

# Keep Hackney Building

Developing a new programme of Council homes in Hackney:  
Sellman House and Wellday House garages (E9 5AF).

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## Background

Since launching our innovative, not-for-profit Council house building approach in 2011, the Council has led the way in delivering a new generation of high quality Council housing in Hackney. Despite the huge challenges caused by Brexit, the coronavirus pandemic, and the increased cost of building, the Council started or completed more than 1,000 new homes between May 2018 and May 2022.

Through a pioneering cross-subsidy model, more than half of the Council's new homes are for genuinely affordable Council social rent, shared ownership, or Hackney Living Rent - despite the absence of government funding. The Council is now developing plans for more new homes beyond May 2022 and wants to ensure that Hackney residents are part of this process.

This report summarises the engagement methods and feedback received during the second stage of the **Keep Hackney Building** consultation. This stage of consultation was a targeted site-specific discussion with neighbours and local residents around 15 individual locations that have been identified for potential development across the borough. This consultation took the form of 12 site-specific events and an online survey that ran for just over eight weeks from Thursday 7 July 2022 to Wednesday 7 September 2022.

The first stage of consultation was a borough-wide survey seeking feedback on the types of locations the Council should prioritise for new homes, the things the Council should consider when building, and suggestions for individual sites the Council owns that could accommodate new homes. This ran on the Council's consultation platform Commonplace from Tuesday 1 March 2022 to Tuesday 26 April 2022.

This stage one survey was engaged with by 199 participants, further details of the feedback received from across the borough during this earlier stage can be found in the full consultation report here. ([bit.ly/3gY7EN2](https://bit.ly/3gY7EN2))

### **Purpose of this report**

This report provides a neutral account of the engagement that took place and the feedback received. The scope of the engagement was not to decide whether or not to proceed with a new development on each location, but to gain a full understanding of the location from a resident's perspective at the earliest possible stage – including the opportunities and challenges that building new homes could create – before any design work or detailed planning takes place.

# Selman House and Wellday House garages

## About the location

- The garage block and car park at Selman House and Wellday House is one of the 15 locations in Hackney that has been identified as an option to accommodate new homes. This is because the land could be better used, providing much-needed new homes and to improve the public spaces around the blocks.
- This location was also identified because it could have the potential to unlock improvements to the wider estate or bring additional investment to benefit residents, such as through new community facilities or improved communal spaces.

## Distribution

- 796 letters were sent to the surrounding area ([see distribution area](#)).

## Engagement

- Engagement took place between Monday 27 June 2022 and Wednesday 7 September 2022.
- An event was held on Thursday 7 July in the car park adjacent to Selman House and Wellday House.
- An online survey was hosted for the duration of the engagement period.
- Contact details were provided in the letter sent to residents for one on one discussions outside of the event.

## Responses

- 20 feedback forms were received, including 18 at the event and a further two online.
- Around 30 local residents attended the event.

## Feedback

### General feedback

- The overall feedback from the engagement suggests there are relatively few concerns about the prospect of building homes on the site, with little concern about the loss of garages and a strong desire for the location to be improved.

### Specific issues raised

- A few attendees shared concerns over the loss of car parking, but this was not shared for the garages. While others expressed their concerns about parking in the car park, as it was prone to thefts and vandalism.
- Several attendees were older residents looking to downsize, but unable to find suitable options.
- Concerns were shared by attendees from Selman House over the fire escape being blocked by belongings. Concerns over dampness and drainage were also shared.

## Survey responses

Three open questions were asked, the aim of which was to give participants an opportunity to tell us their views and ideas, and allow the Council to better understand how residents use and interact with the areas around them. The feedback to each of these questions is summarised below:

*What do you think works well in the area?*

- Two participants stated that **the playgrounds and access to parks** were local assets. **Good neighbours and the local community** were also mentioned by two participants, with specific mentions of a 'Sharon with community lunches' helping to break down isolation and loneliness for local residents.

*What would you like to see change or improve?*

- 14 participants raised housing repair concerns, these included; **leaking/flooding roof** on Wellday House, **fire doors blocked/locked** in Selman House, **out-of-service lifts/poor lift maintenance**, **estate cleaning insufficient**, **fire safety of existing balconies**, **leak concerns relating to existing balconies** and **damp repairs and black mould concerns** in all areas.
- Eight participants stated that it was **difficult to get hold of housing officers**, some stated they had **no idea who the officer for the estate was**, and the need for an **estate survey to capture all repair needs** was frequently suggested. A number of these participants asked for regular housing officer meetings on the estate to be restarted.
- Five participants discussed the **need for better greenspace**, with specific reference to the **need for better maintenance of greenspace** by Selman House, and a request to see **play areas and allotments delivered on the car park space**. Four participants mentioned **anti-social behaviour in the area**, but with no specifics. CCTV was suggested as a solution.
- 11 participants discussed the **needs of current residents for better homes**, the **need to downsize** and a number of these **suggested the existing buildings should be demolished and redeveloped**.

*Where do you think are the best places to build new homes in this area?*

- Six participants suggested some **former play space on Heartlake Road**. Nine participants stated they would **support development in the area of the garages**, with some requesting that existing buildings be included in the redevelopment. Three participants stated they were **against any development** with opposition based on **not wanting to lose light or views**.

## Next steps

- The feedback will now be considered alongside other factors such as affordability, capacity and planning issues, to help inform the Council's decision on whether to proceed in developing detailed plans for new homes at each location. It is intended to take a report to the Council's Cabinet in late 2022, setting out the proposed locations to be included in a new programme of Council homes.
- Should this location be included, the Council will ensure the community is involved throughout the design process via workshops, drop-in events and online engagement.
- Any new project will require planning permission, with local residents given the opportunity to formally comment on a planning application before a decision is made by the Council's planning sub-committee.