



**Sian Berry AM**  
**City Hall**  
**The Queen's Walk**  
**LONDON SE1**

Councillor Nickie Aiken  
Leader of the Council  
Westminster City Hall  
64 Victoria Street  
London, SW1E 6QP

5 April 2017  
SB-0083

Dear Councillor Aiken,

### **Westminster policy on ballots for estate residents**

As a London Assembly Member representing all Londoners, and as a member of the GLA Housing Committee, I am very keen to support resident engagement and involvement in local planning decisions.

I was previously encouraged to read that Westminster Council had a clear policy requiring a vote of residents in support of any regeneration plans.<sup>1</sup> However, I have recently been contacted by residents concerned that the Council has now changed this policy.

I am therefore writing to ask if you can clarify whether your council has taken a decision to change the policy on resident ballots and, if so, what the reasons were for this?

Yours sincerely,

**Sian Berry**  
**Green Party Member of the London Assembly**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/housing-regeneration> This policy says:

#### **Voting**

Local people will be asked to vote on a package of proposed development, incorporating proposed new developments, proposed improvements to existing estates, proposed improvements to the area generally, and proposed programmes of economic and social support. The vote will be a simple yes or no to the package and will be available to every registered adult in the area of benefit. The Council will only proceed with the proposed package as long as it receives a simple majority of the votes cast.



City Hall Green — Sian Berry AM

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## City of Westminster

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**CLLR NICKIE AIKEN**  
**Leader of the Council**

Tel: 020 7641 3403  
leader@westminster.gov.uk

Date: 12 January 2018

Dear Sian,

Thank you for your letter and I am sorry for the delay in responding to you on this.

Westminster Council has previously held votes regarding regeneration schemes but our significant experience of this mode of engagement has meant that we have moved away from this very limited form of consultation in order to deliver much more effective methods to ensure local people from all backgrounds are able to contribute and be involved over a sustained period of time.

There are a variety of reasons for moving away from a vote, including the low turn-out these votes attract, the fact that they represent a moment in time only, whereas regeneration schemes are long and complex. Many things in an area can change following any specific vote. They also lead to a tendency, should the vote be successful, to reduce resident consultation following the vote.

However, Westminster Council is committed to always carrying out meaningful and ongoing consultation with all residents through a variety of means throughout the entire process of renewal of an area. The community engagement approach that we adopt is to consult residents throughout the whole regeneration period so that more local people can be involved and identify and communicate their views. They can let us know what it is they value within their communities and work with us to explore ways of enhancing plans, designs and proposals. We have found that this approach engages people and encourages them to take ownership of schemes, in partnership with the Council, across the whole lifespan of the project, rather than at fixed points in time involving a limited number of people.

Yours sincerely,

CLlr Nickie Aiken  
Leader of the Council