

# Mr Pete Smith comments

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I wish to express my dismay and wholehearted objection to the proposed creation of a massive Opportunity Area across Kingston that would see 9000 more homes and 5000 new jobs. The current council administration in Kingston has negotiated for this to happen with the GLA behind closed doors over the last 3 years, WITH NO PUBLIC CONSULTATION, and rushed it through as part of the Direction of Travel growth strategy with it now coming in to The London Plan.

This massive growth target is against a formal definition of an Opportunity Area as a place that would allow for 2500 new homes and 5000 new jobs. What we are facing is huge, will be high rise and will change completely the character of the Borough. There is also no guarantee that we will get CrossRail 2 in 2033, or indeed at any time. Development is just starting on the high rise blocks on The Old Post Office Site and Eden Walk (1000 homes just in town centre) and a huge, dense, high rise development is being proposed in Canbury Ward by CNM Estates (which has been put temporarily on hold because of resident opposition). There are other similar developments already complete or almost complete (e.g. Sury Basin/Old Gasholder site).

It seems this huge growth is fixated on simply building more dwellings, with absolutely no thought whatsoever as to the end result - having lived in the borough for 21 years I can say for certain that there is not a sufficient amount of tolerance in the available space to allow for the infrastructure to be put in place to support such an enormous amount of new dwellings.

Claiming that any of these proposed new dwellings will be 'affordable' is an absolute joke. There is no incentive on the part of the property developer to build anything other than 'luxury' or similar, which can be marketed abroad to wealthy buyers. None of the existing large developments in Kingston (permitted, started, partially or wholly completed) offer anything like the amount of GENUINELY affordable housing they should be. They simply offer a cash alternative and the problem is kicked into the long grass. I see no reason for any developer to offer anything different under the Draft London Plan - there is not sufficient legal constraint. All authorities that should have powers to control this seem impotent, unwilling, or, most usually, in thrall to the money and power and influence which the property developers dangle over their heads.

The nature of Kingston is defined by its proximity to Royal Parks parkland, and Thames river frontage. These are already facing DIRE over-subscription from the existing local population - contention of usage in e.g. Richmond Park especially at weekends is already at near CRISIS point, with numbers of cyclists and pedestrians and motorists all wanting access at the same time... there is no straightforward easy solution to this.

Stacking ~20000 people (approx 2 or 3 persons per new dwelling) on top of these contented spaces and ramping up demand on creaking infrastructure will do nothing other than bring the borough to a standstill and create a hideous urban jungle with associated social problems.

The Draft London Plan also proposes allowing people to sell off their homes for development if they live within 800 metres of a station as well as some other criteria. Developers can then build properties that are several storeys high in their place. This criteria means that nearly all of Kingston Borough can be redeveloped piecemeal as there are no restrictions on the type of buildings that can be sold and the buildings put in their place do not have to match the existing style or height of the area.

The Draft London Plan reads like an over-ambitious, very panicked, badly thought through response to a perceived crisis. If implemented, it will mark the ruin of the Outer London boroughs.

This country needs to start facing up to the realities of the skewed South East bias. The nation requires NEW TOWNS to be built.

If we do not address this crucial situation at a NATIONAL level, we will create enormous urban problems for future generations.