

Email Helen and Colette Community Charter and Powered by People 050724

Dear Helen and Colette,

Thank you for your work in preparing the draft Ladywood Resident and Community Charter. I know the process is still ongoing. Nevertheless, residents of Central Ladywood are concerned about ambiguous language and other pertinent matters. They have found it quite challenging to attend meetings and be confronted with fourteen A3 sheets cold, without prior preparation.

The lack of reference to the "Powered by People" policy is particularly alarming, especially since this is BCC policy adopted by the Cabinet for public engagement and is guaranteed in writing by you: **"The council is absolutely committed to the 'Powered by People' approach and will be working to ensure that, once formally appointed, St Joseph adopts a similar approach."** To this end, I have copied in Cllr Sharon Thompson, who wrote the Foreword to this policy. Working in **"collaboration and partnership"** is the golden thread that underpins this policy. Shabana Mahmood MP, in a document published on 21 June 2024, stated: **"The council only have one chance to get this right and secure the future of Ladywood for generations to come. I hear the pain of residents and the distress this uncertainty is causing. The council can and must do better."** The Council can and must do much better when it comes to the draft Ladywood Resident and Community Charter, particularly in relation to underpinning all five Powered by People principles.

BCC has apologised numerous times about how residents have been treated concerning the regeneration project, especially, last year when the council ignored the public participation principles set out in Powered by People. I know you and your team are working tirelessly to rectify this and have made a start at addressing the principles (pages 8 and 9):

- 1. We will be inclusive, accessible, and fair.**
- 2. We will be respectful.**
- 3. We will act openly, honestly, and with integrity.**

However, there is still much distance to go in relation to (page 9):

- 4. We will collaborate:** "by working in partnership with people, communities, and the other organisations working with, for, or alongside them. We will be mindful of the different power relationships at play and seek to share and shift our power where possible. What this looks like: Plan together across the Council and the local partners so that public participation is coordinated, making the most of each other's skills and networks. Support and build on existing activities, networks, forums, and venues which already bring people together and build strong partnerships with VCSE, Faith, and other local organisations to harness their knowledge and relationships with local communities".
- 5. We will shift power to communities:** "by enabling people and communities to play an active role in shaping the places where they live and in the decisions that affect them. What this looks like: Build power at a community level, nurturing citizen-led action and community cohesion. Build the voices of the public into governance

structures so that people are part of all decision-making processes, including service commissioning, design, and delivery, in a demonstrable way. Invest in encouraging people and communities to get involved, particularly those seldom heard, and help them develop appropriate skills, knowledge, and confidence to contribute effectively to decision-making”.

You have made your intentions very clear to work collaboratively with the community and to uphold the principles of Powered by People. We are delighted that you have confirmed that the draft masterplan will be a blank canvas to enable residents and the developer to co-design the project.

The draft Ladywood Resident and Community Charter is an engagement document, and Powered by People specifically outlines how the Council and partners will engage with the citizens of Birmingham. Therefore, Powered by People should underpin the community charter and be fully referenced in this document. Unless this is the case, and the five principles are clear and explicit the residents of Central Ladywood will reject the charter as it does not align with BCC policy on engagement and participation with its citizens.

We look forward to your firm commitment and that of the developer to clearly embed all five principles of Powered by People in the Ladywood Resident and Community Charter.

Best wishes,

George