

**APPENDIX 4  
MIDDLESEX ATREET ESTATE CAR PARK**

**Community & Children's Services Committee – 23 January 2023**

**Middlesex Street Estate – Areas of Car Park and Six Shop Units**

**Responses to questions raised by Chair of Middlesex Street Estate Leaseholders Association**

**1. No tangible benefits to residents**

Allocation of £3.45million to be ring-fenced for the HRA and, to be used to help fund specific projects across the Middlesex Street Estate.

The main benefit to residents, in terms of improvements to the estate, is an opportunity to undertake remedial works to the podium, which requires works to remedy the defective waterproof membrane. In addition, there will be general upgrades to security measures, lighting and, potentially, the Gravel Lane highways will be connected to pedestrian areas.

This will form a key part of the public consultation and discussions with the Residents Steering Group should the City of London Police (CoLP) project proceed.

**2. Flawed 'consultation' and lack of transparency**

The Section 105 Consultation had a very specific purpose, which was to seek residents' views on whether specific areas identified in the MSE for future non-housing use, are still required for housing purposes. The scope of this statutory consultation did not include consultation on the CoLP's proposal.

The Corporation has subsequently acknowledged the frustration to residents caused by the 'narrow' scope of the S105 consultation. At the public meeting on 1 November, the Chair of Policy & Resources apologised to residents for this and, gave a firm commitment to ensuring that residents will be much more extensively involved in discussions and consultations on the future use of space within the MSE particularly, with regard to the CoLP's proposal, should it proceed.

**3. Report to Committee is one-sided and misleading**

It is the officers view that the report does accurately reflect the outcome of the S105 Consultation process and, the views of residents are reflected both in the body of the report and, more extensively, in the 'Summary of Section 105 Consultation' document appended to the report.

It is again acknowledged however, that the report does not (and is not intended to) deal in details with the CoLP's proposal for the use of surplus space within the MSE.

Specific reference is made under this heading to 'electric' charging'. As residents have previously been made aware, the Department is currently in the process of applying

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for funding to enable the installation of electric vehicle charging points across all its social housing estates, including the MSE.

### **4. No serious consideration of alternatives**

The Corporation has, in the past, looked extensively at opportunities for alternative residential use across the whole of the MSE.

In 2015, the Corporation considered but decided not to pursue the option of a 'rooftop' extension to Petticoat Tower, that would provide three additional floors of flats as part of the MSE Sustainability Project.

In 2015/16, we completed the development of 24 new homes on the MSE, utilising space at the base of Petticoat Tower and, space previously occupied by the estate office and community centre.

In 2019, we completed the development of 10 new homes on the MSE, utilising underused space recovered from the shop units at podium level.

As residents have been advised, the option to convert the surplus space into social housing has been explored in the past. Unfortunately, however, the first-floor car park does not benefit from sufficient natural light and, any additional accommodation would need to be built upwards, preventing future access for residents to the podium garden. In addition, a development of this scale has significant risks and challenges and, is not considered feasible.

In September/October 2020, the Corporation carried out a marketing exercise, inviting expressions of interest for the use of the first-floor car park. Eight initial bids were received, all relating to the commercial use of the space including hotel, office, workshop, and restaurant use. The most advantageous bid received was from the Bankside Group for proposed office use.

A list of alternatives submitted by residents as part of the S105 consultation and, through subsequent communications, walk-about etc is included at Appendix 1.

### **5. No 'trickle down' economics**

Refer to the response in Section 1 above.

### **6. Paltry financial 'compensation'**

Refer to the response in Section 1 above.

### **7. Capital expenditure by the City Police v residents' interests**

Refer to the response in Section 1 above.

Strategic decisions relating to the MSE, along with corresponding capital receipts, expenditure and asset holdings, are the responsibility of the Corporation, not the CoLP.

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Complications and negative consequences of the CoLP's proposal can be dealt with as part of the discussions and consultations with residents on the future use of space within the MSE particularly, with regard to the CoLP's proposal, should it proceed.

### **8. Failure to learn lessons**

It is correct that changes had to be made to the ventilation system but, this was identified at a very early stage and, paid for by the CoLP project.

The issues with the alarm are accepted and, up until very recently, it was thought that the problem had been resolved. The alarm installation will be reviewed and amended/improved as part of the CoLP's proposal.

### **9. Space is supposedly 'vacant' due to City's own poor planning**

The decision to remove the ramp to the now disused first-floor car park was taken as part of a project to improve the look and appearance of the Artizan Street elevation of the MSE. There is an ongoing project being carried out by colleagues in Environment to install a new canopy to the entrance to Petticoat Tower and to carry out some additional landscaping. This project has been delayed significantly in the past but, it is moving again now, and David Rose and others have been consulted recently on this.

### **10. No neighbourhood, no plan**

There has been, and continues to be significant investment in the homes and communal areas of MSE including:

- Balcony doors and windows (Petticoat Tower)
- Lift refurbishment
- Front door replacement (Petticoat Tower)
- Communal heating replacement
- Replacement stairwell panels (Petticoat Tower)
- Installation of sprinklers
- Flat roof replacement
- Electrical upgrades.

The above equates to around £15million.

In terms of an overall strategy, we are looking at producing a Housing Asset Management Strategy for the whole of our social housing stock over the next 6 months.