

Keep Hackney Building

Developing a new programme of Council homes in Hackney:
Nye Bevan Estate garages (E5 0AQ)

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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.

Nye Bevan Estate garages

About the location

- The garage blocks at Nye Bevan Estate 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 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

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

Engagement

- Engagement took place between Monday 4 July 2022 and Wednesday 7 September 2022.
- An event was held on Thursday 14 July in the open space adjacent to the Nye Bevan tower.
- 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

- 32 feedback forms were received, including 30 at the event and a further two online.
- Around 50 local residents attended the event.

Feedback

General feedback

- The overall opinion was split on possible future development. The loss of parking and the security of garages was a concern raised. Those in support stated they would not like to see a tall building on this site.

Specific issues raised

- Several attendees shared concerns over the loss of car parking if the garages were removed. Issues of damage to cars and car thefts locally, and garages offer additional security.
- Some attendees discussed concerns over the height of any new development 'hemming in' existing buildings.
- A number of attendees hoped that any new development would deliver larger homes to address local overcrowding needs.

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?

- 12 participants were positive about **access to greenspace**, specifically the green space around the estate and Hackney Marshes.
- **Eight participants stressed the importance of the estate's sense of community, activities on offer and diversity.** The **garages were stated as well used** by local residents and an **important asset** by eight participants. **Three participants expressed that the parking was important to them.**
- Participants also spoke positively of the **transport links**, the **height of the existing buildings** and the **overall feeling of safety in the area.**

What would you like to see change or improve?

- Nine participants raised concerns about the overall **security and frequency of anti-social behaviour in the area.** Those who stated this as a concern listed **drug use, vandalism, public urination and car theft** as the most common anti-social behaviour in the area.
- Nine participants discussed specific housing services concerns relating to the existing homes. These complaints included; poor **estate lighting**, with a number of bulbs out, poor **maintenance of shared spaces**, such as entrances and broken lifts.
- One participant stated that the **TMO was poor at responding to repair requests** and another participant noted that the **security of the estate has become worse since the concierge was removed.**

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

- Several suggestions were made that included: **Clapton Park garages, the tenant hall, disinfecting station building on Millfields Road, Hackney Downs and Overbury Street garages.**
- **Opinion was split on the development** of the garages, as five participants supported it and another four were against it. Those against did not want **overcrowding in the area or to lose the garages**, and those in support said they would **support it if not a high-rise building.**

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.