

# Keep Hackney Building

Developing a new programme of Council homes in Hackney:  
Buckland Court garages (N1 6YT).

**October 2022**

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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](https://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.

# Buckland Court garages

## About the location

- The garages at Buckland Court 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

- 465 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 garages.
- 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

- 22 feedback forms were received, including 19 at the event and a further three online.
- Around 35 local residents attended the event.

## Feedback

### **General feedback**

- The overall feedback from the engagement suggests there are a number of housing maintenance-related concerns in the area, with little opposition to development shared by participants, but some anxiety was shared over the potential density and height of any development.

- Nine participants stated their **support for development, but shared concerns over density and loss of privacy**, while four participants stated their **opposition to it**.

### Specific issues raised

- **Vermin was raised as a big issue across the estate**, suggesting that hollow spaces are being used as nests for rats following the installation of district heating works.
- Attendees from Cranston Estate stated they would like **access to the Buckland Court resident garden**.
- Concerns about the **height of any development were shared** by many attendees, as well as the loss of storage space.
- Buckland Court attendees stated **improvements were needed in communal areas**. **Maintenance issues in flats** were raised by residents of Cranston Estate.
- **Anti-social behaviour and security concerns** were also discussed by attendees, these related to a number of recent burglaries.

### 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?*

- Nine participants were positive about the **community feel and neighbourliness of the area**. Seven participants also mentioned the quality of **green space and public space** as an asset of the area.
- Three participants praised **access to public transport** as a good local asset. Three other participants also stated that the **TMO was good**. One participant said that the pram shed was useful, another praised the proximity of **local schools** and one also listed the diversity of the area as a positive.

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

- Seven participants stated that the lack of **green space and the maintenance of the current greenspace is a concern and naming tree pruning, fly-tipping, and lack of planting** as specific issues. Six participants from Cranston Estate complained about the **problem of rats living around the blocks**.

- Seven participants requested more **community facilities such as a community centre, community outdoor spaces, storage space, more playspace and food shops**. The **security of homes and the wider area was raised** by five participants, with requests for CCTV and better lighting.

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

- Participants suggested **De Beauvoir Square, the old Iceland site and disused business space** in the Old Street areas. Four participants suggested **rooftop extensions** to help meet local housing need.
- Nine participants stated their **support for development, but shared concerns over density and loss of privacy**, while four participants stated their **opposition to it**. Opposition was based on the area being **overcrowded and parking issues** when a reason was given.

## 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.