

Keep Hackney Building

Developing a new programme of Council homes in Hackney:
Regents Court garages and car park (E8 4QD).

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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.

Regents Court garages and car park

About the location

- The garages and car park at Regents 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

- 676 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 Saturday 16 July in the open space adjacent to the children's play area.
- 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

- 73 feedback forms were received, including 27 at the event and a further 46 online.
- Around 75 local residents attended the event.

Feedback

General feedback

- The overall feedback from the engagement suggests there was little support for development at Regents Court, with 18 stating their opposition in the feedback. While only six supported the development, those that opposed it outlined concerns about overcrowding, impact on local infrastructure and the need for parking locally as their reasons for opposing.

- During the event a petition was shared and signed by 91 residents, stating opposition to any development. The cover letter for this petition seems to contain a number of misleading points concerning what is being proposed.

Specific issues raised

- Attendees that use the car park **did not want to see parking reduced**, as it is difficult to find on-street parking. **Parking restrictions were requested for Pownall Road** to prevent market users and tourists from parking there.
- Some attendees, from the 6-storey element of the estate, were **concerned about the loss of light**.
- Attendees wanted **assurances of the protection of the green space, play space and sports court**, both during any construction and for the long-term benefit of residents.
- Many attendees **raised concerns over dampness and mould** in existing blocks.
- **Rooftop development on top of the existing 4-storey block was suggested by several attendees** instead of the proposed site.

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?

- 24 participants answered that they appreciated the **open space at the centre of the estate** that includes the **MUGA, children's play and green space as a community asset**, and that it gives the area a focal **point for community activities**.
- Eight participants listed the **sense of community and safety of the estate** as a benefit of the area, with most mentioning that the **children's play space and MUGA are always busy** for both residents on the estate and nearby. The same number of participants discussed the **openness of the area due to the canal** as a great asset.
- Eight participants voiced **opposition to any development** and raised concerns ranging from **impact on the density of the area, loss of parking, loss of light, overcrowding** and the **loss of community space**. Three residents shared support for development, however expressed concerns over the loss of light and views.
- One participant mentioned **good public transport, cycling provision and greening efforts** in the neighbourhood.

What would you like to see change or improve?

- 20 participants raised **concerns over the general maintenance and cleanliness of the estate**. Within this, some specific complaints were raised regarding the **lifts being out of service** regularly, **fly-tipping in communal spaces, windows and doors needing replacing** in the existing blocks, **leaks in flats** that have led to **dampness and mould issues**, as well as poor **heating and ventilation**.
- 10 participants discussed the need for **more parking** and **better enforcement of parking restrictions**, with specific requests made for an **extended CPZ** and **traffic havens needed on Pownall Road** to secure resident parking, particularly on Broadway Market days.
- Two participants noted a **lack of cycle lanes** and requested **more cycle storage**. 10 participants discussed **public realm improvements**, with three participants asking for **more seating in communal spaces**, and two for **more trees and better landscaping**.
- **Five participants raised security concerns** around the estate and the need for **CCTV and lighting improvements**. **Anti-social behaviour** was raised by three participants, with specific concerns over **drug taking and public urination** in communal spaces.
- Three participants stated they were **against any development in the area**, while four participants said they **would support the delivery of new homes if the design was right**.

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

- 18 participants stated their **opposition to development in the area**, giving reasons of **overcrowding, impact on local infrastructure, need for parking, and loss of light**. Four of these participants also **suggested sites in less densely populated areas** should be pursued.
- Six participants were in **support of development**, stating the **need for housing** and the **disrepair of existing garages**. Six participants also **suggested rooftop extensions** as a solution for housing need.
- Other sites that were suggested for new homes included **Marlborough Avenue, sites around Broadway Market, space opposite Haggerston Park on Queensbridge Road, Hillman Street Council Building, Orwell Court street garages and Scribbers Street**.

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.