

What could
regeneration
mean for
High Path?





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Introduction from **Paul Quinn**

The first designs for the future of High Path are almost ready

After a busy summer of consultation events, site visits and workshops, the first draft of the master plan for High Path will go on public display in a few weeks' time. You will find the dates for the High Path events on page 14 and we will send you a reminder invitation nearer the time.

There is still some way to go before any decision to regenerate High Path will be made, but the first draft of the master plan is an important milestone. You will be able to see how the architects working on the design have turned your ideas into a plan for the future of your neighbourhood.





The next stage

This first draft of the master plan will include lots of details, but this will not be the final version. That will be available in January 2015 so there will be plenty of time for you to suggest changes and to make comments.

At the same time as we show you the final master plan in January, we will be able to give you more details about the Residents' Offer. This is the package of financial compensation and options available to residents affected by the regeneration plans. We know how important that offer is to you, especially if you are a homeowner, so we are working hard to make sure you receive this information as soon as possible.

I look forward to seeing you at the master plan events in October.

Kind regards

Paul Quinn
Director of Regeneration
Circle Housing Merton Priory



Continuing to involve you

We met with lots of residents during the summer. But there are many others who were not able to come to our events or wanted to wait and see the draft master plan. It is important that everyone living on and around High Path gets to have their say.

Over the next three months we will make sure that we:

- call at every home to go through the draft master plan and to answer your questions individually
- leave a copy of the draft master plan with you that includes details about the types of homes which could be built, the possible order of works, the location of green spaces and community facilities, etc.
- offer everyone a home visit at a convenient time to discuss the plans and address any concerns you may have



We plan to give you details of both the final master plan (how your neighbourhood could physically change) and the Residents' Offer (your financial compensation and options) in January 2015. This will give you a much more complete picture of how the regeneration plans could affect you.

The next three months will be an important time for the future of High Path, so please do not hesitate to contact our Regeneration Team if you have any questions or would like us to visit you in your own home. In the meantime we have listed the ways you can keep in touch and find out more about the regeneration plans on the back page. We want to hear your comments on the draft master plan so we can make sure all views are taken into account.





The Residents' Offer - developing it together

The draft master plan will give us a much clearer picture of the costs of our regeneration proposals. It gives us a good idea about how many homes could be built, the mix of houses, flats and maisonettes and the overall layout of the neighbourhood. Much of this is based on what residents have told us about their housing needs and preferences.

This means we are also getting a clearer picture of the financial help and compensation we can offer residents affected by the regeneration plans - the Residents' Offer.

Over the next three months, as well as consulting on the final master plan, we will also talk to you about the Residents' Offer. We want to work with you to develop a fair package of compensation and options. A series of workshops is being arranged to help with that process and we will provide you with the details of these in the next few weeks. There will be an early opportunity to sign up for these workshops at the draft master plan events in October.



More than just bricks and mortar

Although much of the discussion so far has been about buildings, the regeneration plans could bring a whole range of other benefits too.

For example, during the consultation this summer you made it very clear that you wanted to see as much of the green space kept as possible, but made better. So the regeneration plans need to create high quality green space that:

- › makes the most of the mature trees
- › offers you enjoyable places where you can relax and play



Regeneration could help in a number of other ways too:

- new ‘multi-generational’ homes that allow family members of all ages to stay together longer or live together more flexibly
- live/work homes where people can set up their own small business from home, helping create jobs and support entrepreneurship
- environmental benefits would include energy efficient homes that would help keep down fuel bills
- improved community facilities including a new community centre and new play areas
- well-connected, safe streets that improve access to the surrounding area but don’t create ‘rat runs’
- build local employment and training into the development contracts (Circle Housing already has a strong track record in this area)
- bidding for funding from Europe to help bring new skills and employment training opportunities for High Path residents

The draft master plan

In October we will be showing you the first draft of the master plan for High Path.

Between now and the end of the year we will gather your comments, positive and negative, before presenting you with a final version of the master plan in January 2015.

The draft master plan should answer a lot of the questions you have raised with us. It will include our ideas for:

- the number of homes and overall layout of the neighbourhood
- the types of homes, their layout and how many rooms they would have
- phasing - the order in which the new homes could be built to minimise disruption to existing residents
- green spaces and local facilities such as a community centre, shops and play areas
- car parking and transport links to the local area

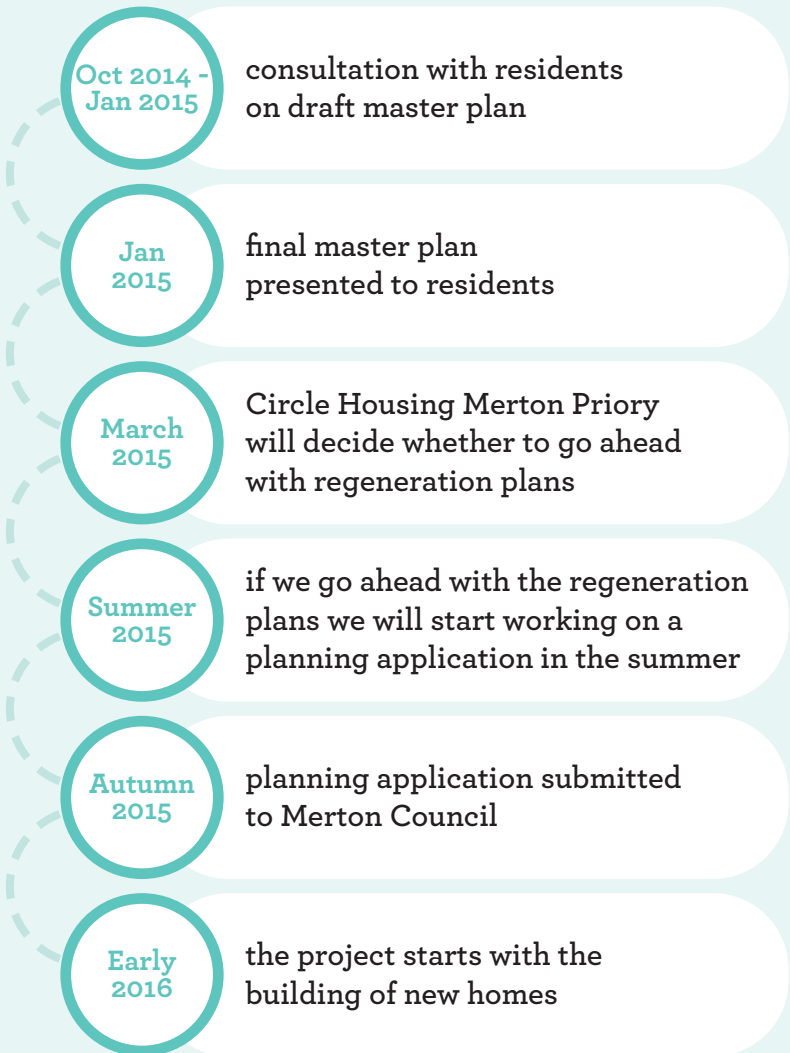
The consultation on the draft master plan is an important step forward, but the decision about whether to go ahead with regeneration will not be taken before March 2015.

That is after you have seen both the final master plan and the Residents' Offer, giving you a much clearer picture of what regeneration could mean for you and your family. So it is very important you have your say about the future of your neighbourhood throughout the autumn and winter.



What happens next?

If regeneration goes ahead this is what we think the timetable could look like:





Dates of the draft master plan events

Dates
for your
diary

**Saturday 25
October**

.....
**Draft master plan
launch event***

**Monday 27 to
Wednesday 29
October**

.....
**Draft master plan
consultation evening
events***

Drop-in Surgeries

We will be continuing our series of drop-in surgeries at the High Path Community Resource Centre, 63 High Path. The next one will take place on Tuesday 14 October 2014 from 5pm to 7pm.

***Venues and times will
be confirmed in writing.**

Your questions answered

Responding to your questions and comments and addressing rumours

General comments



“I haven’t been properly consulted on the master plan yet”

Although a lot of people came to the exhibitions and on the site visits, we know many High Path residents still need to take part in the consultation and have many questions to ask. That is why the consultation on the draft master plan will be door to door, making sure everyone gets an opportunity to take part.

We would urge anyone who has not yet taken part to come along to one of the draft master plan events in October. But even if you can’t make it please speak to your Regeneration Officer, Donna Brown, on **020 3441 8518** or email **highpath@circle.org.uk**



“This is a done deal”

No decision about whether to go ahead with regeneration will be made until we have completed our consultation on the master plan and confirmed the Residents’ Offer. That will not happen before January next year. By then we will have more detailed plans and your comments on the draft masterplan along with costs, which will enable Circle Housing to take a decision about whether to proceed.

Even if we do decide to proceed we would still need the support of Merton Council. If we submit a planning application for the regeneration of High Path it would need to be approved by the Council.

The Council will be very much involved throughout master planning and the consultation.



“The estates are deliberately being run down”

This is definitely not the case. We made commitments when the homes were transferred to us to maintain and improve the homes and neighbourhoods. There have been issues with our repairs and maintenance service in recent months but this is now improving.

The Council has given us time to see if the regeneration plans could work, which means we have temporarily suspended the programme of improvements planned for High Path under our transfer promise (mainly window, kitchen and bathroom improvements). If the decision is made not to proceed with the regeneration then the improvements will, of course, be carried out as promised.

But we believe carrying out repairs alone will not solve many of the problems residents have told us about. That is why we are exploring regeneration. Surveys are being carried out on High Path by an independent company to assess the condition of the existing homes and information regarding this will be shared with you.



“I will be forced to leave the area because of regeneration”

We want to keep the existing community together and would work closely with residents on the phasing of the new homes to make sure we keep families, neighbours and friends together.

The best possible result for High Path would be if everyone who lives here now chooses to stay. That is why we are working to make the Residents’ Offer as fair and flexible as possible.

There is no advantage to Circle Housing if you do leave - quite the opposite. High Path is a well-established community and that is a strength of any regeneration programme. We would do everything we can to help keep the existing community together. This will include planning the regeneration works to allow for new homes to be built ahead of demolition.

Circle Housing Merton Priory tenants



“I will lose my rights as a tenant”

If the regeneration goes ahead it would not affect your tenancy rights in any way. As a tenant of Circle Housing Merton Priory you would keep all your existing rights and your tenancy agreement would not be affected.



“Rents will increase as a result of the regeneration”

If we regenerate High Path it would have no impact on rents for existing tenants. You would be offered a completely new, modern home. However, the rent you pay would continue to be in line with the terms of your current tenancy agreement and all the other Circle Housing Merton Priory tenants.



Homeowners

“I will not be offered the full value of what my home is worth”

You can appoint your own valuer, which Circle Housing would pay for. We would also appoint a valuer and then work with each homeowner to agree the value of every individual home. To make sure the regeneration plans have not affected what your home is worth it would be valued as if regeneration wasn't taking place.

Your home would only be valued at the point it is needed in the regeneration programme. This means you would continue to benefit from any increase in property values in the meantime.

Other reasonable costs or fees relating directly to the sale of your home would also be reimbursed.



“Circle is doing this to make a profit and gentrify the area”

Circle Housing is a not-for-profit housing association. To regenerate High Path - including rebuilding all the existing homes and creating new open green spaces and community facilities - we plan to build additional homes for sale. But the income from these homes would not cover the cost of regeneration. The regeneration of High Path is only possible because Circle Housing is large enough to be able to absorb the overall cost of creating a new neighbourhood. It is important for you to know that we have no private sector partner.

We are designing a regeneration project which encourages High Path residents to stay whether they own or rent their home. We want to keep the existing community together and would work closely with residents on the phasing of the new homes, as we have done on other regeneration schemes. We would offer a range of different types of housing and layouts to give existing residents choice and the opportunity to choose their new home from the outset.



Working with the council

Merton Council and Circle Housing Merton Priory have agreed 10 Commitments to residents of the three neighbourhoods potentially affected by regeneration.

They include pledges about keeping the community together and maintaining our repairs service while we explore regeneration.

Merton Council recognises the huge benefits that new housing, job opportunities and community facilities would offer residents. The 10 Commitments show that the needs of all tenants and homeowners are central to the proposed regeneration.



Merton Priory





Our 10 Commitments are:

1. Circle Housing Merton Priory will **consult with residents**, consider their interests at all times, and address concerns fairly.
2. **Current homeowners will be entitled to at least the market value** of their home should they wish to take the option to sell their home to Circle Housing Merton Priory.
3. **Current tenants will be entitled to be rehoused in a new home** of appropriate size considering the number of people in the household.
4. Existing Circle Housing Merton Priory tenants will **keep all their rights**, and have the same tenancy agreement, including rent level, in the new neighbourhood as they do now.
5. All **new properties will be more energy efficient** and easier to heat than existing properties, helping to keep down residents' fuel bills.



The future of: **Eastfields** **High Path** **Ravensbury**

our 10 commitments

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3 Current tenants will be entitled to be rehoused in a new home of appropriate size considering the number of people in the household

4 Existing Circle Housing Merton Priory tenants will keep all their rights and have the same tenancy agreement, including ten levels, in the new neighbourhood as they do now

5 All new properties will be more energy efficient and easier to heat than existing properties, helping to keep down residents' fuel bills

6 Circle Housing Merton Priory will keep disruption to a minimum, and will do all it can to ensure residents only move once if it is necessary to house them temporarily while their new home is being built

7 Circle Housing Merton Priory will offer extra help and support for older people and/or disabled residents throughout the regeneration works

8 Circle Housing Merton Priory will continue to maintain the homes of residents across the three neighbourhoods throughout the planning process until regeneration starts, including ensuring a high quality responsive repairs service

9 Any growth in the number of homes will be in accordance with the council's Development Plan so that it is considered, responsible and suitable for the area

10 As a not for profit organisation, Circle Housing Merton Priory will not profit from any regeneration and will use any surplus to provide more housing or improve existing neighbourhoods

Sir Robin Young, Chairman, Circle Housing
Councillor Stephen Alambritis, Leader of the Council, London Borough of Merton

Leader of Merton Council, Councillor Alambritis and Sir Robin Young, Chairman of Circle Housing, at the signing of the 10 Commitments for Eastfields, Ravensbury and High Path.

6. Circle Housing Merton Priory will **keep disruption to a minimum**, and will do all it can to ensure residents only move once if it is necessary to house them temporarily while their new home is being built.
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8. Circle Housing Merton Priory will continue to maintain the homes of residents across the three neighbourhoods throughout the planning process until regeneration starts, including ensuring a **high quality responsive repairs service**.
9. Any **growth in the number of homes will be** in accordance with the Council's Development Plan so that it is **considered, responsible and suitable for the area**.
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Get in touch

Please feel free to pop in to share your views on the future of High Path. If you would like to make an appointment, please contact your Regeneration Officer, **Donna Brown**

0203 441 8518

or email highpath@circle.org.uk

You can also contact your Independent Tenant and Resident Advisor, **NewmanFrancis**

020 8555 2139 / 0800 644 6040

or email mertonregen@newmanfrancis.org

Alternative formats

If you need a copy of this newsletter in large print, Braille or any other format or language please call 020 3441 8518.

Circle Housing welcomes calls from Text Relay. If calling from a textphone please dial the prefix 18001 and the number you wish to contact.

