

Keep Hackney Building

Developing a new programme of Council homes in Hackney:
Orwell Court garages and Welshpool Street car park & depot
(E8 4PP and E8 4PF).

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Report author:

Ben Davies
Senior Consultation Officer

Contact:

Consultation Team
020 8356 3343 or
consultation@hackney.gov.uk

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.

Welshpool Street car park & depot and Orwell Court garages

About the location

- Welshpool Street depot and car park, and Orwell Court garages, are two 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 immediate area.
- 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

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

Engagement

- Engagement took place between Friday 1 July 2022 and Wednesday 7 September 2022.
- An event was held on Tuesday 12 July in the open space adjacent to the Orwell Court 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

- 56 feedback forms were received, including 40 at the event and a further 16 online.
- Around 100 local residents attended the event.

Feedback

General feedback

- The overall feedback from the engagement suggests there was more support for the development of the Orwell Court location than the Welshpool Street car park. During the event, a petition was shared and signed by 35 Welshpool House residents, stating opposition to any development.

Specific issues raised

- Orwell Court garages are used by local residents for parking, as parking in the area is difficult. Some non-estate residents also rent garages for storage.
- Attendees from Welshpool House were against any loss of car parking.
- A certain amount of animosity from residents towards the Broadway Market, with road closures, anti-social behaviour, late-night noise and the impact of deliveries to the market area being raised.
- Attendees felt that the Council prioritised the market over local residents.
- Broadway Market brings a lot of anti-social behaviour to the area, with drunks and late-night noise. This was put down to licensing changes in the area.

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?

- 14 participants were positive about **Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs)**, **pedestrian access** and **cycle infrastructure**. Some participants commented that residential areas need to be separated and protected from the Broadway Market area, particularly the night-time impact of local pubs and bars, including late noise, taxi drop-offs and problems with drinkers urinating near homes.
- **12 participants listed greenspace and playspace** as positive local assets, the **football pitch, skate parks** and **children's play spaces at London Fields** were mentioned specifically.
- Broadway Market was discussed by nine participants, with five stating it had a **positive impact** and four stating it was **taking away space from local residents**. Many participants celebrated the market's diversity, however, requests were made for **residential spaces to be given more protection from the noise**, and for measures to minimise the parking impacts of visitors and tourists to the area, particularly on market days and at night.

What would you like to see change or improve?

- 17 participants discussed **local infrastructure and community needs**, many of these suggested that the area's **schools and medical services were overstretched** and had **not kept up with the area's population growth**. Others focused on the area **being busy with tourists**, and stated that the frequency of **litter and rubbish**

collection was not sufficient to meet the need. Four of these participants also asked for **better facilities for older children and teenagers**, such as youth clubs and outdoor gyms.

- 21 participants discussed traffic-related concerns such as **congestion, parking and road access, with 16 participants requesting resident-specific parking facilities.** Seven attendees raised concerns about emergency access to the residential blocks due to the market, road closures and congestion in the area.
- **15 participants voiced support for resident-specific green spaces, more accessible community spaces, and better maintenance and upkeep in existing spaces** to cope with the number of visitors.
- 14 participants also discussed **anti-social behaviour issues** ranging from **drug use in the garage area and around Welshpool Street**, as well as the impact on **residents from late-night licensing** including noise, public urination and violence.
- Four participants discussed the **need for storage in the area** and explained that the garages are used for this. Four participants also raised concerns over **overcrowding in the area**, both from residents and tourists, using the same spaces.

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

- A number of participants made suggestions including; a **derelict/disused gas tank area along the canal, building around the railway arches, Laburnum Street, Wick Road, Duncan Road**, and the corner of **Dericote Street and Cranston Street**. The **Suffolk Estate TMO office**, which forms part of the Welshpool Street location, was also suggested.
- Overall, 18 participants **shared their support for the development** of the proposed sites, with 11 **supportive of the Orwell Court site** specifically, two **supportive of the Welshpool Street location and five supportive of both**. 13 participants **opposed the development in the area**, with four **against any form of development at all**, seven **opposed to the Welshpool site only** and two **opposed to Orwell court being developed**.

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.