

23 April 2012

## **Statement by the Leader of the Council to Hammersmith & Fulham Cabinet Meeting on 23 April 2012**

Our part of west London is a vital engine of the London economy and the London economy drives the UK economy. Growth is the engine of economic opportunity and this country needs economic growth.

The Earl's Court land will be redeveloped. Even better would be a comprehensive redevelopment which incorporates the current TfL land which could then be used for new homes and businesses.

We have long said that we are interested in seeing if our residents could also benefit from this strategic redevelopment opportunity.

And by our residents we mean both our current residents but also those residents of the future, including the current children of the borough, including those on these estates, who will want homes and jobs in the future.

We are trying to build a Borough of Opportunity where aspirations are high and those who work hard and better themselves can find the jobs and homes that they want.

Today we have put into the public domain our current provisional analysis of the consultation to date, including the proper statutory consultation with our tenants. We have been very open about the terms of the possible land deal with CapCo.

We have not yet had the chance to complete our consideration of all of the equalities implications but we intend to do so as soon as possible.

We have consulted in various ways and over long periods of time. We have worked hard to secure a very good deal for those who might move.

It is clear that many - particularly those not so directly affected - can see many advantages for the wider area of comprehensive redevelopment.

It is right that we pay special attention to our statutory tenants. We have decided that it is not the right thing to try to reduce the complex issues that these proposals raise, to a simple ballot. But I'm satisfied that officers have worked hard to consult fully and fairly.

Whilst it is right that we note the strong support for comprehensive redevelopment by those in the wider area, we also need to recognise the outcome of the statutory consultation with our tenants.

As I read the report, there are 584 statutory tenants who could have expressed a view. Of these 57% did so.

Some 331 individuals took this opportunity. Officers have been able to discern a clear preference in 317 of these.

With or without assistance from others - some perhaps with their own motives- some 102 expressed support and 215 expressed opposition.

But I think it is fair to compare these numbers against the total of those who could have taken the opportunity to object. It is my experience that people are more motivated to make clear objections rather than express support or indifference.

So against the total of 584 possible replies I suggest that we see clear support from 102 or 17% and clear opposition from 215 or 37%, meaning that we do not yet know the real views of nearly half the statutory tenants (46%).

In trying to understand our tenants' views let us place on record our understanding of the strain and uncertainty we understand this issue must raise for some. Others see only opportunity whereas some have fears and worries. Some of these fears are based on tangible concerns but others are based on misunderstanding or sadly, misinformation.

Even though the statutory consultation has now finished, we will continue to listen to the views of our statutory tenants, leaseholders and residents in the wider area.

Tonight we are not making a final decision but we still have an important decision to make :

Do we pull back at this point - saying we now abandon any thought of these new homes and more jobs for our borough and our tenants?

Or do we go on – working hard to address the concerns of our tenants and those other residents in the immediate area and of course, those further afield to realise the advantages of a comprehensive redevelopment?

My view is that we should note the current state of play on the discussions on the CLSA; note that we have yet to consider the equalities impact implications note the legal and financial advice and then instruct officers to carry on to conclude a report with final recommendations for consideration by the council.

If we do decide to proceed when we are ready to make our final decision, we should offer individual sessions for every household to discuss their concerns and aspirations, and we should make sure the terms of the draft CLSA are widely known and open to scrutiny.

I recommend that the current substantive terms of the CLSA are those which, subject to no other new issues being raised, Cabinet could recommend to the Council meeting that would eventually need to debate any land transfer proposal.

When the valuation issues referred to in the report are checked and re-checked; when all other due diligence is complete, we can see a further report and take a view then on the overall merits of the comprehensive redevelopment and transfer of this land.

I have said from day one of these discussions that the Council should only take decisions that we believe are in the best interests of our statutory tenants, our leaseholders, the wider area and the borough as a whole. That commitment remains secure.

I therefore support the recommendations in the report, and I further propose:

4. That Cabinet should instruct officers to continue negotiations with CapCo; continue to ensure the Cabinet can take a future decision on the best possible advice and that, if we decide to proceed with the CLSA, we should do so on the understanding that we will offer further opportunities to affected tenants and other residents to better understand the possible ways in which the comprehensive redevelopment option might work out for them.
5. That Cabinet notes the current terms in the draft CLSA as suitable for recommendation to Council, subject to no new issues being raised, no changes in the major terms and no adverse advice from our advisers, or other compelling problems arising.
6. That Cabinet receives a further report at a future date that brings together current advice by advisers at that time; the completed analysis on the statutory consultation undertaken, and all other relevant matters for future decision.



**Councillor Stephen Greenhalgh**  
Leader of the Council.

