

Keep Hackney Building

Developing a new programme of Council homes in Hackney:
Cropley Court garages (N1 7HG).

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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/3qY7EN2)

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.

Cropley Court garages

About the location

- Cropley Court garages are one of a number of locations in Hackney that have been identified as an option to accommodate new homes. This is because the land could be better used, providing much-needed new homes and improving the public spaces in the surrounding estate.
- 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

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

Engagement

- Engagement took place between Monday 11 July 2022 and Wednesday 7 September 2022.
- An event was held on Saturday 23 July in the open space adjacent to the disused neighbourhood office.
- 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

- Five feedback forms were received at the events.
- Around 18 local residents attended the event.

Feedback

General feedback

- The overall feedback from the engagement was that participants were not happy with the running of the TMO and were concerned about bringing in new residents to the estate. Tenure was the most important consideration for a majority of attendees at the event.

Specific issues raised

- Attendees stated that there was an abundance of 1 bed and 2 bed properties on the estate, and there was a **need for larger homes for families**.
- We were told there are several older residents in **under-occupied homes that need to be supported in downsizing**.
- Attendees who were previously involved in the Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) noted that **any development that was not 100% social rent would not be supported locally**.
- A few attendees were **critical of the current TMO in regard to repairs and maintenance of the estate**. Some shared **concerns that any new homes would come under the same management** and cause further issues.
- **Concern over any loss of trees** was also discussed with participants.

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?

- Participants listed the amount of **green space on the estate, but explained that it could be better maintained and utilised**. Some participants **criticised the repair work, cleaning and maintenance of the buildings by the Tenant Management Organisation (TMO)**. The **community spirit was described as a local asset**, despite the relationship with the TMO.

What would you like to see change or improve?

- All participants explained that the **green space could be better used**, with suggestions of a **children's playspace, community growing space and more flowers and greenery**. Two participants noted that **safety and security in the area could be improved** and requested additional CCTV. Two participants raised concerns about **local services** (GP services, dentists, schools) **being oversubscribed**. One participant explained that **a lot of residents of the estate were in overcrowded accommodation**.

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

- Two participants were supportive of the concept, but explained that the TMO needs to improve before new homes are brought to the estate. One participant asked that **local residents in need be prioritised for any new homes**. Two suggestions were

made for the **Shoreditch Neighbourhood Office** and the **garages on Shaftesbury Street** as locations for possible delivery of new homes.

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 through 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.