

Keep Hackney Building

Developing a new programme of Council homes in Hackney:
Morpeth Grove car park and garages (E9 7LE).

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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)

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.

Morpeth Grove car park and garages

About the location

- The garage block and car park on Morpeth Grove is one of a number of 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 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

- 555 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 open space adjacent to the car park and sports cage.
- 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

- 34 feedback forms were received, including 23 at the event and a further 11 online.
- Around 50 local residents attended the event.

Feedback

General feedback

- The overall feedback from the engagement suggests there is a split between support and opposition to the proposed development, with 11 stating support and 9 stating opposition in feedback forms. Overall the protection of the MUGA space was essential if any development was to be brought forward.

Specific issues raised

- The MUGA is well-used and loved by residents. It is used by a variety of age groups.
- Some attendees shared concerns over the loss of parking.
- Some attendees said that garages are used to charge electric scooters.
- Existing greenspace is well-used by residents.

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?

- 20 participants stated that the **MUGA/sports pitch is a well-loved space** by all the community, “The basketball pitch is really good as it is a safe place for kids of all ages to play”. It was also noted that the wider areas of the estate were a **safe space to allow children to play unsupervised**.
- Eight participants discussed **the sense of community** as a good point. Four participants discussed **feeling safe on the estate**, and support for the **security doors was specifically mentioned**.
- **Low traffic levels in the area** and the **ability to cycle around freely** were discussed by eight participants. Parking was also discussed by eight of the participants, with some explaining that **parking in the wider area was limited** and that estate parking is needed.

What would you like to see change or improve?

- Eight participants mentioned that they would like to see additional parking on the estate due to the limited availability in the local area. Eight participants discussed **more greening in the area**, such as **planting trees** and more **communal green space**. Six participants requested more **children's play space**.
- Seven participants raised **concerns over the maintenance and cleaning** of the common areas on the estate, as well as reports of **littering, fly-tipping and dog mess**. **Bin collection** was also discussed by one participant who stated that litter is often left behind on collection day.

- Four participants requested more support for **greener transportation** options including cycle storage and car charging points. A few attendees noted the high volume of traffic around Morpeth Grove and requested traffic calming measures.

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

- Some specific suggestions were made, including; **Hackney Marshes, Homerton Hospital area, the old laundry site, 16 Rutland Road and Hackney Wick**. Three participants described the borough as already too densely populated and development outside of the area/London was the only way to address housing needs.
- 11 participants were **supportive of development on the site**, with a majority of them stating **the community space needed to be protected**, specifically the MUGA. Nine participants were **opposed to development of the space**, with most stating the area was already overcrowded.

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.