



Sian Berry AM
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
LONDON SE1 2AA

Our ref: 2019/03/001

Councillor Emily Davey
Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

14 March 2019
By email

Dear Councillor Davey.

I am writing to you regarding the specific consultation and ballot arrangements for Cambridge Road Estate (CRE) residents on the proposals for the future of their estate.

As you know I am very pleased that the council is intending to ballot residents despite not currently asking for GLA funding and I know that you have taken a strong interest in making sure your council is a model of best practice in doing this, but I do have some concerns. I note that the Strategic Housing and Planning Committee is due to vote on 19th March on the arrangements for a resident ballot, the wording of the ballot question, and plans to issue the landlord offer, and therefore would like to make a request for several improvements.

First, I am concerned that the council has not yet worked with residents to produce a resident charter for the regeneration process. The Mayor of London's Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration recommends (page 12) that councils and housing associations set out their commitments to residents through resident charters:

"Resident Charters set out councils' or housing associations' commitments to residents at an early stage of the discussions over estate regeneration proposals. They can be an effective way to engage residents. Commitments set out in a Charter should be clear, specific and deliverable, and written in accessible and non-technical language. Resident Charters can be adopted for an individual estate regeneration project, or as a broader statement to cover multiple projects or a programme."

Examples of resident charters can be found on the following websites:

- Clarion Housing Association - Merton regeneration
http://www.mertonregen.org.uk/regeneration/residents_offer/
- Harrow - Grange Farm Regeneration Charter for tenants and leaseholders
http://www.harrow.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/8315/grange_farm_charter



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- Newham - Carpenters Estate Residents' Charter
<https://www.newham.gov.uk/Documents/Environment%20and%20planning/Carpenters%20Estate%20Residents%20Charter.pdf>
- Southwark - Charter of Principles
http://www.2.southwark.gov.uk/info/200539/get_involved/3716/charter_of_principles

I am also concerned that the report of the Assistant Director of Law and Governance does not mention residents being appointed to the Limited Liability Partnership board for the regeneration of the estate. Appointing residents to a 'shadow board' does not constitute giving residents meaningful power over the regeneration process, so I urge you to change this so that the shadow board can appoint several members to the full board.

I realise that the GLA rules set out in its funding guidance do not currently permit residents not named on tenancies or those who are private renters from leaseholders to have a vote in ballots, and I know that you were keen to provide a wider mandate for your ballot to include these residents. I therefore do not think that you should give up on the idea of balloting all residents and committing the council to the results that come from this wider group. The views from the smaller cohort of voters mandated by the GLA could also be recorded and still used to show the GLA that a compliant ballot was carried out later, if needed, if this was done now.

Finally, I have seen the proposed question and believe that it is not ideal, and indeed is somewhat leading. I have already heard of some residents confused by it and not knowing how to vote if they support 'new homes' but not the council's specific scheme. By conflating these concepts, the ballot is not asking a single question and may not produce clear results and I believe you should think again about this wording.

Having promoted this policy from the start of my term here as a London Assembly member, I want to engage constructively with all councils who are carrying out ballots and would be happy to meet to discuss these issues further.

Yours sincerely,



Sian Berry
Green Party Member of the London Assembly



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