

## 7 reasons why we should beware of 'estate regeneration'

If your council or housing association is looking to 'regenerate' your estate this often means demolition of homes and selling off all or parts of your estate to make room for building expensive homes for sale or rent. This frequently results in - damage to existing communities, council tenants and leaseholders having to move elsewhere and loss of council homes for future generations.

1. **There are problems with our homes. The council says the only solution is demolition and rebuild. Are there alternatives?** Yes, refurbishment is the best option. It is less expensive, disruptive and distressing for tenants and residents. Homes seldom need to be demolished, unless they are structurally unsound.
2. **Our council says refurbishment is just not possible.** The London Mayor's guidance<sup>1</sup> requires them to consider refurbishment first, but most are not doing this thoroughly. Ask for the evidence that they have assessed the cost of refurbishment v demolition and rebuild, the costs of moving tenants and leaseholders, possible increases in cost of rents and service charges, loss of green, play and community spaces and the impact on CO2 emissions.
3. **The council says we will get new social rented homes. Will our rents, service charges and rights be the same?** No. While the London Mayor's guidance says you should get 'like for like' if a housing association is to become your landlord, rents will be higher and you will have an assured rather than secure tenancy. Even councils charge higher rents for new build homes.
4. **How will this impact on leaseholders?** Leaseholder will find immediately that their property loses value. Evidence shows that many are not be able to afford to buy a new home on the estate nor any for sale in the locality.
5. **Will we get a chance to hear all the arguments, for and against demolition?** In all likelihood no, unless your estate residents demand this. The council will have already made up its mind about what it wants to do and will seek the path of least resistance. They might hold exhibitions of what they plan and ask for residents' views. They may employ an 'independent tenant friend' to provide residents with support. But, remember he who pays the piper calls the tune.
6. **The council says they must build more homes and need the land on our estate to do this.** Councils do have targets to build more homes. But, selling off public land on housing estates to build private homes doesn't help future generations who need council homes. Once the land is sold it is lost for ever. Many councils are overseeing the building of lots of new homes, but few of them, despite their own targets are social rented.
7. **How many council homes have been lost in demolition schemes?** Since 1997, 55,000 homes on 166 council estates in London have been demolished with homes have been and about 131,000 tenants and leaseholders have been displaced.

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<sup>1</sup> Better Homes for Local People We should put in a link to the summary from ESTATE-WATCH website.