

# news



**John and Pat Dunn**  
Photo: Ciara Leeming

Pat Dunn, whose house on Hertford Road is included on the Bedford Queens CPO, added: "Our home wasn't originally down for clearance but then, in about 2004, they changed their minds. When I asked someone from the council why the sudden increase in demolition, he said: 'Because the developers want the land.' I and the rest of the residents don't feel that's a good enough reason to lose our homes."

## Last resort

Alan Lunt, neighbourhoods and investment programmes director at Sefton Council, said: "The HMR programme has already provided attractive new homes in Bedford Queens and the Klondyke. The majority of properties in the areas have already been acquired by agreement, and the compulsory purchase order is a last resort to acquire the few remaining properties."

"This will allow the regeneration work to continue, providing high quality homes."

CIARA LEEMING

## Bulldozers for Bootle?

### Residents living in the shadow of the bulldozer are bracing themselves for a public inquiry in which the odds are stacked against them.

The handful of people still fighting for their condemned properties in two neighbouring areas of Bootle, Merseyside, will plead their case before a government inspector in a hearing this week. The odds do not look good, with no money and no legal representation. Few communities have persuaded a secretary of state to overrule plans to clear in the name of regeneration.

### Compulsory purchase

Under Bootle's Housing Market Renewal scheme, compulsory purchase orders were served on terraced properties in the Bedford Queens and Klondyke areas that the council has so far been unable to acquire for demolition. The hearings at Bootle Town Hall have been triggered following objections.

Hundreds of empty buildings have already been cleared to make way for redevelopment by

Bellway and Adactus housing association in the Klondyke, and Keepmoat and Plus Dane housing association in Bedford Queens. This is the second public inquiry for the Queens Road project, where residents in the earlier phase also objected – and lost.

The authorities in Merseyside insist this plan remains on track despite last month's revelation that the Housing Market Renewal Initiative is to be axed. Regeneration cash will instead be given to councils and partnerships on a competitive basis by the new Regional Growth Fund.

In Bootle, the Homes and Communities Agency has provided £2.6 million to allow the development of 69 new homes in Bedford Queens. Eighty new houses have already been built there, on a site where more than 400 mainly large Victorian family houses have been cleared. Almost 200 smaller terraces in the first phase of Klondyke have also been demolished, with another phase to follow later.

Community volunteer Juliet Edgar, who is helping residents prepare for the hearings, is highly critical of the CPO process, which she feels is stacked against ordinary people. She said: "Even while we are preparing for these hearings, the demolitions are continuing, intimidating the remaining residents who feel vulnerable and isolated as it is."

### Demolitions continue

"Then there is the mammoth task of preparing for the inquiries. The three of us supporting the objectors have been working with no resources. We have had problems locating some of the council's evidence in the library, and so have not submitted any written evidence. But the council will have teams of lawyers and advisers."

"This system of CPOs is unfair for objectors, who don't stand much of a chance and they know it. That all of this is happening despite the end of HMR is frankly outrageous. The demolitions continue and more public funding is wasted."

## Women's centre

**Thousands of women have benefited from its services. Now, as the UK's largest women's centre celebrates its 25th anniversary, the WomenCentre Halifax and Kirklees is looking to adapt to the economic climate by playing a greater role in women's health.**

The West Yorkshire centre employs 50 women and has 70 regular volunteers. Over 6,000 women a year receive advice and support on domestic violence, benefits, housing, criminal justice, immigration and mental health.

Earlier this year the then justice minister Maria Eagle praised the centre's Evolve project, which helps female