

Aiming for extra jobs and housing

STORY CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

homes. We do not want our borough to be a place where people feel they have to move away to move up in life."

Cllr Greenhalgh added: "It is important to stress that in all our areas there are no actual plans on the table.

"Potentially entering an agreement with landowners in West Kensington is about seeing if we can work together to bring about plans that would revitalise that area.

"The involvement of local people will be absolutely crucial in helping us develop ideas. If or when any proposal comes forward for West Kensington it has to be right for the area."

• The blueprint, called the Local



POTENTIAL REGENERATION: West Kensington Estate

Development Framework Core Strategy Options, is currently out for consultation. You can have your say up until July 17 by logging on to www.lbhf.gov.uk/decentneighbourhoods

OUR VISION

Comment by H&F Council leader
Stephen Greenhalgh



"MANY council estates have become what they were fighting in the first place – social ghettos."

These are not my words but the words of Sir Robin Wales, the Mayor of Newham.

Up and down the country there is rightfully a debate about the need to create mixed and balanced communities. In many areas housing estates are failing the people they were designed to help – council tenants themselves.

With our high levels of poverty, we have set ourselves the mission to regenerate the most deprived parts of the borough. We want to keep our residents in the borough by providing better housing, attracting more jobs, creating a better housing environment and giving people a chance to get onto the property ladder.

Standing still is simply not an option when it will cost the council over £1 billion over the next 30 years just to maintain our existing housing stock.

Our ambition to redevelop some of our council estates over the next 15-20 years is not a secret plot but the way to deliver more homes and better quality housing in a greatly improved environment. In some ways we are behind other parts of London as the redevelopment of the Ferrier Estate in Greenwich, Aylesbury Estate in Southwark, Woodberry Down in Hackney and West Hendon in Barnet is already under way.

I was struck by the story of one of our residents who lives on the Clem Attlee estate in North Fulham. She works hard and is proud of her home once she closes the door at night. But that pride seeps away once steps outside and is confronted by her immediate housing environment.

Is it really right that in the 21st century thousands of people are living in estates

separated by the rest of the community? Shouldn't we be looking at tearing down the physical and social barriers that separate so many?

That is not to say all estates are bad, nor is redevelopment the answer in every case. For example, at Edward Woods we are spending nearly £16 million refurbishing it.

Let's be clear. This isn't about social engineering, gerrymandering or shipping poor people out as some of our opponents would have you believe. This is about ensuring people want to carry on living in the area by giving people real choice and opportunity.

• Opportunity to step on the property ladder should they wish because we are going to work damned hard to provide people with low cost home ownership options. Why should the aspiration of owning a home belong to London's wealthy elite alone?

• Opportunity to raise their children in a housing environment that is fit for purpose and not separated from the rest of the community by high walls and barriers.

• Opportunity to send their children to modern, well equipped local schools.

• Opportunity for people to find a local job by making ensure we attract millions of pounds of new investment in our neighbourhoods.

• Choice about what kind of house or flat they want to live in as their needs change. That means tackling head-on the desperate lack of family-sized accommodation in our borough.

I understand as the leader of H&F Council that talk of demolishing people's homes is a hugely emotive subject. I understand the concerns and fears people have.

But let me tell our tenants and leaseholders clearly – we have set out this vision because we want to make your housing environment better.

We are giving a cast-iron guaranteeing that where renewal opportunities arise ALL council tenants will be offered a permanent home in the area. ALL leaseholders and freeholders will receive the compensation to which they are entitled and there will be no reduction in the amount of social housing.



of new investment in our neighbourhoods.

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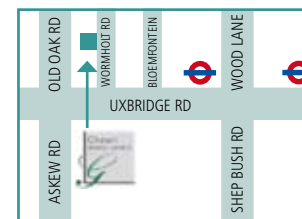


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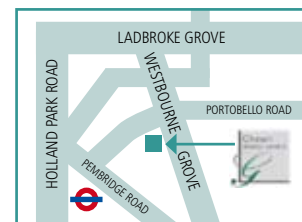


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