



**Kensington & Chelsea
Liberal Democrats**

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Chair: Robin Meltzer, 07771 895514

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HOLLAND PARK SCHOOL SELL-OFF: ROYAL BOROUGH HAS LOST “MORAL AUTHORITY” ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING, SAY LIB DEMS

Following the decision by the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea to sell off the play area in Holland Park School to luxury property developers, the local Liberal Democrats have condemned the failure to provide any affordable housing on the site.

Addressing the Council's Major Planning Development Committee on 26th June just before the decision was made, Robin Meltzer, the Chair of Kensington & Chelsea Liberal Democrats, had warned:

“This application represents a very dangerous precedent. Granting planning permission will surrender any moral authority on these issues. When the council breaks its own rules so flagrantly, what developer with a plan for off-site housing will be fearful of a negative response from an RBKC planning committee?”

“We are not creating mixed communities in this Borough; we are creating ghettoised communities for both rich and poor. Each is ghettoised because when you don't live there, you don't enter them; they exist only for a certain income bracket, and no-one else. This is the antithesis of a cohesive community, and this committee has a unique chance to halt this trend.”

The Lib Dems point out that the affordable housing provision, “way off site” in North Kensington, is in breach not only of the London plan and the Unitary Development Framework which both stress the importance of affordable housing ON-site, but also of the Council's own new Interim Core Strategy.

“Silchester Garages is not just off-site but a long way off site, in an area which already has a high density of social housing,” Meltzer said. “There are problems with sun and daylight entering the new flats, and they will be built right over a railway line with all the accompanying problems that brings in terms of noise pollution. It is simply unacceptable that the only housing being provided for families on low incomes from the sale of their own educational land will be in this location and in these circumstances.”



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The Liberal Democrats say the plan also fails from an educational perspective. Meltzer told the planning committee: “The newly built school will cater for just 100 new pupils at absolute most, therefore completely failing to address the actual pressing need in this Borough which is the provision of a new non-denominational school in the North of the Borough”.

The council’s own North Kensington Action plan consultation document states: “There is considerable dissatisfaction about the lack of choice among parents in the area and a strong demand for a new local secondary school.”

Meltzer continued: “The Council’s priority should be to solve this chronic lack of choice. After this rebuild, there will still only be one non-denominational state school in this Borough.”

[ENDS]

NOTES TO EDITORS:

At the planning meeting, Robin Meltzer quoted the Council’s own Core Strategy document, which reads:

“For affordable housing to contribute to the creation of mixed and balanced communities, it cannot simply be directed to the less affluent areas of the borough where land values are lower. The provision of affordable housing on site is of such strategic importance, no alternatives to this approach are being offered.”

The strategy goes on to say that even in exceptional circumstances, off-site affordable housing must be **“in the vicinity of the original development or in areas which have very low percentage of social housing at present.”**