

Housing in West Ealing Centre

West Ealing centre has had its fair share of new housing built in recent years. Some 800 new homes (virtually all of them flats) have been built over the last eight years. Very little of this has been Social Housing for Rent. Ealing's Local Plan Core Strategy calls for 2,580 new homes to be built over the next 15 years in the Ealing Metropolitan Town Centre (EMTC). The western half of the EMTC is contained within the proposed West Ealing Centre Neighbourhood Area (WECNA). A realistic apportionment of this target is perhaps half of it ie 1,290 new homes. 382 new (additional) homes are planned to be built at Green Man Lane, Drayton Green, Manor Building and Dean Gardens/Sherwood Close. However none of these locations are strictly within the EMTC.

So where are these 1,290 new homes to be built? Ealing Council proposes that these new homes be built at eight Development Sites within the western half of the EMTC. Apart from the huge 3.4 acre development site centred around Sainsburys, West Ealing Library and O'Grady Court there is no explicit commitment to housing at all. For the other seven sites the phrase 'mixed use development appropriate to the town centre' is used. No target numbers of new homes are specified at all in the current development proposals for the WECNA.

How many of these new homes need to be Social Housing for Rent? It's important to realise that Ealing's Housing Commission, which deliberated during 2011, announced in April 2012 that its 'foremost recommendation is that Ealing maintains its commitment to socially rented homes'. The report also names the Council's number one theme as '...meeting need and supporting the most vulnerable'. Sadly this 'commitment' represented the creation of just 48 new Social Homes for rent throughout the whole of Ealing during 2011. Ealing's London Plan target in 2011 for Ealing was the creation of 320 new Social Homes for Rent. The largest housing redevelopment in living memory in West Ealing at Green Man Lane will see the number of Social Homes for Rent actually diminish over the next seven years by 53 homes – from 391 to 338. Shelter England estimates there is a deficiency of 3,213 Social Housing for Rent throughout Ealing.

Overall The London Plan for the whole of London calls for 25% of all new homes built to be Social Homes for Rent. For WECNA that amounts to 325 new Social Homes for Rent to be built (in the western half of the EMTC) over the next 15 years.

Ealing's Local Plan Core Strategy 1.1 states '...without the necessary infrastructure needed to support development, ...the levels of growth the plan seeks to achieve by 2026 will not be sustainable'. Proposed new homes in the central West Ealing area add up to 1,672 (382 + 1,290). Using the occupancy rates projected for the new mixed tenure Green Man Lane Estate (under construction) – 2,000 residents occupying 706 homes – the additional residential population in the central area of West Ealing will be 4,737 by 2026.

Where will the 'necessary infrastructure' be located to support these new residents?

Eric Leach, 14 August 2012