

Leader's speech to Developer's Summit 25.09.07

On behalf of the people of Hammersmith & Fulham, I'm delighted to welcome you all to the developers' summit here at the Disney auditorium. You have each been invited for your expertise in housing, development and regeneration. Each of you has something unique to offer this event.

Local authorities are best when they work alongside developers and investors for the good of the community. Today we want to share our vision for the future of our borough.

Make no mistake, this is an ambitious council. A council that wants to transform large pockets of deprivation for the benefit of our residents. The one message we want you to hear loud and clear is that Hammersmith & Fulham is a borough very much **open for business** and with your help we can make our vision become a reality.

So what is the regeneration task in H&F?

This is a borough of huge contrast. We have the fourth highest property prices in the UK, it is a borough of international business and it is a borough that is already changing massively with one of the biggest retail developments in the UK – Westfield.

Yet, we also have some of the most deprived areas in London. We have too many residents who are denied the chance to get on the first rung of economic opportunity. That is something we want to change.

Today we are looking for you to help us maximise our huge land values to transform some of our most run-down areas. These areas include parts of White City, Shepherd's Bush, North Fulham and central Hammersmith.

As you will hear more about shortly, the multi-billion pound Westfield project is already transforming large parts of W12. Yet we want to see that as the catalyst for further growth.

In North Fulham, NDC designation has brought some benefits yet there is much more work to do.

In central Hammersmith, the regeneration task for economic renewal is as great as the opportunity it affords – for you, our borough and for our residents.

This is a council that is absolutely committed to helping people move on in life regardless of their background. We are creating an educational ladder of opportunity through better schools and we want to create a housing ladder of opportunity by building a bridge between social housing into home ownership

For too many years, the debate about housing has been along ideological lines, an argument that becomes less meaningful the more society changes. For many, the solution is simple: build more houses. But this in turn leads to another set of arguments. Brown or green field? Public or private? Rented or owner-occupied?

Here in Hammersmith & Fulham we believe that the era of constructing large, local authority estates has passed. What's needed are more balanced communities, with a healthy mixture of public and private rented housing, with subsidised homes for sale and others available on the open market.

Hammersmith & Fulham have already demonstrated a clear commitment to increasing home ownership for residents. Our right to buy and tenant incentive schemes are now joined by a Homebuy scheme, under which tenants with savings can purchase shares in the property in which they live.

Things are changing in Hammersmith & Fulham. Tomorrow sees the official launch of our "Borough of Opportunity" campaign. One important aspect of this is the Local Development Framework (LDF), which will provide the spatial strategy for the borough – identifying regeneration opportunities and providing direction for town centre growth.

The local development framework encourages low cost home ownership and

shared ownership. One major change is to the planning framework. Previous restrictive policies will be dropped in favour of a more flexible approach. We will streamline and fast track strategic applications; civic renewal agendas and local action plans will drive s106 negotiations.

This streamlining of the planning process will present the opportunity for applicants to present applications to the leadership and council members themselves rather than officers. We will endeavour to remove or reduce uncertainty around planning applications wherever possible.

Neither the public nor private sector can resolve all the problems associated with housing alone. The way forward is to combine the best that public and private have to offer. To solve old problems in new, innovative ways: to look at projects such as “hidden homes”, and to use regeneration to help more people succeed.

Today we will discuss some solutions to the housing process, and see how we can all use our expertise to make Hammersmith and Fulham the borough of opportunity for residents and businesses.

We are eager to start that conversation. **We are open for business.**