundy Street Quarter) on transport and social infrastructure, including healthcare. As a result, this application fails to meet the transport and community infrastructure needs of residents (both current and future).  
    
  Furthermore, EBE Health & Wellbeing Needs Assessment 2013 (p:5) states that "A large night-time visitor population is **largely** a feature of popular areas and has impacts on levels of need and use of services. In particular, ambulance call-outs and crime, particularly alcohol-related, are often influenced by the night-time population. The Churchill ward has a relatively low night-time visitor population compared with the Westminster average."
* The wider context in which the proposal sit has changed in recent months as Coronavirus has led to questions about sustainability in every aspect of life. Yet they make no reference to the pandemic, including in the Health impact report (Appendix I1).
* The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and the Estate Regeneration Statement fail to show that there is majority support for this development from the residents of Ebury Bridge Estate (EBE). There is no evidence that plans have been changed in response to concerns raised by residents either.  
    
  There are also several claims of long engagement with the *community*, when this only refers to the (dwindling number of, worn-down) residents of the existing EBE, not residents of the immediately adjacent buildings which are staying. They may have been talking to remaining EBE residents since 2017, but by the time they met with us at previews of the1st public exhibition of initial detailed plans in Sep-Oct 2019, they'd already confirmed the 'preferred' scenario for renewal, secured cabinet approval, knocked down two buildings and commissioned the Meanwhile space.  
    
  Finally, following the two rounds of 'consultation' with wider community, the developer claims to have made "significant design changes" based on neighbours' feedback. But they don't seem very significant to me, since the designs submitted for planning permission are essentially identical to the 'initial' detailed plans, as far as key areas of contention concerned.  
    
  **B: The impact on my home and our building, 1 Ebury Bridge Road (1 EBR)**
* I gratefully adopt and agree with the objection lodged by my neighbour dated 11th August 2020. I note that my flat is impacted in a similar way to my neighbour's, although I suffer the additional detriment caused by proposed Building 1 given its placement extends directly in front of my flat.  
    
  In particular, I note the summary of the impact on my flat in terms of sunlight and daylight at corresponding pages of the report (Appendix E). This summary unacceptably downplays the impact of the changes on my flat as my light levels were already below BRE recommended levels, any reduction in light further is in fact significant. It is wrong for them to say that because I had poor light before, it is fine for them to make that worse. The opposite is true: because I have less light than recommended, the light that I do have is particularly important and any reduction in this further should be considered a significant adverse effect.  
    
  For the reasons above, I will be making further inquiries into whether 1 EBR enjoys any "right to light" (ancient lights), such that there may be a legal basis on which to resist its further reduction and/or to seek damages for the impact.
* The proposed loss of nearby public pathways & roads within the estate will disrupt and block emergency access for 1 EBR and present further loss of amenity for residents as we rely on those for maintenance works, deliveries, etc.

**News from Tom Copley: Proper environmental scrutiny urged for Ebury Bridge Estate scheme 06 November** 2019

**Westminster City Council’s Ebury Estate regeneration plans could thwart proper environmental scrutiny**

**The Secretary of State for Housing has been urged to order an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to cover the whole scope of Westminster City Council’s Ebury Bridge Estate redevelopment plans. Labour’s London Assembly Housing Spokesperson, Tom Copley AM, has accused the council of either avoiding or overlooking the environmental issues presented by the regeneration project by splitting it up into different schemes.**

In a letter to the Secretary of State for Housing, Robert Jenrick MP, Mr Copley observes that Westminster City Council’s use of Permitted Development Rights to knock down six residential blocks on the Ebury Bridge Estate before it is redeveloped, means that the demolition plans will not be subject to an EIA.

Mr Copley highlights that, on the other hand, the proposals to build new homes on the demolition site, undergoing a separate planning process, are currently undergoing an EIA. He argues that the whole regeneration of the estate should be considered as a single process, underlining that as the demolition of the existing council homes is “an integral part” of the redevelopment, it should be included in this environmental assessment.

Mr Copley previously raised separate concerns with the Leader of Westminster City Council, Councillor Nickie Aiken, regarding the fact that the demolition works are being scheduled to take place before the formal submission of a full planning application for the wider Ebury Bridge Estate regeneration scheme. He has observed that this would leave significant uncertainty around the Estate’s future.

He has also questioned the council’s refusal to hold a residents’ ballot on the demolition of the residential blocks and their failure to apply for City Hall funding to maximise the scheme’s provision of genuinely affordable housing.

At the most recent Mayor’s Question Time session, Sadiq Khan shared Mr Copley’s concerns, observing that the council “seem quite blatantly to be trying to avoid City Hall’s and indeed the public’s scrutiny of their plans” and asserting that they “should be ashamed of their shoddy tactics”.

**Labour’s London Assembly Housing Spokesperson, Tom Copley AM, said:**

“It remains uncertain whether the council have overlooked, or indeed ducked, the need for robust environmental scrutiny of their plans to regenerate the Ebury Bridge Estate. By splitting up the scheme, they have muddied the waters over their proposals.

“It is clear that the council have opted for the path of least resistance with their approach to the regeneration, by refusing to carry out a residents’ ballot over the demolition of the existing homes on the site.

“This raises many questions surrounding what the council might have to hide with this scheme and why they didn’t apply for Mayoral funding to maximise the amount of genuinely affordable housing it will offer.

“It is now vital that the Secretary of State for Housing intervenes and orders the delivery of an Environmental Impact Assessment to cover all stages of the regeneration scheme”.

**ENDS**

Notes to editors

* Tom Copley AM’s letter to the Secretary of State for Housing, Robert Jenrick MP, and the two relevant attached documents, can be found attached;
* Tom Copley AM’s previous correspondence with the Leader of Westminster City Council, Nickie Aiken, can also be found attached;
* **Planning documents relating to Westminster City Council’s proposals to demolish Wellesley House, Wainwright House, Dalton House, Hillersdon House, Pimlico House and Mercer House on the Ebury Bridge Estate (Prior Approval under Schedule 2, Part 11, Class B of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order can be accessed** [**here**](https://idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=PXEIWHRPFML00&activeTab=summary)**;**
* **Permitted Development Rights were introduced in England in** [**1995**](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/332/pdfs/uksi_20160332_en.pdf)**, and allow certain changes to be made to a building without requiring full permission from the Local Planning Authority;**
* The request for a scopingopinion submitted to Westminster City Council under Regulation 15 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 for the redevelopment of Ebury Bridge Estate to provide a residential led mixed-use development comprising the erection of new buildings, can be found attached as ‘Attachment B’;
* In line with [Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/571/pdfs/uksi_20170571_en.pdf), when considered on its own, the total area and density of the six residential blocks earmarked for demolition, under Permitted Development Rights, would not meet the 5 acre and 150 homes threshold for an EIA screening to be submitted. If both the demolition and rebuilding phases of the wider regeneration scheme were considered together, as a single process, both could be eligible for an EIA;
* In July 2018, the Mayor introduced a [rule](https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/requirement-for-estate-regeneration-ballots) that any major regeneration schemes which involve the demolition of social homes must receive the support of existing residents through a ballot in order to be eligible for Mayoral funding;
* The Mayor’s Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration can be found [here](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/better-homes-for-local-people-the-mayors-good-practice-guide-to-estate-regeneration.pdf);
* A transcript containing the Mayor of London’s comments on the Ebury Bridge Estate Regeneration scheme during the most recent Mayor’s Question Time in October, can be found [here](https://www.london.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s79398/Minutes%20-%20Appendix%202%20-%20Questions%20to%20the%20Mayor.pdf);
* Tom Copley AM is a Londonwide Assembly Member.

[**EburyHYPERLINK "http://www.churchilllabour.co.uk/cabinet-meeting-july-2018-ebury-address/" Bridge Estate: Our address to Cabinet Members of Westminster City Council**](http://www.churchilllabour.co.uk/cabinet-meeting-july-2018-ebury-address/) July 9, 2018

*Councillor Talukder and Councillor Mann attended the Westminster City Council*[*Cabinet Meeting*](http://committees.westminster.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=130&MId=4533)*this evening, along with a number of Ebury Bridge Estate residents. Cllr Mann addressed Cabinet about the proposed plan for full demolition and rebuild of the estate. This is the full text of her speech:*

“I’d like to express thanks to the Leader, on behalf of myself and Cllr Talukder, for allowing me to address Cabinet members here this evening as a Council member for Churchill Ward.

I wanted to address you because I want to put forward some of our and many residents’ concerns about the proposed plan for Ebury Bridge Estate and the process that led to it – and also our hopes going forward.

And I wanted to speak because these concerns – which have been both expressed to us directly and between residents themselves – are not concerns that you’ll see in the [Cabinet Report](http://committees.westminster.gov.uk/documents/s28600/Ebury%20Cabinet%20Report%20090718%20Final%20Report%201.pdf) before you.

Indeed, that’s my first point: the disparity between the Council’s reports and the views that we have heard. So perhaps we can rely on data and statistics to get some clarity. But I have gone through the Cabinet Report and the [Engagement Report](http://committees.westminster.gov.uk/documents/s28561/Appendix%20B%20-%20My%20Ebury%20Engagement%20Report.pdf), and I completely fail to see in either of them any concrete evidence, any data or statistics, that show that the majority of Ebury residents support this proposed plan for their estate. Indeed, the only concrete numbers given about resident feedback is that, after all these months of engagement – 80% engagement! – only 59 residents – consisting of 56 secure tenants (because tenants who aren’t secure have no say) and a mere three resident leaseholders – support this scenario being proposed tonight. 59 people on an estate of 217 occupied households.

This lack of evidence of majority resident support for this plan is one reason why we as a Labour Group continue to ask for a full residents’ ballot on it. From the very start, we have asked for a meaningful, resident-led consultation process and, at the end of that, a ballot. Back in 2013, the Council agreed with us: you gave Ebury residents a ballot, which resulted in a turnout of over 60% and a clear majority in favour of the plan. That plan was then scrapped – due to the Council’s failings – and yet now, later down the line in the same estate regeneration process, and through no fault of their own, residents are told they are not allowed a ballot. What’s changed? The Council has never explained. And what’s more: if the Council is confident that Ebury residents back this new plan, then why won’t they hold a ballot to prove it? The Council’s proposal is full demolition and rebuild of the estate – everyone’s home will be demolished. In such a situation, we believe it would be entirely wrong not to give every household the right to have their say in a ballot before it goes ahead.

The Council says in its reports that it has had “collaborative dialogue” and “meaningful engagement” with residents during a “transparent” consultation process. But again, much of what we have seen and heard does not back this up. For example, Ebury residents were presented with eight scenarios for their estate regeneration – yet some of these scenarios failed the viability assessment set by the Council itself. Which begs the question: why were they even presented to residents in the first place? This is not collaborative, meaningful or transparent to me; and it is no way to build trust with residents.

The cost of this consultation – which had to start anew after the initial botched plan – is just one part of the financial cost of all of this, too. Last year, Labour found that over £30million had been spent on the Ebury regeneration so far, without a brick being laid. It will only have risen, and continue to rise. I’d like to venture that the Council could mitigate some of these costs by applying to the Mayor of London for funding – but that would, of course, require them to hold a ballot.

More important than the financial cost, though, is the human cost. Ebury Bridge was first earmarked for regeneration in 2010 – meaning that for eight years, residents and retailers have been living with it hanging over them: causing incredible stress, anxiety and uncertainty. And they have been living on an estate that’s been falling into disrepair –  with no major works being carried out for over 10 years. It’s also an estate that’s increasingly empty – the Council’s own figures show that Ebury is currently around 35% vacant, and you only have to walk around to see the growing number of windows and doors covered by Sitex, where people have not only lost neighbours but are also not having new ones move in. Residents have been given no support for the mental health issues caused by all this – and yet the **Equality Impact Assessment** shows that many of them are especially vulnerable or have specific needs. Nearly a quarter of the residents on the estate are children; 10% of residents are elderly; 63% are from BAME communities and 8% have a long-term illness or disability. We ask that going forward, all necessary mental health and other specific support is immediately put in place.

Finally: We have heard the Council trumpet many a time and often about the amount of social housing that will be created by this regeneration of Ebury Bridge Estate. Labour will always welcome the building of more social and truly affordable housing – but what Westminster Council has failed to highlight about Ebury is that if its proposed plan goes ahead, the percentage of social housing on the estate will be reduced – hugely. Ebury is currently 59% social housing. Depending on which option the Council chooses in the execution of scenario 7, that figure will be reduced to 38% or even 34%. And even if I’m being generous by adding ‘intermediate’ to that, under the Council’s umbrella of ‘affordable’ housing, it still only brings the figure up to 45%. The Council and its officers have openly spoken about how special the community and the ‘spirit’ of Ebury is – they’re right, and I’d argue that this spirit and community is intrinsically linked to its mix of residents. So make no mistake: if this plan goes ahead as it is currently proposed, social tenants will go from being a majority on Ebury Bridge Estate to being the minority – and the makeup of its community will be forever changed.

I’d like to end by bringing us back to where I began: on the disparity between what is being presented to the Cabinet tonight and the views and feelings that residents have expressed to each other and to us.

On that front, we ask that, if the Council proceeds with this proposed plan, you let the recently formed Residents Association lead the liaising with residents on Ebury. The Residents Association has been set up by the residents themselves – not by the Council; it follows the Council’s ‘model constitution’; as of March, it had 126 members; and it is led by engaged people who are passionate about their community – and know and love it deeply.

Ebury residents have been put through the mill for eight years – and they are now about to go through the biggest period yet of extreme stress and upheaval to their lives. Over the coming months and years, a community of neighbours, friends, families and support networks are going to be separated – some for good.

If the Council truly cares about the spirit of Ebury Bridge Estate, then it should aim to create the maximum amount of social housing possible. And going forward, if it truly wants to work with residents in a collaborative way – if it wants to win more than 59 hearts and minds (and I hope it does) – then it needs to let the Residents Association be its guide among those whose lives are about to irrevocably change.

**There's been a new twist in the Ebury Estate demolition and redevelopment plan**https://www.mylondon.news/news/west-london-news/theres-been-new-twist-ebury-1495098230 July 2018

Westminster Labour councillors have backed unhappy residents and called in the controversial Ebury Estate demolition and redevelopment

[**Westminster**](https://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/all-about/westminster) City Council's Labour opposition has called in plans for the demolition and redevelopment of a major central London housing estate.

Labour has backed residents unhappy with the [**plan to knock down HYPERLINK "https://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/west-london-news/anger-over-decision-demolish-west-14889338"EburyHYPERLINK "https://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/west-london-news/anger-over-decision-demolish-west-14889338" Bridge Estate**](https://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/west-london-news/anger-over-decision-demolish-west-14889338) in [**Pimlico**](https://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/all-about/pimlico) to make way for a mix of social, affordable and market-price homes.

The site has long been earmarked for regeneration and is mostly empty, but the process has been beset by problems.

A previous concept was scrapped as it failed to attract a development partner as it was deemed to not be providing enough new homes, and was unsafe to carry out with residents still living in their homes.

Earlier this month, residents protested outside the council building as [**Westminster's**](https://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/all-about/westminster) cabinet decided on the option of building 750 new homes at Ebury Bridge Estate.

Of those homes, 342 would be affordable housing, and another 408 private and leaseholder homes.

The chosen scheme, scenario 7, guarantees a right of return to the housing for all secure tenants and resident leaseholders.

It also promises to fully replace all council homes, and allocates 35% of the new units to social and intermediate-rent housing.

Leaseholders would have an option to buy back into the new estate, with the option of using council-provided equity loans.

Secure residents and leaseholders would get support packages including storage, and disturbance payments during the works period.

The council's leadership touted the project as the “largest single delivery of new council homes in the heart of London for over half a century.”

However Labour has been critical of the plans and has called it in.

The council had balloted secure tenants and leaseholders only, with 60% of secure tenants and three of the six resident leaseholders who responded to its survey supporting the plan. Another 33 leaseholders did not respond.

Leader Cllr Adam Hug said the party wanted all residents to be asked their views.

"Firstly, building on the consultation so far, we believe it is important to give Ebury residents the final say on what happens to the estate through a ballot," he said.

"Especially as the Council's figures do not yet prove that the proposed 'Scenario 7' has the backing of the majority of residents."

London Mayor Sadiq Khan recently announced new rules for local authorities effective from July 18, stating that any major new regeneration scheme involving the demolition of social homes must have the backing of existing residents before it can receive City Hall funding. A consultation showed widespread support for the Mayor's mandate.

Cllr Hug said Westminster's plan needed to ensure it offered as high a proportion of affordable homes as possible.

Given Westminster's housing crisis, we believe it is essential to ensure any Council-owned land maximises the proportion of new social and genuinely affordable homes to be built on it, and there are further steps the Council can take here, including applying for funding from the Mayor of London's Building Council Homes for Londoners programme."

The council's spokesman said it was on track to deliver more than 1,850 new council and affordable homes by 2023, and planned to renew its social rented homes, which make up around a quarter of housing in the borough.

“We also urgently need more intermediate homes within reach of key workers in the city, which currently make up only 1.5 per cent of homes.”

**Anger over decision to demolish west London housing estate to make way for new homes**11 July 2018 <https://www.mylondon.news/news/west-london-news/anger-over-decision-demolish-west-14889338>

At least 342/376 -197 of the 750/740 planned homes at Pimlico's Ebury Bridge will be affordable housing, Westminster City Council has promised

A [**Westminster**](https://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/all-about/westminster) City Council meeting erupted with emotion as leaders made the call to go ahead with demolishing and rebuilding a west London housing estate.

There has been a question mark hanging over the future of [**Pimlico**](https://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/all-about/pimlico) 's Ebury Bridge Estate for years, and it has long been earmarked for regeneration amid council concerns of overcrowding.

On Monday night, a group of residents protested outside the council's chambers on the Strand, shortly before the council's cabinet voted to topple the estate to make way for new housing.

The council says the regeneration will double the number of homes available in the new estate.

It said at least 342 of the 750 planned homes would be affordable housing, making the estate home to the "largest single delivery of new council homes in the heart of London for over half a century".

Another 408 would be private and leaseholder housing.

The cabinet on Monday picked the recommended Option 7 of eight possible scenarios, opting for a staged demolition of the estate.

The committee heard estate residents, via the Community Futures Group, had been heavily involved in steering plans, with 60 per cent of secure tenants supporting the recommended scenario.

However, not all residents would be entitled to stay, in an issue at the heart of the protesters' opposition to the scheme.

The chosen scheme guaranteed a right of return to the housing for all secure tenants and resident leaseholders, promised to fully replace all council homes, and allocated 35 per cent of the new build properties to social and intermediate-rent.

The cabinet heard many residents had already been moved out, with two blocks fully vacant, and one nearly empty.

Leaseholders would have an option to buy back into the new estate, and the council planned to offer equity loans.

Residents able to stay in the new build will move twice, at the most; either once into their new home, or into temporary housing then back again.

This was expected to take 24 to 36 months, and secure residents and leaseholders would get support packages including storage, and disturbance payments.

Churchill ward Labour councillor Andrea Mann criticised the council leadership's handling of the long-running dispute over the estate's future.

She said residents had backed a previous 2013 plan that was later scrapped and believes a new ballot should be held where residents can give their views on the new plans.

The council's documents say the original scheme failed to attract a partner as it did not provide enough new homes, and was unsafe to carry out with residents still living in their homes.

However, Cllr Mann said all 217 households should have been balloted on the revised plans that went out for consultation from mid-2017.

The London Mayor's advice on estate regeneration released earlier this year recommends a referendum of residents when a demolition option is on the table.

Cllr Mann added: "If the council is confident that Ebury residents back this new plan, then why won’t they hold a ballot to prove it? The council’s proposal is full demolition and rebuild of the estate – everyone's home will be demolished. In such a situation, we believe it would be entirely wrong not to give every household the right to have their say in a ballot before it goes ahead."

Cllr Mann said the questions over the future of the homes had caused stress for residents for years.

Ten per cent of the remaining residents were elderly, 63 per cent from black and ethnic minority communities, and eight per cent had a long-term illness or disability, she added.

She said: "If this plan goes ahead as it is currently proposed, social tenants will go from being a majority on Ebury Bridge Estate to being the minority – and the makeup of its community will be forever changed."

Conservative Churchill ward councillor Murad Gassanly accused the opposition party of "politicising" the issue, saying it was holding up progress on much-needed new affordable housing in the borough, which he said was “disappointing but not surprising” from Labour.

He said he was "angry about the misinformation spread by the media and social media," to shouts of “boo” and “rubbish" from the public gallery.

Cllr Gassanly continued that his only criticism of the project was that he did not feel council staff had been protected.

He said: “No one working on a housing project should be subject to abuse or intimidation and there should be no tolerance of anyone who intimidates our council staff.

“We need homes in Westminster, and let's get building.”

A final proposed design will go through the planning application process.