



Darren Johnson AM

City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA
Switchboard: 020 7983 4000
Minicom: 020 7983 4458
Web: www.london.gov.uk

Our ref: DJ5192

Your ref:

Date: 23rd June 2015

Mick Sweeney, Group Chief Executive
One Housing Group
100 Chalk Farm Road
London NW1 8EH

Dear Mr Sweeney,

I am writing to strongly urge you to withdraw the "notice to quit" on residents living in two properties on Crescent Road in Kingston and Islington Park Street, and to re-engage in a respectful mediation process with the residents.

When I chaired a London Assembly Housing Committee investigation into housing estate regeneration, for which there are many parallels with these two properties, a key theme was the need for effective scheme communications to gain the trust of residents. You need to take residents with you, not fight against them, and consider the wider social impacts of 'decants' and evictions. In this case that trust seems to have completely broken down; one constituent has written to me claiming that your communications have been dishonest and inappropriate.

I read in your statement on your web site that you "need to ensure that homes are allocated to those most in need as is standard practise with housing association properties." You have told the press that the current residents "have no proven entitlement to be living in" the homes. But you would not ordinarily, for example, evict sitting tenants whose incomes had risen considerably in order to make space for those in priority need. I have joined most of the housing association sector in strongly criticising the suggestion that security of tenure should be weakened in this way. Whether the current residents would have qualified when they first moved in and the fact that they don't currently enjoy an assured or secure tenancy are, morally speaking, immaterial. Evicting vulnerable people and strong, supportive communities for a claimed greater good cannot be justified.

This is the heart of the matter. Whatever your future plans for these homes, you should treat them as homes and not assets, respecting the rights of the current residents and the value of their staying in situ as a community.

I should like to urge you to continue with efforts to have mediated discussions with the residents, but not in a way that could make them homeless or break up their community.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darren Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Darren Johnson AM
Green Party Member of the London Assembly