

LETTERS AND COMMENT

■ GRAVEL EXTRACTION

Why I won't be chasing votes

As one of our most doughty campaigners, Ron Jeffries certainly knows how to tighten the thumb screws (Letters, last week), but I've seen too many politicians, our current MP included, come unstuck for chasing votes before an election and doing something else afterwards.

On gravel extraction, I understand the fears and concerns of residents living near the proposed site for new works. I've said I'll make a decision based on the planning application, due in the New Year, which is the right thing to do.

I know the Redbridge Conservatives have said "enough is enough", but they've yet to explain why they named Aldborough Hatch as the council's "preferred option" in 2012.

On possible development options, we need to balance the need for new homes for

the borough's children and grandchildren with making sure that we don't lose the beauty and open spaces that make Redbridge a special place to live.

It's really important that residents respond to the consultation. I don't support the option proposing to build on green belt and the devil will be in the detail on the remaining options. The debate isn't just about where we build, but also the type of homes and how we protect some of the important sports and leisure facilities at sites like Oakfield.

These aren't straightforward issues and while I know could gain some easy applause by saying "enough is enough" or "save our suburbs", I believe I would be doing residents – and my own integrity – a disservice. These debates are more important than votes.

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