Help First Time Buyers Call

The local MP has called on the council to do more to help young families and key workers get on the property ladder.

■ *Young families are being priced out*

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John has outlined how the council could use its planning and housing powers to introduce affordable shared equity and ownership schemes to stop local first time buyers being priced out of Weston's housing market.

Over the past few months, John has been consulting widely with local and national housing providers, as part of his investigation into the problem. He said:

"Nowadays housing estates over a certain size include some 'affordable housing'. But until now it's been nearly all cheap rentals rather than affordable owner-occupation. We need to rebalance our community and John Penrose believes that fewer cheap rental homes and more shared ownership schemes would help local people and help to regenerate the town.

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"Nowadays housing estates over a certain size include some 'affordable housing'. But until now it's been nearly all cheap rentals rather than affordable owner-occupation. We need to rebalance our community and introduce more opportunities for home ownership. If you own your own home you've got a powerful stake in your community's future.

"Given the problems the police have been reporting from some of Weston's dodgier rented houses of multiple occupation (HMOs), many of them full of drug addicts sent here from other parts of the country, it would clearly be good for our town.

"Affordable shared ownership and shared equity schemes give local people a better chance to take that vital first step onto the housing ladder.

"House prices have shot up so far that it's almost impossible for many young people to buy their own place. Many of them are trapped in a vicious circle - paying as much in rent as they would for a mortgage, all because they can't raise a deposit on a house.

"My research shows that there is so much more that the council could be doing. There are practical examples across the country where we can learn some valuable lessons.

"There are areas within Weston which are mostly social rented housing. The experts agree that there are tremendous benefits in developing a broader and more sustainable mix of housing through "Rent to buy" style schemes.

"This is a hand up rather than hand out approach. It would give people a much greater stake in their homes, develop more mixed communities, and allow additional investment in the area's affordable housing.

High Speed Trains Stopping at Worle Station

At a recent meeting with MP John Penrose, First Great Western confirmed that they intend to introduce 'partial door opening' at Worle and Weston Milton station. This will allow the next generation of refurbished high speed trains to stop for passengers at both stations for the first time. The changes are likely to be included in the December timetables.

By May there will be two extra Weston Milton calls in the evening peak. First also plan to run the 1700 rather than the 1730 train from Paddington through to Weston, which they believe will "enhance the evening peak on the Weston corridor".

At the moment, commuters at Worle station put up with a very limited service while High Speed Trains sweep past with plenty of empty seats. Partial door opening is already in place at Nailsea and Yatton.

John said: "There are already 20,000+ local people working outside Weston-super-Mare every day. The rail service must give all travellers, particularly Weston's many daily commuters, a viable alternative to the car.

■ *If it's safe then the trains should stop*

Weston Beach Dog Ban
What do you think?

The council has introduced a ban on dogs on Weston Beach between the Grand Pier and Royal Sands. The council say the ban will encourage owners to keep the area clean.

Dog walkers believe they are being unfairly penalised. They want the council to concentrate on the minority of irresponsible dog owners who don't clean up after their pets.

Do you support the council's ban? Please use the space alongside to tell John your views.

■ *Man's best friend or a legitimate health hazard?*

Weston Beach Dog Ban

Please use the space below to tell John your views.

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ **Tel** _____

Email _____

Please return to
John Penrose MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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