

27th June 2017



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Dear 4 Estates Forum,

Thank you for your letter dated 13th June.

I confirm that One Housing (OH) has requested that the GLA disregard the information we provided to them in relation to a potential future scheme at the Kingsbridge estate and therefore we are “withdrawing the bid”. In the interests of openness and honesty I enclose with this letter a copy of the information which was provided in the bid. I stress that no information related to the Kingsbridge Residents’ Expectations document, the JV response, or any other consultation material was submitted as part of the bid. I also agree that no further funding bids will be made for any of the four Island estates without full disclosure and discussion with residents.

I have written to the residents of the Kingsbridge estate to explain what happened in relation to the GLA bid, to apologise and to give my assurance that no redevelopment of the Kingsbridge or any other estate will happen without full and meaningful consultation.

I take this opportunity to restate One Housing’s ongoing promise that all residents will have the right to return to their estate, whatever development or regeneration takes place. Likewise the options appraisal process should be resident led and that any options to be consulted on will have been developed with the full cooperation of residents. One Housing has been and continues to be committed to the principles of open and honest communication and consultation, with residents at the heart.

I know that actions speak louder than words. To demonstrate our commitment to openness, communication and a resident-led process we have shared the draft brief for a consultation specialist with Mike Tyrrell which we hope addresses your concerns. This brief is intended

for the appointment of an independent consultation specialist to work with One Housing, it's partners, and of course residents and other key stakeholders such as the Council, to develop a consultation strategy, support the options appraisal process, ensure that residents are given the opportunity to feed into the development and selection of the options, and to broaden the consultation to reach residents of all tenures, genders, ages and ethnicities. Chris Hageman and Leila Arefani would like to attend the 4EF meeting on 28th June to discuss the consultation specialist brief with you.

I do believe we have not yet carried out resident consultation which is anywhere near extensive enough and we intend to expand on this. The expansion of the consultation to engage with as many residents as possible from a true cross section of the community should be a key objective for the consultation specialist. I hope that this process of reaching more and more residents, involving them in the formation of the consultation and options appraisal processes, and establishing and supporting representative resident groups in their efforts to engage more people, will mean that further consultation and surveys and the framing of any questions will be formulated involving residents and over time will help to build trust. I am sure the 4EF will provide their input into these processes.

There are a few other points in your letter that I would also like to address.

I hear your comments on the area board however I cannot agree that they are not without value. Area boards are in position across the Group and are made up of independent members and our own customers who receive our services and feedback on our performance. All OH residents are able to apply to be on their area board. I do accept that there are improvements to be made regarding the visibility of the Area Boards and how residents can contact them. We are in the process of setting up a web page with biographies of all the area board members, and providing contact details so that residents can get in touch.

I apologise if I came across as somewhat casual when speaking at the last meeting regarding potential redevelopment and I assure you that I and One Housing are fully aware of the stress, distress, concern and other feelings which arise from projects like this. We understand that we are discussing matters which may cause significant changes to people's lives and rightly people may worry. But I wish to reassure you that we have completed a number of redevelopment and refurbishment projects in recent years, such as at the Kidwells estate in Maidenhead, Frederick Street in Camden, and Bethune Road in Hackney.

In all these cases there was a longstanding community present and we worked long and hard to complete these projects with as little disruption to residents as possible and as sensitively

as possible. We have a specialist in-house team who work closely with every individual household, meeting them regularly to understand their needs and how we can help them through the process.

You state that it is not good enough to say that “things will go wrong”. I do feel that statement has been taken somewhat out of context when at the time I was referring to the fact that we felt that us discussing potential future funding opportunities with our regulatory and funding body was seen by us as a normal part of our business, but have agreed that that was a misjudgement and that we should have discussed the matter with residents and the Council. I was trying to highlight that the reality is that this is a vast and complex project with literally hundreds of people involved, and occasionally someone somewhere may say the wrong thing or make an oversight, but to move the dial back to zero every time and refuse to engage any further is not in our view a constructive way of working together. Of course I accept that we should do our best to minimise such occurrences and I agree that being as open and honest as possible with each other will prevent a lot of the rumour and misinformation, but occasionally such mistakes will inevitably happen and we believe it would be in everyone’s best interest to meet and discuss such matters openly and constructively to establish what has gone wrong and resolve the matter together.

You state that One Housing has a “duty of care” that we “don’t seem to be taking seriously”. I do take issue with this remark. One Housing has housed thousands of people and families over the past 50 years, many of whom are extremely vulnerable or in serious housing need. To imply that One Housing or its staff body do not care, a group who have chosen to work in providing social housing, even over recent years in a politically hostile environment, is simply unfair. We do care and want to do what’s best for all our residents, on the Isle of Dogs and elsewhere.

We look forward to working with you constructively and openly going forward to consider the options for the future of the Island estates.

Yours sincerely,

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

John Gregory
Interim Chief Executive