

## **NEW SOUTHWARK PLAN, WRITTEN STATEMENT SP2 – Regeneration for All**

### **From:**

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### **Introduction and Context**

Further to my previous submissions on previous iterations of the NSP I wish to say that the Plan remains unsound in my view for the reasons outlined below. First, however, I want to say a few words about context. This whole process is a rather technical and restrictive one which I believe actively discourages many local residents from participating. Also, although I think officers have done a very poor job of consulting and have used an endless number of vague words and phrases this is hardly surprising given the considerable under investment in this, like other, Council services over the past 30 years. I speak as a local resident involved in community development in the borough for over 40 years and who was an elected councillor in the 90s and Cabinet member for Regeneration who made the initial decisions to carry out extensive demolition of the Heygate and Aylesbury Estates in 2000. I remain of the view those decisions were correct but the Council did not have sufficient officer resources to negotiate or implement the vision behind those decisions, particularly given the extensive resources the hovering private sector brought to bear and the hostile political climate which prevailed.

### **Question 2.16**

I think it's clear there are areas SP2 is aimed at and there are maps outlining them. The ongoing developments on the Heygate and Aylesbury sites, around the former Bermondsey Town Hall and Bermondsey Square, along Blackfriars Road and the proposals for the Elephant Shopping Centre and the Old Kent Road are examples from the north of the borough where the it is clear sustainable regeneration is Not being delivered because of poor consultation and a hostile planning context. Words like aspirations need to be tightened into requirements. The latest iteration of the NSP needs to be tightened up much more in relation to the London Plan. Specifically, it needs to be much stronger in relation to refurbishment and retro-fitting rather than allowing rebuilding as a default position.

### **Question 2.17**

NSP is unsound because the work on Social Regeneration Charters, which has some potential to address this area, is very patchy and incomplete. No work has been undertaken since the departure of the senior officer leading on it a year ago and clearly Covid 19 issues have also hampered any meaningful consultation. The past few years are littered with engagement and consultation activities but I would argue these have been very piecemeal and inadequate, primarily for the reasons outlined above. These inadequacies and the top down technically focussed culture lead to the Plan being very unsound in terms of it being a collaborative process with existing local residents and businesses who were frequently passed over in large redevelopment schemes. The dispersal of Heygate residents out of the area is a scandal and must not be repeated so it is essential that the wooliness and loopholes in the proposed Plan is eliminated. Much more needs to be done in the text of this policy explicitly linking it to many of

the other Strategic Policies and other more specific policies in housing, tall buildings (where the Hammersmith and Fulham policy seems a good template to use), employment and green spaces and environment. Why is there no reference or reflection of the implications of climate emergency policies? Although relatively little has been done in this area in the past 12 months there needs to be some reference to it because All includes future generations.

### Question 2.18

Certainly not and so the Plan remains unsound it has not been positively prepared and effective in my view. I'm involved with the Walworth Society. Their extensive lobbying has reaped some positive developments in recent years but, as with other groups around the borough, it has been an uphill struggle and involved an enormous amount of (unpaid) hours put in by residents with minimal professional support. Also, it is vital that when referring to heritage the Plan explicitly and specifically recognises it involves social and community factors rather than just buildings. For it to be sound the Plan must ensure that all existing neighbourhood assets in buildings, spaces and social, community and economic infrastructure are identified and agreed with local stakeholders before regeneration plans are developed; and the plans must demonstrate that they will provide benefits for the existing neighbourhood better than the retention and nurturing of the existing assets and uses."

### Question 2.19

There is a role for both **but there must genuine collaborative processes in the development of them effectively involving existing residents and businesses.** As I mentioned in my opening comments above this will require both considerable investment of staffing resources and the development of skill sets which there is no evidence the Council currently has. The revised Statement of Community Involvement, which, as I hope I've indicated, builds on previous very inadequate ones and is little more than a tick box exercise based on very poorly framed questions. This SCI has been very hastily produced following your comments made in the summer about the illegality of the Plan and has not been consulted on. This is another reason for this Plan being unsound.

### Conclusion

Pressure and lack of time has meant I've been unable to formulate specific amendments to the wording or cross reference my remarks to the latest draft of the NSP. Nevertheless, I hope my remarks above are sufficiently clear to be helpful to you and I look forward to an invitation to attend the Examination in Public session to discuss and elaborate on the matters I've raised which leads me to the conclusion this PLAN REMAINS UNSOUND.