

The Mayor's London Plan: A Dream for Developers

Sadiq Khan's new London Plan – the framework for local planning decisions throughout London for the next ten years or longer – has not been widely publicised and very few people know about how it affects the lives of Londoners.

The Mayor's new Plan is a dream for developers and continues the policies of Boris Johnson, who boasted that "London is open for business": he has prioritised the wishes of developers and speculators above the needs of ordinary Londoners. His policies on building homes in "opportunity areas" and "strategic areas for regeneration" target poor and densely populated areas for more development when what these areas actually need are funds and resources to build up the local infrastructure, support local amenities and upgrade existing homes.

The Mayor's policies will see more demolition of council housing, more high rise flats that are unaffordable, a lack of housing for large families. This will be even more damaging because of the government's new rules permitting the creation of rabbit-hutch size housing as former offices are converted to residential use without the need for planning permission. His policies encourage the buying of housing for foreign investors who do not live in the homes and they do nothing to combat "investors" buying London property as a method of money laundering.

Most of the objections to the draft London plan given during the many months of the planning Inspectorate's Examination in Public that took place between January and May 2019, have been ignored or overruled, particularly points about the disproportionate negative impact of the London Plan on poor and low-waged people, and those protected under the Equality Act 2010, such as black and ethnic minorities, travellers, women, LGBT, disabled and elderly people and so on. Sadly, the Inspectors' Report published in October 2019 weakens some protections in the Mayor's Plan and only makes a few helpful changes.

The Mayor's plan will lead to a deterioration of air quality, green spaces, play spaces for children and will fail to deliver the infrastructure —such as schools, health centres, local shops and small and medium businesses— that Londoners need. They are not sustainable plans and they downplay issues of pollution, climate change and the quality of life of Londoners.

The Plan, while being a dream for developers, continues the nightmare of social cleansing and gentrification that has had a disproportionate impact on working class and ethnic minority communities for the past 20 years.

The campaigns against the destruction of people's homes, workplaces and communities – like the Love Lane Council Estate and the Peacock Industrial Estate in Tottenham – will have to continue because it is quite clear that the Mayor's London Plan will not protect their rights.

Action: Join the protest outside the Mayor's Question Time in Haringey at 6pm on **Thursday 23 January 2020**, outside the Dominion Centre, Wood Green High Street, (2 minutes from Wood Green underground station). Protest and stop the destruction of our communities – homes for people, not for profit.

Natasha Sivanandan is a community activist in Haringey; she is a former equalities advisor and lawyer.