

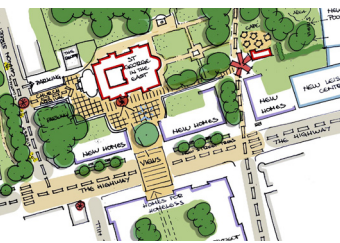


# Our Vision

## For the St George's Neighbourhood

### A resident led plan

March 2024



*I have been on the waiting list since 2007 for a four bedroom council home, however when I bid for a house there are 200 other families bidding for that one property! I'm still living in mouldy damp housing due to overcrowding, and every day, every year the situation is getting worse. When will we get a decent home to have our children grow in healthy environments and live somewhere you we call home?*

**Kulsuma, Local Parent**

*I had amazing memories learning to swim at St Georges and it's sad to think my youngest child will not experience having a local swimming pool until she is nine.*

**Katie, Local Parent**

# Our Vision

## St George's Gardens

### Who we are

We are a group of community leaders from across institutions in Shadwell and Whitechapel who are working towards creating a powerful community alliance to shape our Neighbourhood of St George's.

We aim to create quality affordable homes for local people, along with amenities and spaces that bring us together and allow us to live healthier and happier lives. Ultimately, we want to create a place where our children and future generations can thrive.

We currently represent **1,500 people across six local institutions** and community networks supported by our relationship with **seven local primary schools**.

- St George-in-the-East Church
- MIND Tower Hamlets,
- The Maryam Centre at East London Mosque
- SEND Parent Ambassadors
- Gift of Knowledge Charity
- E1 Community Gardeners

Many of these institutions are part of Tower Hamlets Citizens, which is a local community organising alliance. We are also supported on this project by the Create Streets Foundation, a charity that empowers communities to improve their local built environment.

We want to put the community at the heart of proposals for St George's Leisure Centre, creating a facility that offers a wide range of activities, meets the diverse needs of the local community, and above all is a fun and safe place for children. It's important to us that the development also provides safe, secure, and truly affordable housing for local families.

This document sets out what we've accomplished so far and what we hope we can further secure.



## What we've done

It all began in 2019 when St George in the East Church and our neighbours started to explore how we could improve the church surroundings and address local housing needs.

**2019** Our first workshops resulted in a community led plan for St George's. Residents envisaged a transformation of the park, a new pool, more greenery, quieter streets, and new affordable housing.



**2020** The Pandemic hits, focus shifts to the immediate needs of the community. Shadwell Responds is formed. Meanwhile St Georges Pool closes, never to reopen.



**2021** Pandemic eases but the pool remains shut. There is an outcry at the loss of this much loved community asset and particular anger that a generation of children could be missing out on learning the vital life saving skill of swimming.



**2022** We took action and called on the Council to keep the pool in Shadwell. Our priority was that the local community were properly involved in the process to ensure that our cultural and religious needs are taken into account Over 1,000 primary school children were involved in creating a piece of artwork to represent the children's voices in the campaign. The action was led by Fr Richard from St George in the East and Imam Kazi Asiqur Rahman from Darul

Ummah Mosque.



**2022 (summer)** This didn't stop our other work. We continued to listen to our neighbours and progress solutions to tackle issues with refuse and traffic on Cannon Street Road, and secured funding to install an air quality monitor on The Highway. Shadwell Responds became **St Georges Neighbourhood Action Team**.



**2022** Our continued and persistent action, and efforts to engage and consult, resulted in **our biggest win**; the council committed to providing a new state of the art pool and leisure centre in Shadwell, and to continuing consultation with the community.

**2023** Our efforts to put the local community at the heart of decision making continued. We listened across our community to around 400 local people to establish an independent vision for the leisure centre and housing, running events and facilitating meetings with the council design team.



**2023** Based on our consultation findings, we developed an alternative plan for housing. This could deliver approximately 40 family sized homes in a mix of maisonettes, mews homes, and flats.

**2024** This year is already shaping up to be a big one for our group. As the new leisure centre progresses towards planning and construction, we will continue to be a strong voice for the community and fighting for the best possible future for St Georges Pool and Gardens.



## Celebrating our wins

Our dedication and relentless effort have yielded results. In the **most recent design proposals** we can highlight eight major achievements that wouldn't have been realised without our involvement, **putting residents' voices at the centre of this redevelopment.**

What we asked for	What we got
<p><b>A pool in the heart of Shadwell.</b> Keeping a pool on the same site, rather than moving it to Wapping.</p>	<p>In a major win, the council has committed to a new pool in Shadwell, securing access to swimming and leisure facilities for generations to come.</p>
<p><b>Deep engagement and co-creation.</b> We want to be part of the design and decision making process</p>	<p>We have developed an excellent relationship with councillors, officers, and the design team. In total we have had eight meetings with the council team.</p>
<p><b>Homes for Shadwell.</b> Safe, secure, beautiful, and truly affordable family sized homes.</p>	<p>Approximately 30 new homes will be delivered, the majority of which will be three or four bed family homes, helping to tackle the serious overcrowding in Shadwell</p>
<p><b>Inclusive facilities.</b> Additional gym facilities for women and girls</p>	<p>A separate female only gym space is proposed, providing the opportunity for women and girls to use the facilities at all times.</p>
<p><b>Maximising space for sports.</b> Making use of the roof with space for sports and games facilities.</p>	<p>While it has not been possible to deliver a full-sized pitch, there are exciting plans for a roof top games area.</p>
<p><b>Children at the heart of design.</b> A focus on play and fun, design the pool and gardens around the needs of our kids.</p>	<p>Plans include an area for adventure play and soft play indoors, and natural play outdoors. We're working on slides and splash pads.</p>
<p><b>Yes to ball games.</b> Provide facilities for football and other sports in the gardens.</p>	<p>The plans for St George's Gardens includes a mini 'multi use games area' (MUGA) for children's sports, a huge improvement on current provision.</p>

## Our asks

Our work isn't done yet, and while we can celebrate the ambition of the council and their team, and their commitment to community-led design, we need to ensure the designs are realised and incorporate most of the elements our community have highlighted as priorities.

Following extensive listening and debate, the community are asking for:



### 1. A place for our kids

- Will you commit to delivering football provision either inside the leisure centre or the surrounding gardens at St George's?
- Given water play has been a top priority for every school, will you commit to providing a water slide in the pool and explore water play in the gardens, such as water fountains, neither of which are in the current proposed designs?
- Will you commit to delivering a permanent indoor playscape catering for a range of ages from toddlers to high school aged children?

### 2. Homes for Shadwell

- Will you commit to delivering **majority three and four bedroom family sized homes**, all priced at social rent for council tenants and if the number of homes reduce will you ensure the mix priorities three and four bedroom flats?
- Will you meet with our community to discuss how we can deliver good quality, family-sized affordable homes in the borough, particularly on cable street?



### 3. Telling our story

- Deputy Mayor, will you commit to including our artwork in the new leisure centre, telling our community's story of how we saved and co-designed the space?





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