

ECDC prepares to get Earls Court regen scheme under way

By Ciaran Nerval | 30 Mar 2026

At the end of last year, Earls Court Development Company (ECDC) secured two major planning wins for its £10bn urban regeneration masterplan.



Spread over two local authority areas, the 44-acre development in west London gained a grant consent from Kensington and Chelsea council in December, after winning unanimous support from Hammersmith and Fulham council the month before.

The real work on the scheme, set to include 4,000 homes, three cultural venues and retail, leisure spaces, is due to start this year, with phase one including 1,300 homes.

ECDC chief executive Rob Heasman tells *Property Week* how things are progressing.

What was it like getting a development of this scale through the planning system?

There are two local authorities, so we had to do it twice. Our team is mega-experienced. They're people who are used to navigating complexities of big projects – and one of the complexities, of course, is planning. We work very closely with not only the authorities but also the communities around us.

The challenge comes in the complexity, and an extra challenge came because the site previously had a masterplan, which was never fully implemented.

When we came in, people were thinking 'how are they different? Are they going to just implement the consent that's there?'

But that wasn't where we saw the future being. There obviously was very close dialogue with the authorities about why this new scheme had to be different. The previous masterplan included two housing estates, which ours doesn't. That land is not part of the equation and has to be different.

What are your delivery ambitions for 2026?

We've still got to convert planning resolutions into approvals, so the team are working very closely again with the authorities to get that Section 106 [agreement] documented. That in itself will probably take us into the second half of this year.

Then, of course, there's a lot of infrastructure on site. So, we're working through that whole process, moving forward with infrastructure design so the enabling works can start. This year is more about getting our ducks in a row so we can get on site as quickly as possible.

What about 2027 and beyond?

We'll start on site, obviously, and get the first phase under way – that's the mission. My team absolutely hate it when I describe the current situation right now as the start line, because everyone has worked so hard and been so passionate about the project to get it to where it is, but the reality is that we are at the start line.



Earls Court: work on the site is set to start this year

We all know it's a marathon and 20 years sounds like a long time; but actually, to use Battersea [Power Station's redevelopment] example, that is probably only halfway through and attracts well over 20 million people a year. You can create a place without getting all the way through it. So, the mission for the next couple of years is basically to get on the site and get going.

What do you hope to achieve with the cultural venues?

Our masterplan is quite strong in terms of what it proposes, but we tried not to be too descriptive in terms of whether it's going to be for music or for a theatre. We've been trialling uses over the past four years with various operators. We've got things like The Great [theatre] experience. It's an amazing alternative to going to the West End.

How will ECDC ensure that the scheme is as sustainable as possible, both during and post-construction?

Over the past five years, we've seen attitudes towards climate resilience change. It is important for us that we take a long-term project that's going to be built over 20 years, it needs to last more than 100 years.

There are various things we do. We use an energy system that is zero fossil fuel, which balances heating and cooling demand throughout the day and the evening. The scheme is also car-light, with virtually no car parking.

It's a quantum shift from what this project was before we arrived and that's because the mission has changed. The teams look at water resilience. We've listened hard to a lot of community concerns about flooding, as well as air quality. All these things come under our environmental mission, which is included in our principles of future living.

The next stage is making sure all the actors that take part in this site – all the contractors, all the occupiers – are part of that mission. In my experience with these big projects, you set out a vision at the start.

The real key to success is making sure that baton is passed on.