

Cllr Alan Strickland responds to Catherine West MP's comment piece in Inside Housing (17 July 2017)

Catherine West correctly describes the unprecedented funding challenges facing Councils today, and how this is hindering them from providing the new homes which everyone agrees are needed ([Haringey vehicle has few solid guarantees for tenants](#)). In the Haringey Development Vehicle (HDV), Haringey Council has chosen a bold response to these challenges but any debate needs to be based on facts.

The guarantee of a right to return for tenants and leaseholders – and the terms on which that return will take place – are legally enshrined in the documents establishing the HDV. As for affordable housing, the initial work programme for the HDV agreed earlier in July **clearly sets out how sites proposed for development by the HDV will deliver the council's** policy requirement for 40% affordable homes, in line with our own definition of affordability based on average incomes rather than average rents or sale prices.

We are not proposing to transfer anything close to £2bn worth of council land to the HDV; that figure relates to a (now out-of-date) estimate of the gross value of those sites after they are developed. And with the council retaining 50% control of the HDV, and with Councillors retaining a series of checks and safeguards on the transfer of land, you can **call this proposal many things...but privatisation isn't one of them.**

Catherine asks that the process be paused, pending further consideration and an audit. **This plan has been two and a half years in the making. The council's external auditors** have already confirmed that the process to agree this approach and find our development partner was thorough and completely correct. We need action now to help the three thousand families in Haringey in temporary accommodation, and the thousands more on our waiting list.

Setting up a '100 per cent owned development company' instead of our proposed joint venture was considered by our Cabinet in November 2015, and it was concluded that we **couldn't rely on a company owned by the council to build at the scale, pace and quality** that Haringey needs, and that the borrowing required would mean taking an unacceptable **risk with the council's finances. And a 'sixty-forty' partnership would never have attracted** the private investment and expertise on which the plans fundamentally depend.

Let us be clear also that Haringey Council is pursuing the HDV for one reason and one **reason only: because Haringey's** people need more and better homes and jobs. Where existing residents face a period of uncertainty or disruption because of our plans, we are clear in our commitment not only to rehouse them, but also to involve them in every step of planning the new neighbourhood.

Our plans are big and bold, and not without risk, but we believe this new partnership is the right way to deliver some of the thousands of jobs and homes Haringey desperately needs.

Cllr Alan Strickland, Haringey Council Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration