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Mayor backs fair price for Aylesbury homeowners forced to sell

BORIS: 'DON'T RIP OFF ESTATE'

By JACK GRIFFITH

HOMEOWNERS forced to sell up to make way for the regeneration of their estate have gained a high-profile supporter in their battle to secure a better deal.

London Mayor Boris Johnson has echoed the calls of leaseholders on the Aylesbury Estate in Walworth to have the properties independently valued.

The authority has been accused of short-changing residents who have been served compulsory purchase orders, making offers they say are well below market value.

At Mayor's Question Time at City Hall on Wednesday, London Assembly member Andrew Boff asked the Mayor whether he thought the leaseholders should be "fairly recompensed".

The Mayor agreed that a RICS (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors) surveyor should determine the value and said: "A leaseholder should get the true market value, not just some figure cooked up by the council. If someone is being ripped off, it deserves an investigation."

The sprawling estate in Walworth will be transformed over the next 20 years by Southwark council and Notting Hill Housing Trust.

More than 3,500 homes will be created, with half of those classed as "affordable".

Beverley Robinson has lived on the estate for 27 years and bought her two-bed flat under the Right To Buy scheme a decade ago.

She said that she was offered £187,500 for her property in December, despite having it independently valued in excess of £300,000.

She said: "We don't feel we are getting a good deal and there is no one fighting our corner. What will the Mayor do now to help us?"

"We need to see some action. We want to sit around



40132MA06
UNDERVALUED? The Aylesbury Estate

a table with the council and reach a resolution that everyone is happy with.

"When I bought my property, I thought it was a sound investment but it has turned out to be my worst nightmare."

Last year, two leaseholders challenged the council's compensation offer for their one- and four-bedroom properties on the estate at tribunal.

In December, it was ruled that their flats were worth £13,000 and £19,000 more than the value the authority had given them respectively, but both fell short of the residents' estimate.

Naomi Newstead, prospective Conservative MP for Camberwell and Peckham, said: "The valuations need to be done by a surveyor not employed by the council. It was good that the Mayor supported that principle."

Councillor Mark Williams, Southwark's cabinet member for regeneration and planning, said: "The Mayor referred to our policy, which is to offer resident leaseholders market value plus 10 per cent as a home loss payment."

"Our surveyors are fully qualified and we have now received the fully independent tribunal ruling on the valuation of the properties, and we will fully respect those. Revised offers have now been sent to leaseholders."

Building work on the estate is due to start next year and the development completed by 2032.

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