

# **New Homes Delivery Programme Silchester Arches**

**Analysis of Phase One stakeholder consultation**

**January 2021**

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**THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA**

# Introduction

## Background

The Council is delivering 600 new homes including a minimum of 300 social rent homes, alongside open market homes to rent and other community and employment facilities as part of its New Homes Programme. All of these new homes will be developed on sites owned by the Council. We have also committed to building all the new homes without the loss of any existing homes.

The New Homes Delivery Programme (NHDP) has identified a site by Silchester Road as a potential area to help deliver new homes for the borough. This site, currently called Silchester Arches will form part of Stage Two of the NHDP.

## Consultation methodology

The Council launched a consultation on 26 November, running to 7 January 2021, to gather stakeholders' views on the proposals. A dedicated page was set up on the Council's website with details of the proposals and consultation, this included presentation material and a video presentation. Stakeholders were encouraged to provide feedback via an online survey and two virtual live chat sessions were organised for stakeholders to ask questions about the proposals and provide feedback. To ensure those without access to the internet were able to participate, paper copies of material was available on request, as was support in alternative formats (e.g. support for those whose first language is not English).

The consultation was promoted via a variety of channels, including; leaflet drops, social media, the Council's website, newsletters, posters and via local voluntary and community groups.

## Report

A total of eight surveys were returned by the deadline and a total of nine stakeholders attended across the two live chat sessions. This report contains an analysis of survey responses and a summary of feedback from the live chat sessions. Where graphs are shown, actual numbers are used as percentages can be misleading with a low number of responses.

## Acknowledgements

The Council would like to thank all residents and stakeholders that took the time to feedback their views.



# **Section 1:**

# **Stakeholder survey**



# Survey findings: Providing new homes on the site

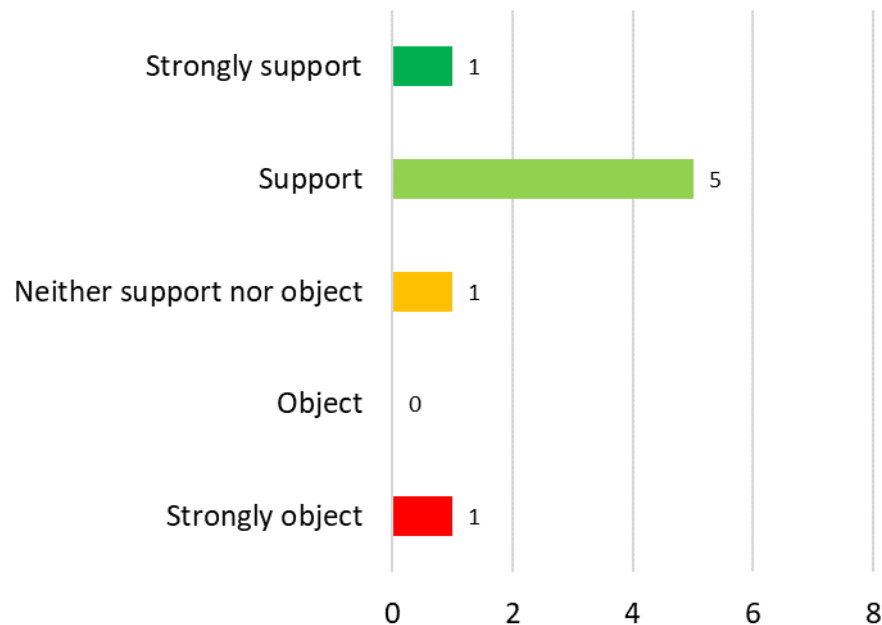
Respondents were asked whether they supported the principle of providing some new social rent homes on the site.

- Six respondents '**strongly supported**' or '**supported**' the principle of providing new homes on the site.
- However, one respondent '**strongly objected**' and another responded neutrally.

Those that objected to the principle were asked to comment on why this was.

- Two respondents commented. One was concerned about the amount of homes that could be built on the site, overdevelopment and the proximity to the railway line. The other respondent indicated they were in support, as long as development was carried out properly. All comments can be seen in full in appendix one.

**Do you support the principle of providing some new social rent homes on this site in temporary use...?**



Base: All responses (8)

# Survey findings: Importance of the site

Respondents were asked what is important about the site and surrounding area at present. Comments can be seen below.

*“That the people living adjacent and near to it, are treated with dignity and respect, specifically that their genuine, informed consent is received prior to any construction or change of use. That the previous gross over-development and loss of public spaces and amenities in exactly this area, which disrespected residents of Lancaster West and the rest of the community, obstructed emergency access to Grenfell Tower, and deprived the community of valuable amenities not be repeated. This site and the surrounding area are extremely sensitive owing to the extremely close proximity to Grenfell Tower. It is therefore important that the council shows respect for this site and the surrounding area. Especially considering how little respect the council has shown for it and for residents here since Grenfell. This is not a suitable site for the council to try to cram more homes into like this.”*

*“I genuinely like having a thriving garden business in my street, it's a good use of the space and I'm not bothered by the appearance. Three wise men is a good community group and have done us gardening favours over the years. We will miss them. I would like to know that they are being moved to a suitable site that they are happy about.”*

*“A well designed building will improve the appearance of the street as there are a lot of ugly and old social housing developments.”*



*“To build new homes.”*

*“Maintaining the identity and cohesion of the design, layout and community of Silchester Estate that this will be building into and become a part of.”*



# Survey findings: Improvements to the site

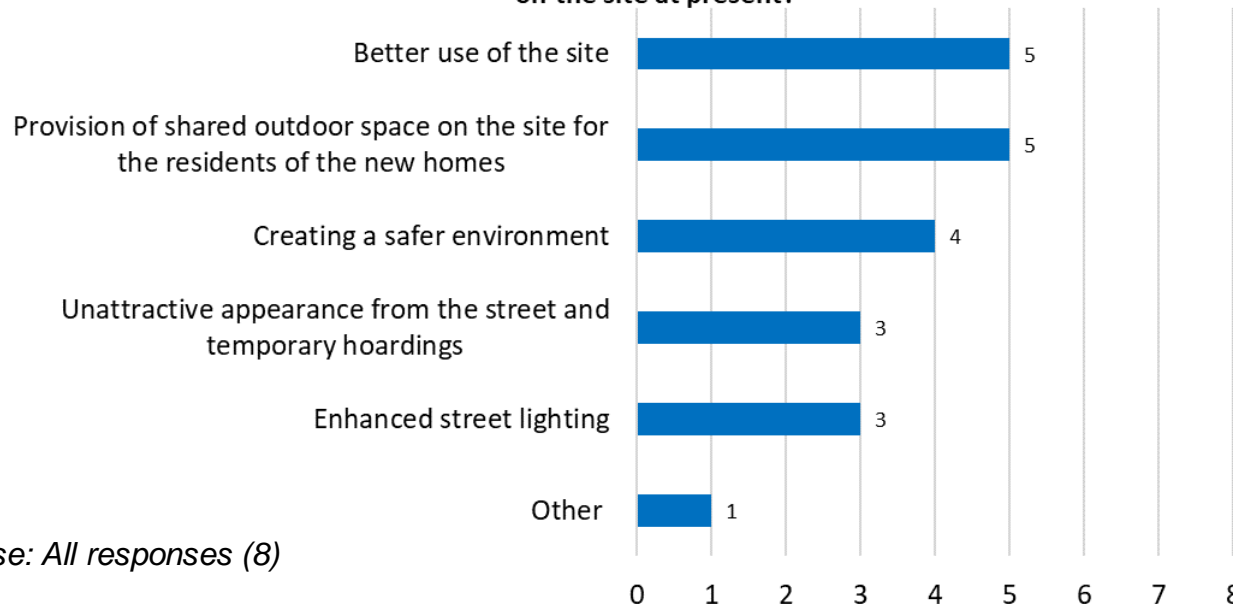
Respondents were asked what they considered to be the areas that could be improved on the site at present, respondents were able to select more than one answer to the question.

- Five wanted to see ***'better use of the site'*** and the same number would like to see ***'provision of shared outdoor space on the site for the residents of the new homes'***.
- Four would like to see creation of a ***'safer environment'***.

Other comments made in relation to improvements to the site were:

- *"Provision of shared outdoor space or other amenity on the site for the residents of the existing homes, and/or for the excluded Grenfell community. Or a small community building with outside space."*
- *"We are a tight community on Silchester. We have been through a lot together and need to be properly involved in any changes that happen to this site."*
- *"Building it into the same style of buildings that currently exist here."*

What do you consider to be areas that could be improved on the site at present?



Base: All responses (8)

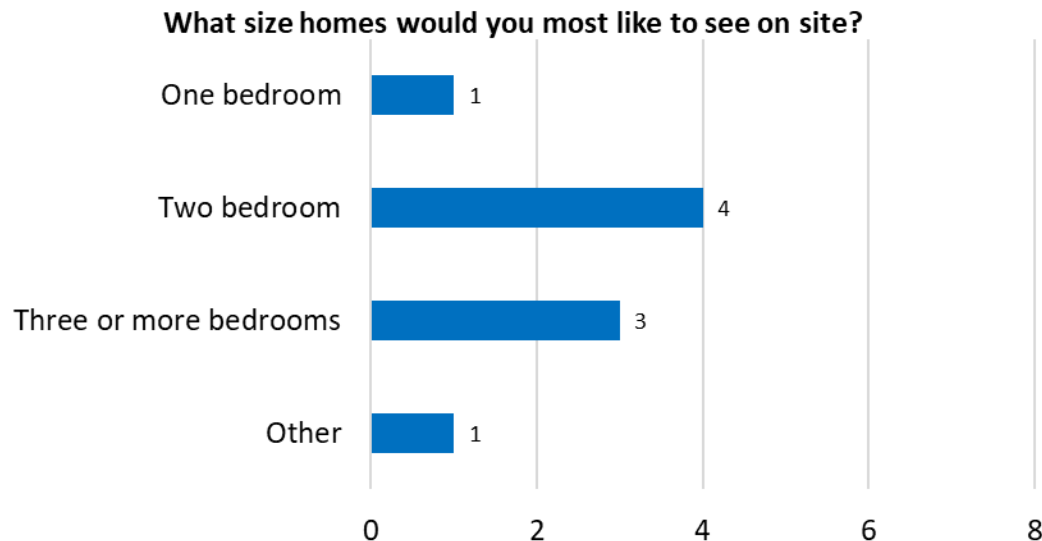
# Survey findings: Size of homes

Respondents were asked to indicate the size of homes they would like to see on the site, respondents were able to select more than one response to this question.

- Four respondents would like to see **‘two bedroom’** homes on the site.
- Three respondents would like to see **‘three or more bedroom’** homes on the site.

Other comments and suggestions made in relation to the size of homes were:

- *“None. This is a leading question. Have you already decided that homes will be built on the site?”*
- *“Whatever size is most needed in our area.”*
- *“Not certain what sizes the houses currently on the road are but equivalent or more spacious.”*



Base: All responses (8)



# Survey findings: Height of building

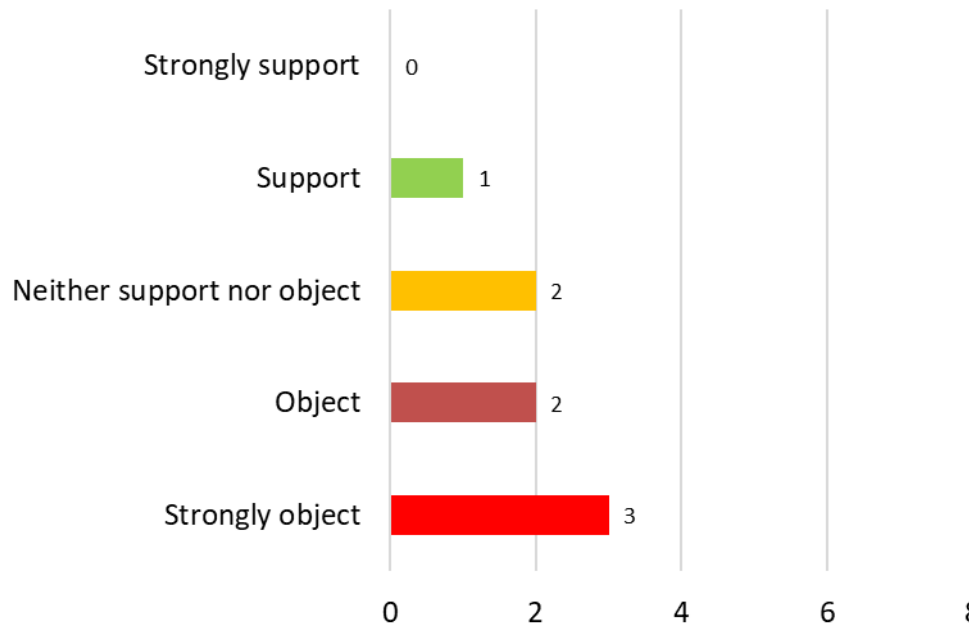
Respondents were asked if they would support the principle of a building of appropriate design which is taller than nearby properties (i.e. over five storeys) in order to provide new social rent homes:

- One respondent **'supported'** the principle of building a property that is taller than nearby properties.
- However, five **'objected'** or **'strongly objected'** to the principle and one responded neutrally.

Those that objected to the principle were asked why this was.

- Four respondents commented. Comments focused on: density, proximity to other buildings, light pollution and being in keeping with other nearby properties. All comments can be seen in appendix one.

**Would you support the principle of a building of appropriate design which is taller than nearby properties (i.e. over five storeys) in order to provide new social rent homes?**



Base: All responses (8)



# Survey findings: Other comments on presentation or site

*“The proposal is in extremely poor taste given its location. Even if you are expecting residents of the proposed new homes to live in tiny, cramped conditions (which I hope you are not), the number of homes that could reasonably be built on this site amounts to less than 1% of your target. I don’t see how this outweighs the negative impact on surrounding residents and streetscape of increasing the density still further. There would also be significant concerns about the safety of any such homes, in light of revelations coming from the Grenfell inquiry about the dangerous practices of RBKC and throughout the building industry in general. This doesn’t seem to have even been considered in the presentation.”*



*“As long as it’s a beautifully designed building the height matters less.”*

*“Just that this is done sensitively with the collaboration of the neighbourhood.”*

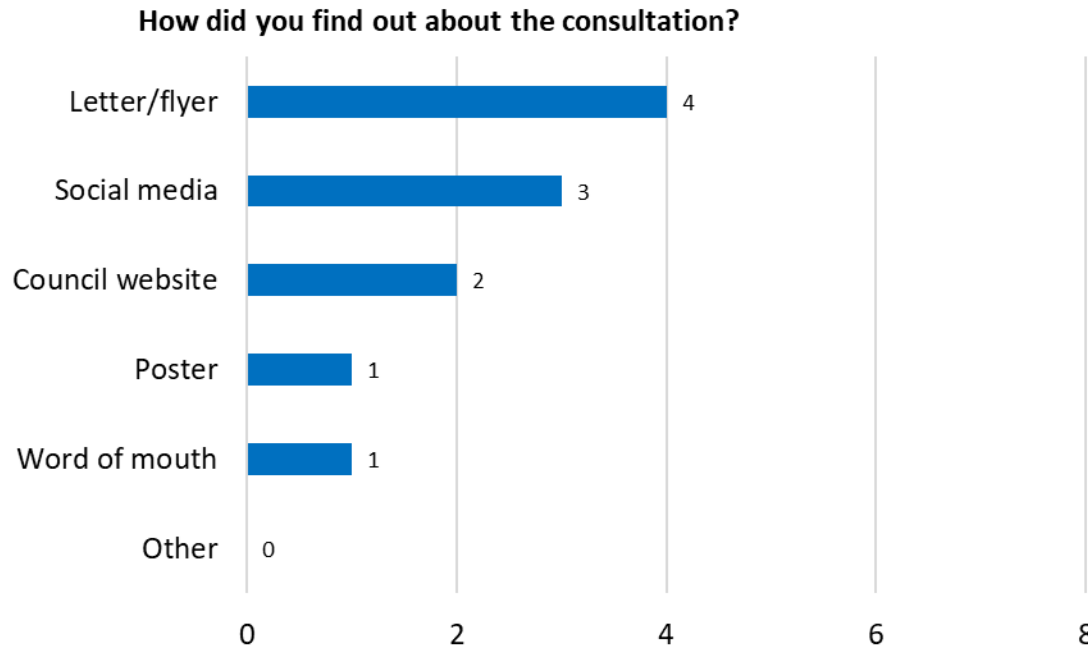
*“Value the style of architecture that informs Silchester Estate and the need to make this fully a part of that pre-existing development.”*



# Survey findings: Finding out about the consultation

Respondents were asked how they found out about the consultation, respondents were able to select more than one answer to the question.

- Four respondents found out about the consultation from a '**letter/flyer**'.
- Three found out via '**social media**'.
- Two respondents found out via the '**Council website**'



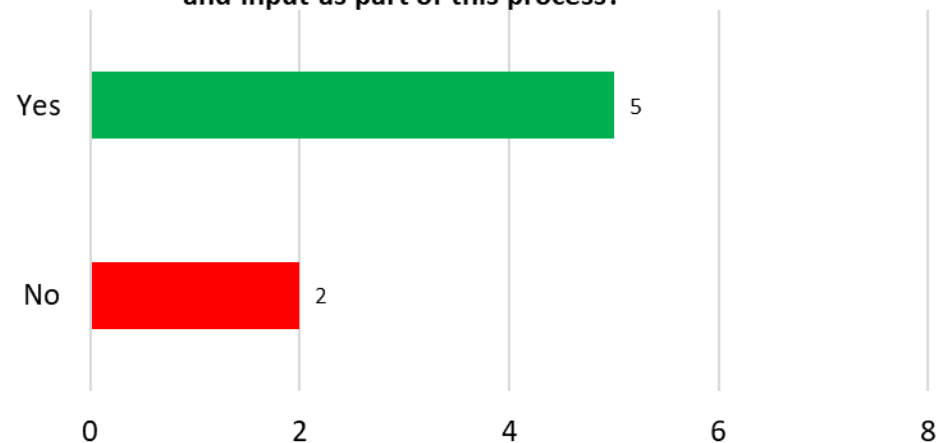
Base: All responses (8)

# Survey findings: Presentation

Respondents were asked if they felt the presentation informed them how they could provide their thoughts as part of the process.

- Five respondents felt the presentation did inform them how they could provide their thoughts and input as part of the process.
- However, two did not agree.

Do you feel that the presentation informed you how you can provide your thoughts and input as part of this process?



*Base: All responses (8)*

# Survey findings: Profile of respondents

Respondents were asked a series of questions about themselves, to understand who had responded to the consultation.

- Four respondents were residents of the Silchester Estate, Bramley House or Silchester Road. Three were residents of the surrounding area and one a business or worker within a local business.
- Three respondents were male and four were female (one preferred not to say).
- Three respondents were aged 35 to 44, three aged 45 to 54 and one aged 55 to 64 (one preferred not to say).
- Four respondents were White or White British, one Black or Black British and one was from a mixed ethnic background (one preferred not to say).
- Six respondents indicated that they did not have a long term illness, health problem or disability (two preferred not to say).



# Section 2: Virtual meetings



# Virtual meetings

In addition to the feedback survey, the Council organised two live chat sessions in order for residents and other interested stakeholders to ask questions and provide their feedback on the proposals.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, both sessions were held virtually via Zoom and attracted a total of nine members of the public. The below table summarises the feedback from each of these sessions.

Date of meeting	Number of attendees (public)	Summary of feedback/points made
4/12/20	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Welcomed new homes and keen to stop people living in temporary accommodation.</li><li>• Questioned whether plans had already been drawn up and whether properties would be in keeping with immediate area and subject to right to buy.</li><li>• Request for larger properties for families and potential for 4/5 bedroom flats.</li><li>• Could the ground floor flat be suitable for a disabled resident?</li><li>• Co-ordination of works with Lancaster West improvements.</li><li>• Will enhancing surrounding landscape be part of the scheme?</li><li>• Would like to see improvements to railway arches, apple tree maintained and ACAVA land enhanced.</li></ul>
5/12/20	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Questions about the site/potential development included whether: homes will be social rented, whether rents would be genuinely affordable, the Council would be the landlord, flats would be provided for disabled people and whether Silchester residents would be given priority.</li><li>• In regard to the design of the properties, comments included: whether there would be balconies, how noise levels from the viaduct be mitigated against, concerns about pollution/air quality and whether there was opportunity for underground parking.</li><li>• Concerns seeking planning permission in early 2021 would be too quick.</li><li>• Freston Road was suggested as another site to look at.</li><li>• There were also comments in relation to the demolition of Grenfell Tower and what would be replacing it.</li></ul>

# Appendix one: Comments made in the survey

This section of the report lists all comments made in response to open questions within the survey:

## **If you object to the principle of providing new social rent homes on the Silchester site please tell us why.**

- This is a tiny piece of land, right up against the railway line, in an area which is already heavily over-developed, thanks to the ill-fated KALC. The number and quality of homes it would be possible to build here would both be very low, and the negative impact on the existing surrounding homes of increasing the density is not outweighed by the benefit of adding what would be cramped homes blighted by tube trains going by every 3 or 4 minutes just feet or inches from the windows.
- I support the principle of houses for social rent on my street but this depends on whether they are genuinely affordable and the build and design is fire safe, constructed to the highest green standards and well designed. This is a great opportunity to build something groundbreaking that people want to live in. So yes support but done properly.

## **What is important to you about the site and surrounding area at present?**

- That the people living adjacent and near to it, are treated with dignity and respect, specifically that their genuine, informed consent is received prior to any construction or change of use. That the previous gross over-development and loss of public spaces and amenities in exactly this area, which disrespected residents of Lancaster West and the rest of the community, obstructed emergency access to Grenfell Tower, and deprived the community of valuable amenities not be repeated. This site and the surrounding area are extremely sensitive owing to the extremely close proximity to Grenfell Tower. It is therefore important that the council shows respect for this site and the surrounding area. Especially considering how little respect the council has shown for it and for residents here since Grenfell. This is not a suitable site for the council to try to cram more homes into like this.
- I genuinely like having a thriving garden business in my street, it's a good use of the space and I'm not bothered by the appearance. Three wise men is a good community group and have done us gardening favours over the years. We will miss them. I would like to know that they are being moved to a suitable site that they are happy about.
- A well designed building will improve the appearance of the street as there are a lot of ugly and old social housing developments.
- Maintaining the identity and cohesion of the design, layout and community of Silchester Estate that this will be building into and become a part of.
- To build new homes.



# Appendix one: Comments made in the survey

## **What do you consider could be improved about the site at present? (Other answers)**

- Provision of shared outdoor space or other amenity on the site for the residents of the existing homes, and/or for the excluded Grenfell community. Or a small community building with outside space.
- We are a tight community on Silchester. We have been through a lot together and need to be properly involved in any changes that happen to this site.
- Building it into the same style of buildings that currently exist here.

## **What size homes would you most like to see on site? (Other answers)**

- None. This is a leading question. Have you already decided that homes will be built on the site?
- Whatever size is most needed in our area.
- Not certain what sizes the houses currently on the road are but equivalent or more spacious.

## **If you object to the principle of a taller building on the Silchester site please tell us why?**

- Because it is much too close to existing homes and would be detrimental to them. In a residential area of this size and scale, building above five storeys would be the local equivalent of putting the Notting Hill Gate development here.
- I would like to see the light pollution of anything higher than the six two story houses next to the site.
- Fit it into current layout here. More fully justify the need for building higher or significantly higher.
- It feels as though the area is very dense already and having a taller building there would overshadow others.

## **Do you have any other thoughts or comments on the presentation or site generally?**

- The proposal is in extremely poor taste given its location. Even if you are expecting residents of the proposed new homes to live in tiny, cramped conditions (which I hope you are not), the number of homes that could reasonably be built on this site amounts to less than 1% of your target. I don't see how this outweighs the negative impact on surrounding residents and streetscape of increasing the density still further. There would also be significant concerns about the safety of any such homes, in light of revelations coming from the Grenfell inquiry about the dangerous practices of RBKC and throughout the building industry in general. This doesn't seem to have even been considered in the presentation.
- Value the style of architecture that informs Silchester Estate and the need to make this fully a part of that pre-existing development.
- Just that this is done sensitively with the collaboration of the neighbourhood.
- As long as it's a beautifully designed building the height matters less.

