



Justice Matters:
A **Community** Plan
for **Holloway**

Holloway prison: Community perspectives
October 2017

www.plan4holloway.org

Introduction

Holloway women's prison in Islington, London, closed in 2016 as part of the government's £1.3bn prison building and reform programme. Receipts from prison land sales are to be used for the construction of new prisons. Holloway was the only women's prison in London and sits on a large area of public land in one of the most densely populated boroughs in the city with some of the highest housing costs.

Holloway prison is currently being marketed by the Ministry of Justice's agents, GVA Bilfinger. A brochure can be viewed at www.hollowayprison.com. The deadline for bids to purchase the site is 15 November 2017.

Community Plan for Holloway is working in coalition with local people and community groups to create and promote a positive vision for the former Holloway prison site. There is strong local interest and recognition for the potential of the Holloway prison site. It is important that the local community are fully involved in how the site is developed.

Despite its reputation as a wealthy borough, Islington has shocking levels of poverty. Out of 326 local authorities in England, it is the 24th most deprived and has the 4th highest rate of child poverty in the UK. Key findings from our 2017 report, *Islington: A local needs analysis*, shows that:

- 38% of children are in poverty, the fourth highest rate in the UK
- 20,733 households are on the waiting list for social housing
- 881 households were in temporary accommodation on 30 September 2016, including 1,124 children
- 442 households were owed a homelessness duty by the council last year
- 29,900 adults are estimated to have depression, anxiety or both
- 31,000 people identify as having an impairment or disability

The land has value not just in monetary terms, but as a community asset. The Holloway prison site can set a benchmark for the disposal of prison sites and public land in London and across the country.

This report provides a summary of the views of the local community as shared with us through our online and paper surveys with local residents, community groups and women in the criminal justice system.

About Community Plan for Holloway

Community Plan for Holloway is organised by the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, an independent charity based in London. *Community Plan for Holloway* is funded by Trust for London, a charitable funder working to reduce poverty and inequality in London.

The *Community Plan for Holloway* project is involved in four main activities:

1. **Understanding the needs of local residents:** We have collated data about the needs of people in the borough. Our report, *Islington: A local needs analysis*¹, is intended to inform policy decisions about how the Holloway prison site could be developed to respond to local needs.
2. **Community outreach:** We are working to ensure local voices are heard and the needs of the community are taken seriously in the future of the Holloway site. Outreach activities have included:
 - a. **Survey:** Between April and September 2017 *Community Plan for Holloway* ran an online and paper survey asking for people's views about the future of the site. With the help of local people and community groups we held two action days and distributed survey leaflets to around 8,000 homes in St Georges and Holloway wards.

Working with the charity, Women in Prison, we have also consulted with women in the criminal justice system through discussion groups and paper surveys.

We have tried to ensure that as many voices as possible are heard in this process and, in particular, to reach out to those who may not normally participate in formal consultation processes. By late September 2017, 929 individuals and organisations had shared their views with us about the future of the Holloway site.
 - b. **Partnerships:** We have established an active partnership group of local community organisations, faith groups, trade unions, and political parties.
 - c. **Events:** We have attended local events, spoken at public meetings and organised street stalls giving out around 20,000 leaflets.
3. **Developing a vision:** Based on the responses submitted from online surveys, public meetings and through ongoing dialogue with the community, we will publish a community plan in 2018. The community plan will contain a vision for the Holloway prison site. This will include a series of recommendations and principles for the site. It will not be a full architectural plan.
4. **Engaging decision-makers:** We are working to ensure that key decision-makers and elected officials consider the views and needs of the community.

¹ <https://plan4holloway.org/2017/04/26/new-report-islington-a-local-needs-analysis/>

Islington Council's Planning Guidance

Islington Council ran two consultations in 2017 on a 'Supplementary Planning Document' (SPD). The SPD provides planning guidance for the Holloway site. It is not legally binding but outlines the Council's expectations for the site and gives an indication on what the local planning authority is likely to permit.

The main objectives outlined by Islington Council in the draft SPD are:

- housing and in particular affordable housing (with a minimum of 50% affordable housing).
- public open green space and play space.
- a women's building/centre that includes space to support local organisations and promote employment opportunities.
- a small amount of commercial space.
- a high-quality design.
- good connections.
- high sustainability standards (including an energy centre to provide cheaper and cleaner energy).

The results from our survey and community engagement work echo many of these objectives.

As explained in the SPD, targets to deliver new housing have been met by Islington Council in recent years – but affordability has not improved, rather it has worsened. This is clearly something the local community is aware of and wants to see addressed. Housing – and in particular, genuinely *affordable housing* at the Holloway prison site – is a key priority for the community.

When we asked people what they did not want to see at the Holloway site, the main response was 'unaffordable luxury flats'. This was followed by 'private housing', 'high-rise', 'gated or privatised space' and 'private development'. The implication here is that the public want the land to remain in public ownership and/or publicly accessible to all.

Our findings suggest concerns about high-rise, high-density developments. A range of scenarios have been outlined by Islington Council of between 400 and 900 homes. In April 2017, the MoJ advised the House of Commons Justice Committee that the site 'is expected to open up land for building around 800 homes'². GVA Bilfinger, are currently advertising the site claiming it has the potential for a residential development of 'over 1,000 apartments'. There is a risk that a developer could purchase the site at an inflated price based on unrealistic expectations about the number of units feasible.

The public have been very clear that they want more than just housing on the site. They identify a range of other publicly accessible spaces and facilities, including community space, green space, community services, and provision for different groups, including young people and women.

² <https://plan4holloway.org/2017/06/19/room-for-800-homes-on-holloway-prison-site/>

Of the responses we received from community groups, housing was a key priority, followed by 'women's provision'. This was also echoed in the responses from women in the criminal justice system and adds further support for the proposal for a women's building as detailed in the SPD and promoted by campaign groups.

Main findings

At the time of writing we have received 929 responses to our *Community Plan for Holloway* survey. This includes: 50 from women in the criminal justice system (either in prison or in the community), 25 of whom were formerly incarcerated in Holloway prison; 100 children from Robert Blair Primary School; and 23 community organisations (listed in the appendices).

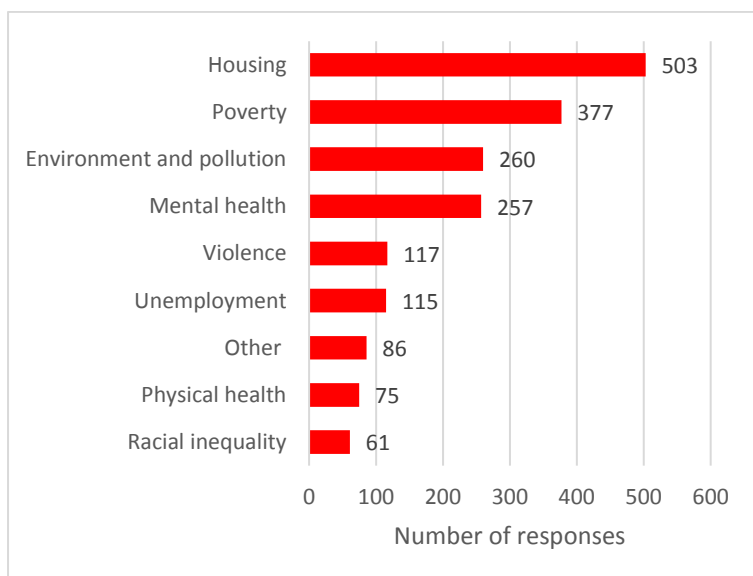
The main survey contained three questions:

- Q1: 'Given the problems faced by the people of Islington, what do you think are the three most important issues that you would like to see addressed?' (multiple choice options, plus 'other').
- Q2: What would you really like to see on the Holloway prison site? (open response)
- Q3: What would you NOT like to see on the Holloway prison site? (open response)

Responses to Q2 and Q3 were analysed and coded. There were roughly equal numbers of respondents from each five year age group, and we collected the views of 102 people under 19 years old. 115 respondents of the 718 respondents who supplied data on their ethnicity were black or minority ethnic. 87 of the 695 respondents who supplied data on disability self-identified as having a disability or impairment. Most respondents (592) were residents of Islington. 19 respondents said they had 'no connection to Islington'.

Individual responses

Q1: 'Given the problems faced by the people of Islington, what do you think are the three most important issues that you would like to see addressed?'



Q2: What would you really like to see on the Holloway prison site?

1. **Affordable housing** (mentioned in 507 responses), with particular emphasis on genuinely affordable and social housing (344 and 315 responses respectively).
2. **Community space** (mentioned in 355 responses).
3. **Green space** (mentioned in 270 responses).
4. **Community services** (mentioned in 245 responses).
5. **Provision for different groups** (mentioned in 170 responses), mainly for children and young people and women.
6. **Commercial use** (mentioned in 87 responses) mainly shops or a shopping centre (mentioned in 69 responses) but specifically **small, local or independent businesses** (mentioned in 54 responses).
7. **Arts and cultural** facilities (mentioned in 43 responses).
8. **Sports and fitness** facilities (mentioned in 37 responses).
9. Incorporation of **environmental sustainability** (mentioned in 31 responses).

Q3: What would you NOT like to see on the Holloway prison site?

1. **Unaffordable luxury flats** (mentioned in 409 responses).
2. **Private housing** (mentioned in 185 responses).
3. **High rise** (mentioned in 67 responses).
4. **Gated or privatised space** (mentioned in 56 responses).
5. **Private development** (mentioned in 51 responses).
6. **Shopping mall** (mentioned in 43 responses).
7. **Chain shops** or large businesses (mentioned in 37 responses).

Community organisations

The views of the 23 community organisations who responded also supported 'affordable housing', followed by 'women's provision'.

Q2: What would you really like to see on the Holloway prison site?

1. **Affordable housing** (mentioned in 20 responses), with an emphasis on genuinely affordable and social housing (mentioned in 18 and 13 responses respectively).
2. **Women's provision** (mentioned in 14 responses) with a **particular focus on women affected by criminal justice** (mentioned in 6 responses).
3. **Community space** (mentioned in 10 responses).
4. **Community services** (mentioned in 9 responses).

Q3: What would you NOT like to see on the Holloway prison site?

1. **Unaffordable luxury housing** (mentioned in 13 responses).
2. **Private housing** (mentioned in 7 responses).
3. **A private development** (mentioned in 5 responses).
4. **Gated or privatised space** (mentioned in 4 responses).

Women in the criminal justice system

We commissioned the charity, Women in Prison, to consult with women in the prison system and in the community. Women in Prison ran facilitated discussion groups and distributed questionnaires. Responses were received from five women's prisons and also from a women's centre, the Beth Centre in Lambeth.

The Ministry of Justice has claimed that the closure of Holloway prison would result in improved conditions for women. Our findings suggest that this has not happened.

The closure of Holloway prison had, and continues to have, a significant negative impact on women in the criminal justice system. The process of the closure caused significant harm to mental health and wellbeing.

The closure also had a knock on effect across the women's prison estate due to overcrowding and the movement of women around the system to accommodate the hundreds of Holloway prisoners who were moved as a result of the closure.

In 2016 there were 12 self-inflicted deaths in the women's estate, compared to five in 2015. Both the Chief Inspector of Prisons and the Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody have raised concerns that the closure of Holloway is a causal factor in these deaths.

Women were asked to rank in order of priority what they wanted to see at the Holloway site:

1. **Supported housing** (24).
2. **Domestic violence refuge** (23).
3. **Council housing** (22).
4. **Mental health support** (22).
5. **Women's centre** (21).
6. **Hostel** (18).
7. **Community centre** (14).
8. **Private rental housing** (13).
9. **Green space** (10).
10. **Children's playground** (9).
11. **Park** (9).

In the open ended responses, women expressed a strong desire to see specialist housing, mental health and domestic violence support. The women were keen to see that the historical legacy of the site will be recognised – but through something more meaningful than a plaque or a museum. There was a strong call for the Holloway site to offer services that support and empower women.

Children and young people

Student Councillors at Robert Blair Primary School sought the views of all year 3, 4, 5 and 6 pupils (approximately 100 8-11 year olds). The results were as follows:

Q2: What would you really like to see on the Holloway prison site?

Football pitch / academy	Shopping Centre
Theme park / Adventure Playground	Community Centre for children and adults
Cinema	Homework club
Museum (dinosaur/ history)	Market
Fun fair	Sport Centre
Studio for people to work on Youtube videos	Science Lab
Homeless shelter	Hospital / Health Centre
Trampoline park / Bowling alley	Library
Water park	Charity Shop
School / College/ Education centre	Old people's home/ houses

Q3: What would you NOT like to see on the Holloway prison site?

Another prison	Apartment blocks
Factory	Circus
Bank	Football place
Fast food restaurant	

APPENDICES: DATA TABLES

Ages of respondents

Under 19	102
20 to 24	24
25 to 29	81
30 to 34	83
35 to 39	75
40 to 44	63
45 to 49	79
50 to 54	66
55 to 59	73
60 to 64	48
65 or over	129
Prefer not to say	9
Total	832

Self-identified impairment or disability

Yes	87
No	608
Total	695

Ethnicity

White	581
BME	91
Total	672

Gender

Male	257
Female	444
Other	5
Total	706

Note: The totals in these tables do not correspond to the total number of responses received. Some people did not answer the demographic questions. Some responses were on behalf of organisations rather than individuals.

Connection to the borough

Resident	592
Work in the borough	164
Member of a local community group	83
Local councillor	2
Local business owner	14
Study in Islington	9
No connection to Islington	19
Other	68
Total	951

Q2: What would you really like to see on the Holloway prison site? (individual responses)

	Number of responses
Affordable housing	507
Truly affordable housing	344
Social housing	314
Council housing	88
Affordable housing to buy	30
Affordable housing to private rent	8
Private housing	65
Mixed tenure housing	64
Housing for local people	36
Different sized households housing	28
Community space	355
Outdoor community space	255
Indoor community space	86
Community centre	84
Green space	270
Community services	245
Education services	65
Health services	74
Mental health services	35
Provision for different groups	170
Child youth provision	154
Women's provision	106
Provision for the elderly	29
Disabled people's provision	16
Homelessness provision	18
Commercial use	87
Shops shopping centre	69
Local indie small businesses	54
Arts cultural facilities	43
Sports fitness facilities	37
Environmental sustainability	31

Q3: What would you NOT like to see on the Holloway prison site? (individual responses)

	Number of responses
Unaffordable luxury housing	409
Private housing	185
Housing	29
Mainly all private housing	24
Mainly all unaffordable housing	21
Student accommodation	23
Social housing	9
High-rise	67
High-density	11
Poor quality design	15
Lack of green space	21
Car park	20
Prison	14
Gated or privatised space	56
Private development	51
Shopping mall	43
Chain shops/big business	37
Shops	32
Offices	24
Supermarket	14

Organisation responses include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caxton House Community Centre • Clean Break • Clean Break Theatre Company • Dartmouth Park Coho • Every Voice • Highbury Vale Blackstock Trust • IKWRO Women's Rights Organisation • Islington Hands off our Public Services • Jubba Youth Community Association • Keep Homes Ltd • Minority Matters • Music for Open Ears 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muslim Welfare House • OnSide Youth Zones • Prison Reform Trust • Reclaim Holloway • Rooms of our Own • Shelter from the Storm • Solace Women's Aid • Speak Street • Women in Prison • Women's Resource Centre
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