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Rio Ferdinand criticises 'unaffordable' regeneration schemes

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Former England football captain Rio Ferdinand has criticised the affordability of some London regeneration schemes as he revealed further details of his own affordable housebuilding plans.

Mr Ferdinand has teamed up with former Fulham striker Bobby Zamora and West Ham captain Mark Noble **to launch a new charity** which will build social housing schemes using long-term private investment. Mr Ferdinand and Mr Zamora spoke to journalists about progress with the Legacy Foundation's plans at last week's MIPIM UK conference in **London**.

The foundation is currently **planning** to build a 1,000-home development in Houghton Regis, Central Bedfordshire. Mr Zamora confirmed that they have also been in talks with Barking and Dagenham and Newham councils in London about further developments.

But Mr Ferdinand was highly critical of the impact regeneration has had on existing communities in some parts of London in recent years. He said he has spoken to people, including family members, who had been forced to move to different areas because regeneration work had resulted in schemes that were "not affordable".

"The word affordable, I think, is bandied about far too often and isn't actually true in a lot of cases," he said.

For more on regeneration in London



The regeneration game

In the febrile world of London housing politics, regeneration has become a dirty word. Labour mayor Sadiq Khan is now set to publish a 'best practice guide' on the topic. *Pete Apps* finds out more

Mr Ferdinand selected one scheme in particular for criticism: the **large-scale regeneration of the Aylesbury Estate in Southwark**.

"Kids from my foundation can't afford to live there," Mr Ferdinand stated. "They grew up on that estate but they can't live there. It's not affordable."

It's not the first time the high-profile scheme has attracted criticism. In September the secretary of state for communities and local government, Sajid Javid, rejected Southwark Council's application for a compulsory purchase order to demolish part of the 2,704-home estate. He stated that many of the remaining leaseholders on the estate would be unable to afford the options of either a shared ownership or shared equity property on the estate, and that the plans would "probably force

many of those concerned to move from this area". Earlier this month the council said it would challenge the government's decision in the High Court.

UPDATE: at 25.10.16 9.31am

Mark Williams, cabinet member for regeneration and new homes at Southwark Council, said: "As part of the Aylesbury Estate regeneration half of the new homes will be affordable, with 75% of those at social rent and the remainder as shared ownership of shared equity to help leaseholders stay in the area. In addition to the new homes of all kinds the Aylesbury regeneration will create 1,400 local jobs, and we are building a new health centre, a new library, new parks, and extra care housing for older residents."