

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING – 10TH OCTOBER 2016 –
SOUTHWARK COUNCIL OFFICES, 160 TOOLEY STREET, LONDON SE1 – AT 7PM**
Aylesbury Leaseholders Action Group - Submission by Beverley Robinson

The council is spending millions of pounds of public money on a regeneration which was supposed to benefit the Aylesbury's existing community, but following a public inquiry the Secretary of State has pointed out that the scheme is forcing leaseholders out.

The Secretary of State's detailed decision notice and inspectors report for the compulsory purchase order, has effectively directed Southwark to make sufficient provision to ensure that we are able to remain living in our community without being impoverished by the rehousing options currently on offer.

Instead of following the Secretary of State's advice, the Council has decided to spend public funds on challenging the Secretary of State's decision and has issued a press statement accusing us leaseholders of '*holding it to ransom*' and '*demanding much higher amounts for our homes than they are independently valued to be worth*'.¹

We would like to point out that the Council has persistently rejected calls for our homes to be independently valued. Wandle Housing Association is currently buying back homes from leaseholders at a scheme in peckham, where leaseholders obtain 3 independent valuations from RICS valuers and Wandle agree to pay the higher of these².

Paragraph 217 of the Inspectors Report refers to the public inquiry submissions relating to the Council's 2005 Executive Committee meeting, which proposed that '*the compensation offered to leaseholders would be the existing market value based on the average of two independent valuations*.'

Had the Council actually instigated such a policy of independent valuations then it wouldn't be in the big mess that it finds itself in now.

The Council has claimed that leaseholders have been offered new homes on the redeveloped estate and that they will pay no rent. But it is only now that leaseholders have been able to read the small print and realise that many will not be able to afford these Shared Ownership/Shared Equity options. They will pay higher values for the new home, pay higher service charges and will be subject to various limitations in the small print; i.e. restrictions on succession and the ability to sell on the open market should the need arise. It is no surprise that only 3 leaseholders from previous phases took up this offer and are now living on the redeveloped phase 1a of the estate.

We believe that Southwark Council should follow the Secretary of State's instructions and make every effort to work with the leaseholders to negotiate better rehousing options. We have suggested a number of possible ways forward in doing so:

- 1) Adoption of the 2005 Executive Committee policy proposal that market value is based on the average of two independent valuations by RICS surveyors appointed by leaseholders.
- 2) A like-for-like swap for a new property on the redeveloped estate or similar size council

1 <http://www.southwarknews.co.uk/news/aylesbury-plan-face-scrutiny/>

2 <http://www.southwarknews.co.uk/news/owners-condemned-flats-fear-housing-association-back-price-deal/>

property elsewhere in the area.

- 3) One block on the estate could be taken out of the scheme, refurbished and leaseholders offered like-for-like replacements.

These measures would meet with the requirements of the Secretary of State's decision and avoid using taxpayers' money for the expensive litigation currently proposed. We look forward to working with Southwark Council in a more effect, transparent and positive way to achieving a fairer deal for all.

Beverley Robinson
AYLESBURY LEASEHOLDERS ACTION GROUP
<http://halag.wordpress.com>