

# CrownResidentsAgainstSellOff

## NEWS RELEASE

Tuesday 30 March 2010

Immediate

### **TREASURY COMMITTEE SLAMS CROWN ESTATE AS RESIDENTS' CAMPAIGN VINDICATED – LEGAL ACTION THREATENED**

The influential Treasury Committee published a sharply critical report from its inquiry into the Management of the Crown Estate today. In a detailed discussion of the proposal, the report makes clear that selling off affordable homes is not in the public interest and that the consultation has been badly mishandled. It slated the Crown Estate's "consultation" on the proposed sale of its affordable housing saying that it lacked transparency and real engagement. It urged the Crown Estate Commissioners (CEC) to take more account of the wider public interest in their activities – including providing affordable urban housing.

Stakeholders including residents, local councilors, Members of Parliament and nominating agencies told the Committee that the CEC should retain ownership of these estates as part of its stated commitment to stewardship, communities and sustainable development. They said that due regard to good management in these circumstances should be interpreted as an obligation to protect the scarce supply of social housing, key worker accommodation and to protect community cohesion in the wider public interest.

Solicitors acting for two tenants have today sent the Crown Estate Commissioners a detailed judicial review pre-action letter warning that they will apply for a judicial review if the Commissioners go ahead with the proposed sale.

Solicitor for the tenants, Christian Hansen of Hansen Palomares, said

"We have asked the Commissioners to think again. The serious flaws in the consultation mean that any decision to sell off their social housing would be unlawful."

Treasury Committee Chairman Michael Fallon MP said:

"We urge the CEC to take more account of the wider public interest in their activities, such as providing urban housing."

Frank Dobson MP said,

"I don't see how the Crown Estate can proceed with a sell off now. It certainly can't proceed without a proper consultation which should include a ballot of the tenants and a commitment to abide by its result."

Madeleine Davis, Crown Residents' Association (Victoria Park) said:

"For weeks the Crown Estate has been saying residents' fears are prompted by 'misinformation' and 'misunderstanding' of their proposal. This damning report completely vindicates our campaign. The Treasury Committee are saying that selling off our homes is against the public interest and that the consultation exercise has been completely mishandled - points that we've been arguing all along. The Crown Estate Board is due to meet in 2 weeks time - let's hope they put an end to this ill-conceived plan once and for all."

CROWN RESIDENTS AGAINST SELL OFF

[WWW.OURHOMESARENOTFORSALE.CO.UK](http://WWW.OURHOMESARENOTFORSALE.CO.UK)

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Ben Bowling, Crown Residents' Association (Millbank) said:

"The Treasury Sub-Committee has entirely supported the residents' view that the so-called 'consultation' was fundamentally flawed, lacked transparency and failed to engage properly with the community. The Committee says quite clearly that protecting affordable housing for key workers in London is in the wider public interest and that this is within the remit of the Crown Estate. The Crown Estate Commissioners should abandon their planned sell-off."

Mark Field, MP (Cities of London & Westminster) said:

"Until now the Crown Estate has been a highly valued landlord for residents living on the Millbank Estate in my constituency. Since its foundation, it has provided a treasured home to a large number of London's key workers and it is the estate's fantastic sense of community that many residents believe could be the greatest loss of all should the Crown Estates decide to sell this vibrant and cherished asset. I have been taken aback by the energy and determination of local campaigners - surely a testament to the value residents place on the homes in which they have, in many cases, lived for decades. I am delighted that the Treasury Select Committee has recognised the sheer strength of opposition to these proposals."

## **ENDS**

Solicitor for the tenants, Christian Hansen can provide further information and copies of the judicial review pre-action letter on request. Hansen Palomares, 153 Kennington Road, London SE11 6SF. Tel: 020 7640 4600 Fax: 020 7640 4610

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## **Notes to editors**

The Crown Estate's Consultation closed on 23 March, when 200 people attended a demonstration at Crown Estate HQ, and handed in a Royal petition to Buckingham Palace with signatures from 1221 tenants and residents.

The residents' campaign has widespread and cross party support from all the Members of Parliament concerned. Boris Johnson, Mayor of London, has written stating his opposition to this sale. Camden and Hackney Councils have written to the Crown Estate opposing the sale.

Employer bodies including Barts, Great Ormond St and UCH NHS trusts have written letters to the Crown Estate opposing the sale. National key-worker trade unions including RMT, PCS and NUT have informed Sir Stuart Hampson, Chair of the Crown Commission of their opposition to this sale.

Tenants representatives of the campaign met the Prime Minister at a Downing St reception for 'community heroes' on 11 March. Campaigners have been informed that the Queen herself is aware of the residents' situation and has read their correspondence.

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