

11 January 2018

Dear Residents

I am writing to you to ask that you take part in a consultation currently being carried out by the Mayor of London. This consultation is regarding the London Plan. A plan, if implemented as currently proposed, will have an enormous impact on our borough, including every single one of our village communities, over the next 10 years and beyond. It proposes a near 10% increase in housing across the borough, with at least that much population increase. That is equivalent to almost 10 new Mortlake Brewery sites, in 10 years. It is enormous.

Yet, the Mayor of London is planning that in Richmond, the vast majority of this growth will come from small site development and residential street intensification. That means if you live in Hampton, Hampton Wick, Hampton Hill, Teddington, Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, Whitton and Heathfield, St Margarets and East Twickenham, Ham and Petersham, Richmond and Richmond Hill, Kew, East Sheen, Mortlake, or Barnes, you will be hugely impacted by it. It is not just going to happen somewhere else.

Therefore every resident and local group needs to be aware of the plan and have their say.

Across London, the wider South East, and across the country, we have a duty to our residents, especially our young people, to ensure there is adequate and appropriate affordable housing available for all. Locally, we have a role in that, and must positively play our part and do through then plans we have developed and how we have used our assets. In fact, if we approach it correctly, we can ensure the development and investment enhances our villages and neighbourhoods. We are already doing this with our plans to redevelop Ham Close.

So in doing so, we must remember what makes London such a unique and attractive city, and Richmond Borough such a great place to live. That means not only preserving the physical character, including our great parks and green spaces, but strong local communities and the distinct characters of our villages.

So we must have a plan for intelligent growth, with connected thinking on transport, schools, health, business, and community spaces.

But I am afraid that ultimately, despite its 500-plus pages, when it comes to Richmond, the Mayor's plan for London in practice simply boils down to a chase for housing numbers which we will not be able to control. And those numbers are simply unrealistic without doing long term damage to our borough.

For example, he says he will protect green spaces. Where then will the 4 or 5 additional schools we will need go? We are already fighting over Metropolitan Open Land for an existing new school, and another is being put on top of a supermarket. The answers to London's housing crisis go well beyond sustainable housing growth in London. Would it not be better for us all to work together on a wider South East England strategy. One that takes into account what is happening in the rest of the country – like the Northern Powerhouse?

Much more connected thinking is required, and this one size fits all plan for London alone simply does not work for Richmond or I believe for many boroughs. In fact it has the potential to do long-term harm that cannot be reversed.

Richmond Council want to be part of that thinking, but the Mayor must work with us and allow us to shape the plan so that it works for Richmond, South-West London, and our neighbouring regions.

I therefore urge you to go online before the 2 March and have your say. We must work together to stop this.

Have your say before 5pm on Friday 2 March 2018 by visiting:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan/new-london-plan>

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Hodgins', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cllr Paul Hodgins

Leader of Richmond Council