

21 August 2023

**Shabana Mahmood MP**  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Dear Shabana Mahmood MP

**Stop the Backdoor Mass Gentrification of Central Ladywood**

Thank you for your response to my letter 4 August 2023.

I note you have met with senior planning officers and Councillor Jayne Francis. I sent a letter to Cllr Francis on 4 August. I have not received a response yet and would appreciate if you would please chase this up for me (letter attached). Unfortunately, apart from sporadic generic email responses from Birmingham City Council, the residents of Central Ladywood are relying on correspondence and support from opposition councillors. There are around 270 residents on Ladywood Unite WhatsApp group and it has been noted that Labour Councillors are not involving themselves in correspondence in relation to regeneration queries. The absence of Cllrs Bore and Hartley is of particular note.

On the 7 July 2023 you asked Cllr Cotton:

- What percentage of new homes in the Ladywood Estate regeneration scheme will be family homes?
- Why is the council not meeting its own targets for social housing or affordable rents as part of the scheme?
- What assessment has been made regarding the displacement of the existing community as part of the 20-year scheme?

Has Cllr Cotton responded?

Your red lines on regeneration are very clear:

- A full and transparent consultation process with residents throughout the project – appointing a specialist to support the community
- Residents who want to stay in Ladywood are guaranteed to stay in Ladywood, and they are rehoused in one move to prevent disruption
- A promise that new, quality community facilities are at the heart of the project and not an afterthought

You also mentioned that any regeneration should not leave the existing community worse off. As you can appreciate a response from Cllr Francis, particularly if I was assured that the content of your letter was to be adhered to, would go a long way. It is particularly concerning that Birmingham City Council has already publicly apologised in relation to consultation:

<https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/news-opinion/sorry-council-promises-lessons-learnt-27374409>

So far, their consultation procedures have been totally shambolic especially Birmingham City Council's failure not to involve private home owners nor housing association residents at all.

You mention that you won't support any regeneration if the council step over your red lines. Should Birmingham City Council step over your red lines I would like clarification of what you will do by not supporting the regeneration – what will this look like? All indications so far suggest that Birmingham City Council will ignore your red lines or at best pay lip service.

I note recently, reported in Birmingham Mail 18 August, <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/digbeth-plans-700-flats-rejected-27548939> that Birmingham City Council Planning Committee has decided not to go ahead with a proposed residential development near to the Anchor Pub in Digbeth. The Planning Committee rejected the development as homes were too small and therefore unsuitable for meeting the requirements of families and also for being unaffordable (only 10% were affordable homes).

As you are aware there are currently 21,000 people on Birmingham's council waiting list with nearly a third of these requiring three-bedroom and four-bedroom accommodation. The Ladywood Estate Regeneration Project falls well beneath the Council's target to provide 35% affordable homes with only 11% of new homes dedicated to social housing and 5% to affordable homes.

According to this newspaper article there were several objections from members of the Planning Committee including the councillor for this area, Cllr Yvonne Mosquito. There was much controversy made by the Planning Committee about building properties with one and two bedrooms. I note that Neighbourhood Heights/Gardens within the red line has one/two bedrooms for which over 25% has been sold to investors. I assume that the Planning Committee approved this – double standards – lesser expectations for the residents of Ladywood? What do you think?

I am more than aware that it is not in your remit to recall the Report to Cabinet 27 June 2023. However, it is very important that residents of Central Ladywood receive the support they need which so far from Birmingham City Council has been truly shocking.

I would like an advice surgery appointment with you face to face, as opposed to virtual, to discuss these matters in greater detail.

I look forward to hearing from you

Best wishes

Yours sincerely,

George Smith