

ELEPHANT & CASTLE

Labour 'making North Korea look like a thriving democracy!' - Lib Dems

Council defends decision to reject popular gym name

By Joe Cavanagh

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LABOUR COUNCIL leaders have been blasted for "making North Korea look like a thriving democracy", after naming a new leisure centre against the wishes of a public poll.

Southwark Council opened the online poll last month to let the public suggest names for Elephant & Castle's new shopping centre, opening in spring 2015. Earlier this month, the council announced it would be named 'The Castle'.

But it soon emerged that the top choice was actually 'Circuit', with 'The Castle' in just third place.

Southwark Lib Dem councillor Graham Neale said: "The council's Labour bosses ran a poll to find a name for the new leisure centre, then completely ignored it and made it up themselves. Sometimes the decision-making at Southwark Council makes



KOREA POLITICIAN: Lib Dems accused council of ignoring democratic vote

North Korea look like a thriving democracy!"

Labour defended the choice by pointing out that the poll was just for suggestions, and the first choice had been discounted as the majority of those votes originated from the same IP address.

They also hit back at Councillor Neale

by claiming his remarks amounted to 'idiocy'.

Labour councillor Fiona Colley said: "To call Cllr Neale's comments hyperbole would be to understate the idiocy of his comparison. I do wonder what the Korean community of Southwark will make of the Lib Dems' flippant sentiments."

ELEPHANT & CASTLE

'Don't sell our land for less than it's worth!'



Council sells off land at low prices and developers pocket the profits, says campaigners

By Amelia Burr

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THE COUNCIL is selling off valuable plots of land in Elephant & Castle for a fraction of their worth, according to community campaigners.

As a hearing to get the council and developers, Lend Lease, to release documents detailing the sale of the 23 acre Heygate site for £50million has been set for February, local campaigners are accusing the council of having a fire sale with land in Elephant & Castle.

A network of local residents and traders in Elephant & Castle called 35percent, and the Elephant Amenity Network, are asking why the council seemingly sold land for between £2.17 - 4.64million per acre when other developers have paid up to £26million per acre for other plots in the area.

Land registry documents show that the new owners of the shopping centre, Delancey, paid £40million for what they are calling 'Tribeca Square', to property developer, Eadon Ltd.

The 1.5 acre site is located between the shopping centre and the Heygate and was sold off by the council for £18million in 2007, meaning Eadon Ltd made a whopping £22million profit.

The London Park Hotel 1.2 acre

site nearby in Brook Drive was also sold by the Greater London Authority for nearly £18million in 2004.

The council flogged the Heygate for a mere £2.17million per acre in comparison and the site of the former leisure centre, within the same 'regeneration zone', for just over £4.5 million per acre.

Jerry Flynn from the Elephant Amenity Network said: "Southwark needs to explain why the price of this land is so low, particularly since affordable housing was sacrificed to get the new leisure centre and home owners from the Heygate have had to leave the Elephant because the new properties are just too expensive."

"We seem to be losing out in both ends of the deal."

The council says the sale of the land is just the start, with more money coming later from 'profit sharing arrangements', which may or may not be available to the public, with £20million hoped to be recouped eventually for the leisure centre site.

Councillor Fiona Colley, cabinet member for regeneration, said: "The council absolutely refutes any allegations of underselling land at Elephant and Castle.

"Every site is different and it is disingenuous to compare one sale against another, particularly at different times of the property cycle."

The less than ten per cent affordable housing allocation on the new Heygate was a "good deal" according to Cllr Colley, confirmed by an independent 'viability process', because developers Lend Lease would have to spend a significant amount on developing the site.

New plan points to Old Kent Road for Bakerloo extension

By Amelia Burr

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THE BAKERLOO line looks likely to go down the Old Kent Road, if a new plan by the Mayor is anything to go by.

The Old Kent Road and Elephant & Castle were both designated as "Opportunity Areas" in the Mayor's revised London Plan last week, which is like a development blueprint for the city.

'Opportunity Areas' are locations earmarked for significant housing developments to accommodate a population which is growing "much faster than anticipated," now expanding by 87,000 people every year instead of 51,000 previously.

The fabled £2billion tube extension was marked as 'unfunded' and scheduled for "after 2022" in the plan, which said the line could increase the potential for the Old Kent Road area to deliver 2,500 new homes and 1,000 new jobs.

The News reported in June that the

Mayor confirmed plans to extend the Bakerloo line beyond Elephant & Castle in his 2020 Vision for London.



Council leader, Peter John, who said that residents had campaigned for two decades for a tube stop in Camberwell, told the News yesterday: "We are absolutely behind Peckham and Camberwell as a preferred route."

Cllr John said when he got the Mayor to agree to the extension last year, it was through Camberwell and Peckham.

"At the end of that conversation he said 'that's a deal'," said Cllr John.

The council committed 50,000 into a feasibility study into the extension but TfL were also looking into the £2billion extension to take an alternative route along the New Kent Road, Bricklayer's Arms and Old Kent Road towards Lewisham.

TfL said it was still reviewing several options for the line extension and the benefits this could bring to different areas.

A spokesperson said: "The Mayor believes southeast London has been excluded from the benefits of the Tube for too long and we are in the early stages of carrying out work to investigate the possibility of extending the Bakerloo line and how this could be funded."

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Other highlights of new London Plan

- More homes in Southwark in new London Plan
- 1,000 more homes in Elephant & Castle
- 2,500 more homes in the Old Kent Road
- 600 more homes at Waterloo