

ELEPHANT AND CASTLE



Last residents: Leaseholder Mojisola Ojeikere with a government planning inspector on a tour of the Heygate Estate, in Elephant and Castle, in February

Last three residents lose fight to hold on to homes

Government grants council right to buy leases

By Sophie Barnes

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THE LAST three remaining residents of the Heygate Estate in Elephant and Castle have lost their fight to hold on to the leases of their flats.

The decision to grant the compulsory purchase order was taken by Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Eric Pickles last Thursday, which means that the council can legally evict the remaining residents from their flats as it now owns the leases.

Adrian Glasspool has been fighting to stay in his flat. He said: "We have simply exercised our right to say no. This is a privilege that tenants on the estate didn't have, as they were simply subjected to eviction proceedings.

"An entire community has been forcibly displaced for the sake of mere land value speculation," he added.

The council will offer the residents the market value of their property. However, the residents feel this will not be enough to afford a flat in the new estate. Mojisola Ojeikere, one of the residents being forced to move, said: "We are being short-changed and priced out of the area."

She added: "I am being offered just £150,000 for my two-bed flat, when the new build two-bed Heygate flats are currently being marketed overseas for upwards of £455,000."

Councillor Fiona Colley, Cabinet

member for Regeneration, said: "The need to secure vacant possession of the estate to allow for much-awaited development means that compulsory purchase of the remaining homes is the only way to ensure this happens in

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a reasonable timescale. We will continue to have regular communication with the remaining residents."

The residents are planning to refer the valuation of their homes to an independent adjudicator. Depending on how much their homes are valued at they will then consider whether or not they can afford to stay in the area.

The council will now write to the leaseholders and inform them of the decision, offering the market value of their properties as compensation. After two months ownership of the flats will transfer to the council.

Residents will then have 28 days to vacate the properties.



The colour of emotion

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