

### **Resident engagement in housing development: A scrutiny review by the Housing Select Committee**

Summary of evidence and main themes

December 2019

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#### Early resident engagement

- 1.1 Engaging with residents early on in the housing development process was a key theme throughout the review – from the best practice and guidance presented in the scoping paper through to the feedback from the community engagement exercises carried out as part of the review.
- 1.2 Early engagement is a key theme of the Mayor of London’s 2018 [Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration](#), which states: “Early engagement is essential, and residents should be given opportunities to be involved from the outset in developing the vision, options appraisals, design, procurement, and delivery of schemes”.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.3 The London Assembly Housing Select Committee’s 2015 [review of estate regeneration](#) also included in its summary of good practice: “Keep an open mind: involve residents from the outset and present a range of options where possible. Don’t present a ‘fait accompli’.”<sup>2</sup>
- 1.4 In evidence from officers, the committee heard that resident engagement on housing development in Lewisham begins at a very early stage, as soon as potential sites for new homes are identified. Engagement will often begin with an initial “ideas event” with local residents, to talk about existing and future homes and to understand the local identity and

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<sup>1</sup> [Better Homes for Local People: The Mayor’s good practice guide to estate regeneration](#), February 2018, p10

<sup>2</sup> [Knock it Down or Do it Up? The challenge of estate regeneration, London Assembly](#), February 2015, p42

context of the site, as well as local door knocking (at various times of the day to make sure that a wide range of people are heard).<sup>3</sup>

- 1.5 Officers stated that early engagement is not just for talking about new homes, but for finding out about what people think of their local area and what issues and concerns there might be. Officers stressed the importance of building relationships and getting genuine buy-in from residents and noted that spending more time on early engagement can save a significant amount of time and money further down the line.
- 1.6 The Lewisham Homes development team said that, going forwards, resident engagement will feature more proactive outreach work and stakeholder mapping in order to develop a clearer understanding of the local area, relevant site history, and engagement preferences from the beginning of the process – once it has been established what it is possible to do on a particular piece of land but before any designs. This will involve working closely with the Lewisham Homes community relations team and speaking to local councillors and businesses, as well as residents and housing officers earlier on. This level of early engagement is not expected to delay development.

#### **Case study: PLACE/Ladywell**

The PLACE/Ladywell development was cited as an example of resident engagement starting at a very early stage with the creation of an on-site consultation “nook” to generate interest and engage people in the proposals. The “nook” attracted more than 600 people over the course of the consultation and continued to be used by local organisations after the consultation, which helped to stimulate a greater sense of community in the area.

- 1.7 Phoenix Community Housing, a resident-led housing association, which owns and manages 6,000 homes in Lewisham, said that it aims to ensure that residents have an opportunity to get involved at every stage of the development process. Phoenix are aiming to deliver an increasing number of new homes in Lewisham, and as all of the proposed sites sit within existing communities and estates (infill) the impact on existing residents is an important consideration for them.<sup>4</sup>
- 1.8 Residents are engaged at the beginning of the development process, when a site is initially being considered, in order to ask about their priorities for their neighbourhood (while at the same time stressing the importance of delivering new homes). Phoenix are conscious of the risk that existing residents may see investment in new homes as something that doesn't benefit them and are trying to align the new homes programme with the interests and aspirations of existing residents.
- 1.9 To help with this, Phoenix has developed a set of commitments to residents affected by new homes. This includes prioritising and funding wider environmental improvements identified by residents (see Ravensbourne Estate case study below). Phoenix said their approach involves a lot of up-front work to understand residents' priorities, and open and honest conversations to come up with solutions, and that it is intended to address the question: *what's in it for us?* There are still objections, but Phoenix aim to bring residents with them on the development journey rather than presenting proposals as a done deal.

#### **Phoenix case study – Ravensbourne Estate**

Phoenix carried out five consultation events at different stages in the development process to reach as many residents as possible. As well as presenting new build proposals, the events were focused on the improvements residents would like to see

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 2

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 5

in their area. Issues identified by residents included the provision of a community facility; new refuse facilities; parking issues; and empowering residents to manage landscaped areas for their children to play. Phoenix subsequently committed to addressing these issues as part of a package of works.

- 1.10 Early resident involvement also arose as a strong theme in the community engagement exercises carried out as part of the evidence gathering for the review. In a meeting with a small group of residents local to an estate in the south of the borough, Hillcrest, there was a strong feeling that residents should have been engaged much earlier on a recent development proposal. There was a perception that the development process was well underway before local residents were given the chance to be involved, and that they were effectively presented with a done deal following minimal consultation. The group felt that discussions with residents should start with a blank piece of paper, be open and honest, and rather than offer solutions, pose problems and involve residents in co-design.<sup>5</sup>
- 1.11 Similarly, a group of Tenant and Residents' Associations (TRAs) from the north of the borough called for engagement to be more proactive and strategic. They felt that residents should be informed and involved from the outset so that plans can be tailored in response to feedback at the initial ideas stage.<sup>6</sup>
- 1.12 National tenant engagement specialists, TPAS, also suggested starting engagement with a blank piece of paper and "building up", noting that communities have a huge amount of knowledge and experience about where they live.<sup>7</sup>
- 1.13 A number of the local authorities engaged with as part of the review stressed the importance of engaging residents from the outset and identifying local issues and context early on. Camden, which describes its approach to its council-led housing schemes as "community led", said that it seeks to build homes and schemes that address local issues, from housing need to reducing crime, and that it ensures that "residents are involved in the design and development from the outset and throughout".<sup>8</sup>

#### Identifying local issues and context

- 1.14 In a meeting at LB Hackney, it was noted that their process involves mapping key local stakeholders and talking to estate management teams, housing officers, and ward councillors early on in order to identify local issues that could be addressed as part of the development, such as parking or anti-social behaviour problems, for example. It was noted that getting to know and understand the community at an early stage can help to engage more effectively throughout the development process, including with hard-to-reach groups.<sup>9</sup>
- 1.15 In a meeting at LB Southwark, it was noted that where delivery is based on the council's estates they prepare engagement plans based on local intelligence gathered early on in the process. It was noted that there can be a tension between good quality engagement and time, but that as each site is different, it is important to be aware of site history when planning engagement.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 6

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 7

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 9

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix 13

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix 4

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### **Case Study: Home Park**

The Home Park development in Lewisham was cited as an example of when building more knowledge about local issues and concerns early on would have helped with the engagement process. In response to proposals for new homes on the estate, residents responded by expressing concern about existing issues on the estate, including a recent serious crime, which residents felt had not been addressed properly. Officers said that it took a long time following this for the council to rebuild trust and reassure residents that the development could help with a number of the issues on the estate.

- 1.16 At the first evidence session the committee noted that while there is a growing number of people who support the building of new homes, there is also a growing number of people opposed to development, which should be taken into account in resident engagement.
- 1.17 A 2016 study by the *Centre for London*, a politically independent, not-for-profit think tank, looked at how effective engagement can help in dealing with opposition to residential development, and made a number of observations about the early involvement of residents.<sup>11</sup>
- 1.18 The study, which focused on the reasons people oppose development in their area, stressed the importance of genuinely listening residents in order to better understand the concept of “place attachment” – where someone’s neighbourhood comes to form an integral part of their identity – given that place attachment has been identified as one of the most powerful motivations for opposition.<sup>12</sup>
- 1.19 The report cited research showing that, when understood, place identity can be harnessed to win local people around to support local development, and argued that by listening carefully to residents, to develop a nuanced, site-specific understanding of how people identify with their local area, more homes can get built with less opposition. The report noted that most developers assess the character of a local area before design work and suggested that adding an assessment of residents’ “sense of home” could be a valuable addition.<sup>13</sup>
- 1.20 Similar points were made during the community engagement exercises carried out as part of the review. The group of residents from the south of the borough, for example, argued that developers should recognise the uniqueness of areas and listen to resident suggestions. They said that architects should walk around estates to understand the landscape and that desktop designs without understanding the ‘on the ground’ situation were a waste of time and money. The group of TRAs from the north of the borough specifically called for “local heritage plans” to preserve and promote local history.<sup>14</sup>

### **Trust, transparency and information**

- 1.21 In the visit the LB Hackney, it was noted that they had a lot of work to do on some estates to rebuild trust following many years of failed new homes proposals. When engaging residents in the development process, they said that it is important to be clear early on about the key stages at which they can influence, and how best to do this. They also said that it is important to be clear about what’s feasible – noting, for example, that if you explain where it is unviable to refurbish homes due to their poor condition, it can sometimes be residents who push for regeneration.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> [Why people oppose residential developments in their back yard](#), Centre for London, July 2016

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*, pp31-3

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*, p33

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix 7

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix 4

- 1.22 National tenant engagement experts, TPAS, stated that enabling residents to scrutinise plans is an important step in building confidence and trust and that engagement should be planned to achieve transparency and accountability. Developers should be available to residents, provide answers, and be open and transparent about decision making and funding.
- 1.23 Trust and transparency were also key themes in the community engagement exercises carried out as part of the review. In the workshop with the TRAs from the north of the borough it was noted that, as well as earlier engagement, residents wanted to have open and honest discussions with developers to find solutions to residents' requests and for residents' practical views to be listened to. Residents' also wanted to see their promises kept and design details, such a play areas and communal spaces, not lost post planning.<sup>16</sup>
- 1.24 Other groups of residents engaged with felt that more information should be provided to address residents' concerns. The group from the south of the borough highlighted concerns about overcrowding, emergency vehicle access, local amenities and public transport, and felt that local service providers should be engaged to address these. A group of residents at a Brockley PFI Engagement Panel meeting said it would be useful to see information about the impact on communal and green areas; parking and road safety; local crime; local transport; and domestic waste. In the visit the LB Hackney, it was noted that they explain to residents where any money that is being made (from private sales, for example) goes as there can sometimes be suspicion otherwise.
- 1.25 The Centre for London study of why people oppose development also discussed the importance of early engagement in terms of "framing", noting that residents tend to make sense of proposals through discussion with others and that the way facts are presented (or "framed") has a big impact on how people respond to those facts.<sup>17</sup>
- 1.26 The report cited research showing that explaining the effects of high house prices on family life and children, for example, significantly reduces opposition to development. It said that this shows how important it is to start communication with residents early in order to frame new housing development as a social necessity that benefits real people, and noted that framing can also help address concerns relating to services early on. At the first evidence session, the committee also stressed the importance of getting early engagement right in order to prevent misinformation from spreading.
- 1.27 A 2015 report on infill development by *Future of London*, an independent housing a regeneration policy network, stated that paying early attention to the narrative, as well as identifying and working with community leaders, is time well spent well, and that an important part of working with existing communities is about how you tell the story of change. The report also discusses confronting cultural and social attitudes towards density and space and winning people over to the idea that increasing the local population is good for neighbourhoods – for example, by providing more customers for local shops and increased funding for services.<sup>18</sup>
- 1.28 A 2019 roundtable on community engagement, held by the *Centre for London*, found that early and prolonged relationship building with local people was good practice in communicating the potential benefits of a development to an area. Good local engagement was viewed by some practitioners as a way of improving schemes and even raising densities. Participants discussed examples of residents pushing for higher densities where they felt in control – there was a feeling that residents are not against high densities, but against bad design.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See Appendix 7

<sup>17</sup> [Why people oppose residential developments in their back yard](#), Centre for London, July 2016, pp35-7

<sup>18</sup> [Delivering Infill Development: A London 2050 briefing paper](#), Future of London, January 2015

<sup>19</sup> [Capital Homes: Trust, design and community engagement](#), Centre for London, July 2019

1.29 The report also noted that demonstrating local benefits can be powerful and mentioned cases of developers changing the narrative of development from simply changing the built form to revitalising a community through providing training, employment opportunities, community assets and facilities. TPAS also said that while engagement on infill development should acknowledge the impact it will have on neighbours it should also promote the benefits. Some caution was expressed in the roundtable, however, about the time demands of engagement where developments are time sensitive and cost constrained.<sup>20</sup>

#### Engagement during the planning process

1.30 It was noted during the first evidence session for the review that early resident engagement is separate to formal consultation during the planning process, which involves making comments on specific planning grounds. The committee heard from officers that residents that come to consultation events before the planning stage are informed that they if they want to make representations on planning grounds these would need to be submitted separately during the planning stage.

1.31 The committee expressed some concern about the differences in the resident engagement carried out before the planning stage and the consultation during the formal planning process. It was noted during the review, however, that the council is currently looking into information and communications during the planning process in response to recommendations of the council's Local Democracy Review.<sup>21</sup>

1.32 During one of the visits carried out as part of the review it was noted that one south London local authority is amending its statement of community involvement to include a development consultation charter setting out the consultation requirements for developers' pre-planning applications, which depend on the scale of the development. The charter is then considered as part of the planning application process.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> See Appendix 14

<sup>21</sup> [Lewisham Democracy Review: A democratic and open Lewisham](#), 2019

<sup>22</sup> See Appendix 8

## Active and ongoing engagement

- 2.1 The ongoing engagement process and the particular methods used was another key theme among the evidence gathered during the review.
- 2.2 The Mayor of London's 2018 guidance on estate regeneration, for example, discusses a range of methods, but states that developers should be open to suggestions from residents and stakeholders about developing more effective mechanisms. The 2015 London Assembly report on estate regeneration states that active and ongoing engagement is essential to leverage the support of residents and notes the value of on-site engagement and working with community leaders.
- 2.3 In evidence from officers, the committee heard that, depending on the scale of the project, ongoing engagement would typically include one or two consultation events, where ideas and concepts from initial engagement are more developed. Engagement would continue throughout construction and following completion to ensure that developments are constantly improved [graphic]. Residents are provided with feedback in a variety of ways following engagement. One of the key ways is publishing "you said, we did" statements online, setting out written responses to comments received during engagement [graphic].<sup>23</sup> LB Hackney also find the "you said, we did" approach useful.

### **Case study: Edward Street**

The Edward Street development was noted as an example of early resident engagement influencing a development. The project was initially called PLACE/Deptford, but was renamed Edward Street following resident feedback that the "PLACE" name didn't capture the sense of the area. Changes were also made to the shape and orientation of the building in response to feedback.

### **Case study: Bampton Estate**

Bampton Estate was noted as an example of where ongoing resident involvement during a lengthy consultation period [screenshot] helped to shape the direction, size and scale of the development, by taking into account resident comments on cycling routes, local connections, and the design of the public realm.

## A range of methods

- 2.4 In written evidence, Peabody stressed the importance of having a portfolio of methods so that all stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute their ideas. Methods outlined by Peabody ranged from formal meetings, exhibitions and resident steering groups to individual appointments, attendance at resident gatherings, informal drop in sessions and fun days, and newsletters, text messages and email. Residents have also been given a say in the choice of materials used in certain schemes. And on a recent scheme in Battersea residents contributed their ideas to develop artwork for the scheme that was meaningful to residents [graphic].<sup>24</sup>
- 2.5 The Lewisham Homes development team are looking to make use of a range of methods. They have recently carried out "walk and talks" with local residents as part of early engagement, and, going forwards, are planning to underpin this with digital engagement on the Commonplace platform. In addition to drop-ins at different times of the day and focus sessions for specific groups, they are also looking to establish Steering Groups for certain projects, with residents responsible for establishing the terms of reference and code of conduct. For some projects residents are also being trained on appointing architects and selecting construction teams and being included in the discussions around the complex

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<sup>23</sup> See Appendix 2

<sup>24</sup> See Appendix 11

finances and budgets involved. Given the collaborative approach with the community from the outset, Lewisham Homes said that the final submission to planning should be akin to a joint submission.

- 2.6 Feedback from the community engagement exercises during the review also stressed the importance of using a wide range of engagement methods. The group of TRAs from the north of the borough suggested online engagement and newsletters providing regular updates up to the start of construction and community events for local residents. Another group suggested email, notices on announcement boards, and community events such as historical walks.<sup>25</sup>
- 2.7 Among a small group of residents from the south of the borough there was a preference for in-person and on-site engagement. They suggested using on-site community centres and warned against an overreliance on digital engagement.<sup>26</sup>
- 2.8 The time and location of engagement was also a strong theme. The group from the south of the borough were particularly unhappy with the location and timing of the consultation events for recent development proposal, which were held away from the estate between 4-8pm, which the group felt excluded many people. Another group noted that standard consultation events and meetings are not accessible to everyone and that those held in the evening, for example, can make it difficult for those with children, among others, to give their views.

#### **Case study: Achilles Street**

Achilles Street was cited by Lewisham officers as an example of the importance of the location of in-person engagement. After holding a consultation event away from the estate, some residents said that the council was trying to hide away.

- 2.9 At the first evidence session the committee noted the importance of face-to-face engagement, stating that it can be a better way of addressing people's concerns, listening to feedback and explaining the borough's housing need. The committee noted that door-knocking and in-person engagement is particularly important on infill developments, where, unlike estate regeneration, the council is not making an offer to all residents and some people may be wondering what's in it for them.<sup>27</sup>
- 2.10 In the visit to LB Hackney it was noted that online engagement is not widely used with housing development, given the very local geography, and that social media has been used with mixed results. The design process was, however, cited by LB Hackney, and a number of others during the review, as one of the best ways to engage constructively with the community.

#### **Design stage involvement**

- 2.11 There are a wide range of ways residents could be involved at the design stage including, for example, in the appointment design teams. It is important, however, according to LB Hackney, to be clear with residents what role they will have, especially whether or not it is a decision-making role.<sup>28</sup>
- 2.12 LB Hackney also noted that it is important to link back at the design stage to the priorities and concerns identified by residents during early engagement, as some issues, such as parking, for example, can be addressed through design. It is again important, however, to be clear about what might be feasible – public realm improvements, for example, can be expensive if clear guidelines are not given.

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<sup>25</sup> See Appendix 7 and 3

<sup>26</sup> See Appendix 6

<sup>27</sup> See Appendix 2

<sup>28</sup> See Appendix 4

- 2.13 Guidance from the *Design council* on infill development notes that involving residents at the design stage in particular could provide opportunities to tackle social and environmental problems. The opportunities of new development may not be immediately obvious to residents, however, and it may take time to build confidence with residents who have suffered from issues, such as anti-social behaviour, that good design can help reduce these problems. Allowing residents to influence design at an early stage can help. The guidance notes that involving residents may require different ways of working and additional resource and discusses providing skilled support and facilitation from independent providers as one possible measure (this is discussed further in the next section).<sup>29</sup>
- 2.14 Homes for Lambeth has also included the involvement of residents in the design process (where they are being re-housed) in its *Housing Design Principles* for the new homes they build. One of the other key methods they support is a monthly Resident Engagement Panel meeting for each estate to update residents on their scheme.<sup>30</sup>
- 2.15 Similarly, LB Southwark established (in 2014) a charter of principles on resident involvement in the development of new homes in estates, which includes the key principle that consultation on new sites will be led by local “project groups” of residents and local councillors. Project groups meet three or four times, with the first session including training with an independent advisor.<sup>31</sup>
- 2.16 Project group membership is drawn from a mixture of TRA representatives and residents who express an interest at initial drop in sessions. Anyone living within the vicinity of the potential site, taking into account natural boundaries such as railway lines and major roads, is invited to drop in sessions. In those areas where there has been little take up of the offer to form project groups, the way residents are involved has had to be adapted to ensure they continue to be engaged.
- 2.17 The involvement of local groups and the design process was also mentioned during the community engagement exercises of the review. The TRAs from the north of the borough suggested establishing “panels” to provide residents with a meaningful role in decision-making. They also advocated the involvement of residents in the detail of regeneration schemes through design reviews, citing engagement with architects as an example of where engagement has gone well in the past.<sup>32</sup>

#### Boundaries and levels of engagement

- 2.18 The geographic boundaries of engagement was also a topic of discussion. There was a feeling in one resident group that the whole community should be involved in discussions about where to put local housing, as local people have valuable local knowledge. And with major developments, it was suggested that everyone affected within a certain area, taking into account local geography, should be engaged.<sup>33</sup>
- 2.19 TPAS said that engagement on infill development should acknowledge the impact it will have on neighbours and that there should be boundaries for different levels of engagement, but that developers should be prepared to talk to anybody.

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<sup>29</sup> [Involving local residents in the design of small and infill sites](#), Design Council, 2016

<sup>30</sup> See Appendix 10

<sup>31</sup> See Appendix 8

<sup>32</sup> See Appendix 7

<sup>33</sup> See Appendix 6

- 2.20 Lambeth also noted that it is important to recognise that residents want to engage on different levels, from short video animations to newsletters on business plans. The authority has also recognised that communities are often based around interests and activities, not necessarily where they live, and has provided a physical engagement hub on each estate regeneration for running events, often around key decision points. Events like this have allowed Homes for Lambeth to increase awareness and understanding among a broader range of residents.<sup>34</sup>
- 2.21 Engagement on different levels was another theme from the review's community engagement. One group suggested that engagement should aim to meet the visual and verbal preferences of residents and that imagination was required to devise creative engagement exercises, such as on-site exhibitions and community theatre. There was a strong feeling among all groups that engagement should be in plain English and jargon-free.
- 2.22 LB Southwark has produced an engagement plan template, which includes questions about the purpose, key stakeholders, and what residents need to contribute, intended to guide the engagement process. TRAs are consulted about draft engagement plans. The authority also endeavours to involve residents who may be moving into the new homes once completed.<sup>35</sup>
- 2.23 Involving a wide range of stakeholders was another theme in the review's community engagement. The TRAs from the north of the borough said that having local leaders on board, such as block reps, for example, could make a significant difference. There was also a feeling among a number of groups that local Councillors play a key role.
- 2.24 The LGA's guidance on engagement is also supportive of the greater involvement of frontline Councillors in engagement and the development of proposals. The guidance notes that local Councillors generally have a close relationship with stakeholders and lead local opinion and can often broker a compromise. Frontline Councillors are also able to empathise more with the community and are more sensitive to the subtle consequences of decisions, and ought to be encouraged to provide a steer.<sup>36</sup>
- 2.25 The *Centre for London* study of opposition to development, mentioned in the previous section, argues that Councillors need to be given additional support and suggests that one way of boosting the quality of debate around housing development could be to hold "town hall seminars" bringing together architects, urban designers, councillors and council officers to explore issues around development – such as improving the quality of high-density schemes, for example. Events like this could help equip councillors and officers with the expertise and confidence to guide developers and defend against opposition. The report also suggests that inviting residents groups to such events could give all stakeholders a common language and help make debates more constructive.<sup>37</sup>
- 2.26 LB Camden is piloting a new peer-to-peer engagement model where local residents, known as "Community Liaison Advisors" (CLAs), are employed to help tailor the approach to delivering community-led regeneration.<sup>38</sup>
- 2.27 On a recent estate regeneration development (of around 300 homes) CLAs worked with officers to set out principles of inclusive and collaborative engagement. CLAs then identified a range of communication tools to inform and involve residents and set out a clear feedback mechanism to show how residents have influenced the process.

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<sup>34</sup> See Appendix 10

<sup>35</sup> See Appendix 8

<sup>36</sup> [New Conversations: LGA guide to engagement](#), LGA, 2017, pp88-93

<sup>37</sup> See Appendix 12

<sup>38</sup> See Appendix 13

2.28 The authority said that the CLAs had helped residents to understand the regeneration process and encouraged residents to be actively involved in the appointment of lead architects.

### Open and honest engagement

2.29 Another common theme from the community engagement of the review was honesty, openness and transparency. There were calls for discussions to be open and honest and a feeling from some of a lack of confidence in new homes consultation process. One group warned of “token” and “tick box” consultation exercises and the feeling of consultation “being done to” residents as opposed to being given an opportunity to influence.<sup>39</sup>

2.30 As discussed in the previous section, the group of TRAs from the north of the borough wanted open and honest discussions with developers in order to find solutions, for their views to be listened to, and for promises to be kept. TPAS also said that engagement should be planned to, among other things, achieve transparency, as enabling residents to scrutinise plans is an important step in building trust.

2.31 The *Centre for London's* 2019 roundtable on community engagement also noted that honesty is undervalued, with some participants saying that developers and local authorities are not entering into honest engagement with the public, or each other, about potential limitations and constraints. Some participants felt that there needs to be better management of expectations, noting that the development industry can be reluctant to say ‘no’ and explain the financial and other constraints at play. The report noted that while councils acting as developers can deliver benefits it can also create suspicion about the role of the local authority and the interests they serve. The report commented that local people are pragmatic and perceptive enough to understand potential trade-offs and that there is therefore capacity for greater honesty in the system.<sup>40</sup>

### TRA involvement

2.32 The committee heard from officers that Tenant and Residents’ Associations (TRAs) are involved throughout the resident engagement process in Lewisham. While they are not always representative of a local area, they often better understand the local area and the views of local people.

2.33 A number of other authorities engaged with during the review also said that TRAs are involved in the engagement process, where established. On an estate in Hackney the TRA has served as the resident steering group for the ongoing regeneration project.

2.34 TRA involvement also came up during the community engagement for the review. The TRAs from the north of the borough suggested that contact details of key people involved in the development of proposals should be made available to TRAs. Other groups said that more TRAs should be encouraged, formed and engaged.

2.35 Officers noted that ongoing engagement with residents and TRAs can lead to better quality developments that local residents feel proud of. The Council wants to engage with as many people as possible, but engagement varies from scheme to scheme, and ensuring good attendance at consultation events is a significant challenge. This is particularly the case with “hard-to-reach” or “seldom-heard” groups.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> See Appendix 7

<sup>40</sup> See Appendix 14

<sup>41</sup> See Appendix 2

## Seldom-heard groups and capacity building

- 3.1 Engagement with seldom-heard groups was a specific key line of enquiry for the review. It's a difficult term to define precisely, with various similar terms used interchangeably by different sources – such as “under-represented”, “hard-to-reach”, “often-excluded”, and “need-to-reach”, for example.
- 3.2 A scrutiny review of engagement with hard-to-reach groups by Haringey Council, however, provides a useful, albeit broad, explanation: “*Those groups which are difficult to engage with from an organisational perspective because they do not feel empowered to do so, or due to barriers which may be overcome*”.<sup>42</sup>
- 3.3 In written evidence, Peabody set out a number of specific examples, including older people, those who are time poor, groups who may be hostile to plans, groups with limited language capacity, and those with mobility issues.<sup>43</sup>
- 3.4 The committee heard from officers that engaging with “hard-to-reach” residents is one of the toughest challenges for resident engagement. Ensuring good attendance at consultation events is a significant challenge with hard-to-reach groups, particularly those who might feel uncomfortable or intimidated attending typical public consultation meetings.<sup>44</sup>
- 3.5 Officers outlined a number of recent initiatives intended to increase engagement with hard-to-reach and seldom-heard groups, including engaging with people through the [Evelyn Community Store](#); the Achilles Street “[Bring it to the table](#)” events [graphic]; and the provision of translators for residents who may be more confident expressing their views in another language. Officers also noted the importance of engagement material being easy for residents to understand, clear, and jargon-free.
- 3.6 Other creative methods being considered include fun days, soft play and mobile cinema. While online engagement is increasingly being used – Team Catford, for example, have successfully used the online consultation platform, [Commonplace](#) [graphic] – officers said that it is still underused as a consultation tool.
- 3.7 Lewisham Homes’ approach to engaging with hard-to-reach residents is informed by their early outreach work to understand the area. This includes identifying specific groups (age-related or faith-related, for example) and vulnerable residents (those with support workers, for example) and enabling them to engage. This might be through engagement at community hubs, such as GP surgeries, schools, and market places, and, as mentioned earlier, local “walk and talks” and online engagement. This should enable a wider range of people, particularly those who wouldn’t normally attend a meeting or workshop, to give their views at a time and place that is more comfortable and convenient for them. In recognition that every community is different, however, engagement activity will be regularly reviewed with the community to continuously improve.

### **Case study: Achilles Street**

The Achilles Street “Bring it to the Table” events were intended to provide an opportunity for residents to ask questions and express their views about the estate in a more informal setting. Once a week, from afternoon to evening, in one of the community rooms on the estate, residents are able to drop in to have an informal conversation over free cakes and sandwiches. Discussions were focused on finding

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<sup>42</sup> [Scrutiny Review of Engaging with ‘Hard to Reach Communities’](#), Haringey Council, March 2010, p8

<sup>43</sup> See Appendix 11

<sup>44</sup> See Appendix 2

out what residents think about where they live and helping with their queries about the process, rather than talking about any particular plans for development.

- 3.8 One of the key ways Phoenix seeks to engage with a wider range of residents is through an informal consultation event it calls “Chat and Chips” [graphic]. As the name suggests, “Chat and Chips” is an event where residents are asked for their views on current and future plans over free fish and chips. Phoenix held seven “Chat and Chips” events last year, engaging with more than 400 residents, 64% of which were residents they had not engaged with before.<sup>45</sup>
- 3.9 Phoenix consider ways to engage with particular groups from the beginning of the development process and carry out targeted door-knocking. Phoenix’s tenancy sustainment officers also help with identifying vulnerable tenants, older people, disabled people, or young people who may not be engaging.
- 3.10 Peabody also discussed the importance of identifying hard-to-reach communities and making targeted contact – either by going out to them or specifically inviting them to attend engagement events. It was noted that typical engagement exhibitions and drop-in sessions are not effective methods for engaging with a number of hard-to-reach groups.
- 3.11 In a meeting with a group of residents from the north of the borough, a lack of support for disabled residents to attend engagement meetings and events was identified as an issue – with the group noting, for example, that there were none at the meeting they were in.<sup>46</sup>
- 3.12 In Phoenix’s experience, young people, aged 18-25, tend to be the hardest to reach and most under-represented during engagement. Peabody also noted that young people are notoriously difficult to reach. To increase general levels of engagement among this group, Phoenix are providing training and support for small groups of young people. Peabody on the other hand has set up an innovative virtual reality workshop for a public realm project in Thamesmead to encourage young people to feed into plans and help formulate designs [graphic].<sup>47</sup>
- 3.13 How to improve engagement with hard-to-reach groups was also a topic of discussion in the community engagement exercises for the review. A group of residents from the south of the borough suggested that other Council departments might be able to help identify and engage with vulnerable groups and individuals. Care workers, for example, could help identify people who have just been discharged from hospital, while health visitors could help identify new and isolated mothers. The group also suggested engaging people through local libraries and providing sports programmes to engage young people.<sup>48</sup>
- 3.14 A group of residents from the north of the borough suggested holding family and community events, directly involving young people; notices and events in schools and community hotspots; and a permanent section on new developments in *Lewisham Life*. The group stressed the importance of going out into the community and engaging groups where they gather - for example, places of worship, toddler groups, disability groups – rather than relying on a narrow number of groups to speak for the whole community. They also suggested keeping a register of people who aren’t digitally connected.<sup>49</sup>
- 3.15 At the first evidence session the committee stressed the importance of door knocking to engaging with hard-to-reach groups, particularly those who might find public meetings

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<sup>45</sup> See Appendix 5

<sup>46</sup> See Appendix 3

<sup>47</sup> See Appendix 11

<sup>48</sup> See Appendix 6

<sup>49</sup> See Appendix 7

intimidating. One member recounted how they had been approached by a resident at a public consultation event who was supportive of the development, as they were living in overcrowded conditions, but felt too intimidated to speak up at the meeting.

- 3.16 TPAS praised the innovative hard-to-reach engagement methods outlined by officers in first evidence session. They said that in order to engage with “need-to-reach” groups (as they described them) the first steps are having a customer relationship management system in place and carrying out analysis of the community in relation to equalities.
- 3.17 In terms of engagement methods, TPAS said that local volunteers should be recruited, supported and trained to be involved in the engagement process (to influence, co-design and scrutinise) but to recognise when recruiting volunteers that the majority of people do not have lots of spare time.
- 3.18 Engagement activity that involves significant time commitment can be off-putting to many people. To reach certain groups, especially those who are time poor, engagement should be increasingly focused around short bursts of work, such as task and finish groups, over a few days. Residents should also be asked how they would like to organise themselves to be engaged on a project, if they do at all – imposing engagement models on residents should be avoided.<sup>50</sup>
- 3.19 TPAS said that often the first challenge is to connect and relate to the communities you’re working with to build their trust. The biggest challenge can be speaking the right language with the community to build the trust and respect to work together positively and constructively. This can take time, particularly where communities have a long history of bad experiences, but the key is having well-trained staff to speak to communities and support communications back to council officers so that everyone understands each other.
- 3.20 In order to be able to assess the impact, TPAS also recommends that any engagement activity should be planned, monitored and measured, and regularly reviewed with the community that you’re engaging with.

#### Resident support and capacity building

- 3.21 The committee heard from officers that there is a wide range of support in place to help residents of Lewisham Homes to engage effectively. This includes free housing courses and help setting up Tenant and Resident Associations (TRAs). Officers noted that building capacity among residents can help to create a more informed and collaborative process, as well as give residents more confidence to challenge decisions. As noted early, Lewisham Homes are currently training resident steering groups to help with the appointment of architect and construction teams. They have also invited steering groups from other London boroughs to come and share their experience with interested residents in Lewisham.
- 3.22 TPAS said that tenants, leaseholders and community members should be provided with the appropriate levels of support to be help residents understand and take a meaningful and active part in the process. It was noted that communities affected by significant housing development often want expert, independent advice.<sup>51</sup>
- 3.23 Lambeth has used Independent Resident Advisors (IRAs) on estate regeneration schemes for some time. Each of their current estate regenerations schemes has its own IRA responsible for supporting and advising residents of their rights throughout the process. IRAs also support

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<sup>50</sup> See Appendix 9

<sup>51</sup> *ibid*

engagement with hard-to-reach groups on an estate by estate basis. The IRAs know their estates and residents well and are able to direct and carry out targeted door knocking.<sup>52</sup>

- 3.24 In Hackney, Independent Tenant and Leaseholder Advisors (ITLA) have been used successfully with large-scale estate regeneration projects. They have been particularly useful for engaging with hard-to-reach groups. On the King's Crescent Estate regeneration project, for example, after struggling to engage with the Turkish Community, the council liaised with the ITLA, who had local knowledge and was aware that a number of Turkish residents were keen gardeners. The council then held a number of consultation events in nearby gardening areas. They also held a Halloween disco to engage with younger people. The authority noted, however, that it would only use an ITLA for large-scale regeneration project or particularly complex infill sites.<sup>53</sup>
- 3.25 Lewisham Homes' has not used ITLAs, or similar, for a number of years. They noted, however, that they can be quite useful on estate regeneration schemes, helping guide residents through the process and providing an independent opinion on information from the council. They are particularly helpful where there has been an element of activism on a scheme. It was felt that they are of less value, however, with infill developments, and that the budget could be better used for other engagement initiatives.
- 3.26 The 2018 Mayor of London guidance on estate regeneration recommends providing independent capacity-building and advocacy support for residents if they request it. The 2015 London Assembly review of estate regeneration also notes that some capacity building is likely to be required to enable communities to participate as fully as possible, and that in some cases, independent resident advisers have been appointed by a residents to support engagement activity.
- 3.27 TPAS, which provides an Independent Tenant Advice service (ITA), said that ITAs are essential to regeneration projects, and stressed that communities should be given the opportunity to choose their own. In response to questions from the committee, TPAS noted that ITAs should constantly demonstrate they are there to represent the views of the community. Residents should accompany ITAs at project meetings and be copied in to correspondence. Some ITAs also ask residents to monitor and agree their activity.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> See Appendix 10

<sup>53</sup> See Appendix 4

<sup>54</sup> See Appendix 9

## **Appendix 2**

### **Resident engagement in housing development – first evidence session**

#### **LB Lewisham and Lewisham Homes – 10<sup>th</sup> July 2019**

James Masini (Regeneration & New Supply Manager, LB Lewisham) delivered a presentation on Lewisham's approach to engaging residents on housing development in their area. The following key points were noted from the presentation:

- 1.1 The engagement process begins at a very early stage. This might include an "ideas event" with residents or local door knocking. There will be an initial consultation event and sometimes a second event depending on the scale of the project. There will also be engagement throughout the construction phase and after completion.
- 1.2 It was noted that this engagement is separate to consultation during the formal planning process.
- 1.3 Engagement exercises attract varying numbers of people. An event around the PLACE/Ladywell development, for example, involved 600 people over six days. Smaller developments tend to attract less interest.
- 1.4 It was noted that engaging with residents often leads to better quality development. The council wants to engage as many people as possible, but it was noted that ensuring good attendance at consultation events is a significant challenge. This is particularly the case with hard to reach groups.
- 1.5 Examples of innovative responses to this challenge were discussed, including engaging people through the Evelyn Community Store and the Achilles Street "Bring it to the table" events.
- 1.6 Lewisham Homes has a programme of support in place to help residents engage effectively, including free housing courses for residents and help with setting up Tenant and Resident Associations.
- 1.7 Other creative methods the council is considering include fun days, soft play and mobile cinema. Online engagement, although being used more, is still underused as a consultation tool. The online consultation platform, Commonplace, for example, has been used successfully by Team Catford.

The committee asked a number of questions. The following key points were noted:

- 1.8 The committee expressed concern about the differences in resident engagement carried out before the planning process and consultation during the formal planning process.
- 1.9 It was noted that consultation by the local planning authority during the formal planning process involves making comments on specific planning grounds. This is separate and different to the broader discussions about an area and/or development that take place as part of resident engagement carried out by the Council and Lewisham Homes before a development goes to planning.
- 1.10 The Achilles Street "Bring it to the table" events have been running every Wednesday since June. There are 87 properties on the estate and attendance has been about 10 households per night, half of which have been returning households.
- 1.11 The committee stressed the importance of door knocking in terms of engaging hard-to-reach groups and those who might find public meetings intimidating.

- 1.12 One member noted that they had been approached by a resident at a recent public consultation event who said that they were desperate for the development to go ahead as they were living in overcrowded conditions, but that they felt like they couldn't speak up at the meeting.
- 1.13 The committee noted that door knocking on infill developments is particularly important because, unlike estate regeneration, the council is not making an offer to all residents and some local residents may be wondering what's in it for them.
- 1.14 The committee noted the importance of face-to-face conversations and that they can be a better way of addressing people's concerns, listening to feedback and explaining the borough's housing need.
- 1.15 The committee noted while there is a growing number of people who support development, there is also a growing number of people who oppose development.
- 1.16 The committee stressed the importance of getting early engagement right in order to prevent misinformation from spreading.
- 1.17 Lewisham Homes carry out door knocking on their infill developments, at various times of the day, to make sure that a wide range of people are heard.
- 1.18 Engagement exercises like the Bring it to the table events at Achilles Street are an important part of early engagement. Engagement like this is more about finding out what residents think about where they live, rather than talking about the plans for a particular development.
- 1.19 It was noted that the best way of measuring the effectiveness of engagement is the quality of the schemes. Developments with a high degree of resident involvement tend to be higher quality.
- 1.20 The proposed residents' charter is a response to new rules on estate ballots from the Mayor of London.
- 1.21 The residents' charter will apply to every estate regeneration where a ballot is required. The ballot requirement applies to projects that involve GLA funding, the demolition of any social homes and the construction of 150 or more homes.
- 1.22 Achilles Street is the only development in the new social homes programme that requires a ballot.
- 1.23 Tenant and Resident Associations (TRAs) are involved throughout the engagement process. TRAs often better understand the local area and the views of local people. TRAs are not always representative of a local area, but it is useful to engage with them from an early stage.

Resolved: the committee noted the report.

## **Appendix 3**

### **Housing Select Committee – resident engagement in housing development review**

#### **Notes from workshop with RB3 (Brockley PFI) Leaseholder Engagement Panel**

**5<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

Kate Donovan (Area Manager, Pinnacle), Chantelle Barker (Project Manager, Pinnacle), and John Bardens (Scrutiny Manager) were present.

The workshop was based around table discussions on a set of questions. Participants separated into small table groups to discuss and then reported back to the wider group.

The questions that the groups focused on during the workshop related to: the best ways for residents to be informed and involved; useful information; obstacles to engagement; advice and support; and how to reach as wide a range of people as possible.

The key points of the workshop are summarised below.

- 1.1 On the best ways for residents to be informed and involved, the groups suggested a number of tools including online (in particular email) engagement, letters and notices on announcement boards, local assemblies; door knocking and social events such as historical walks.
- 1.2 In terms of information that it would be helpful to see at some stage during the engagement process, the groups suggested information about: communal and green areas; parking and road safety (such as issues with speeding and moped crime; other crime (such as drug dealing); plans for local transport; and plans for domestic waste.
- 1.3 In terms of obstacles to engagement the group said that it was important to provide residents with several weeks' notice of any events; to consider transport issues for those without support when considering a venue. In terms of format, the group said that the ability to communicate through the website would be important for those unable to attend meetings. The group noted that there is a lack of support for disabled residents to engage – noting, for example, that there were none at this meeting, which was held in the evening.
- 1.4 In terms of advice and support, the availability of independent advice was suggested by one table. Independent advice was also considered by some residents as a good way to hear from as wide a range of people as possible – as was door knocking and holding events at times that work for different groups.

## **Appendix 4**

### **Housing Select Committee – resident engagement in housing development review**

#### **Notes from meeting with Karen Barke, Head of Estate Regeneration & Interim Head of Housing Supply Programme, London Borough of Hackney**

**18<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

Cllr Aisling Gallagher (Housing Select Committee) and John Bardens (Scrutiny Manager) were present. Some of the key points of the discussion are set out below:

- 1.1 The Mayor of London's good practice guide to estate regeneration contains many examples of good practice in relation to resident engagement, including two case studies from Hackney.
- 1.2 Hackney has had to do a lot of challenging work to rebuild trust with residents on estates where there has been many years of failed proposals. (King's Crescent Estate, for example).
- 1.3 Resident engagement should start early and be regular and take into account the key points at which residents can be involved.
- 1.4 It is important to be clear with residents about the stages during the engagement process at which they can influence the development and how they can best do this.
- 1.5 The design process was cited as one of the best ways to engage constructively with the community. This could include being involved with appointing design teams.
- 1.6 It is important to be clear what role residents will have at the design stage, including whether or not it is a decision-making role.
- 1.7 It is important to get to know and understand the community in order to engage effectively, including with hard-to-reach/seldom-heard groups.
- 1.8 On the King's Crescent Estate, for example, after struggling to engage with the Turkish Community, Hackney held consultation events in gardening areas after being informed by the estate's ITLA, who had local knowledge, that a number of the Turkish residents are gardening enthusiasts. They also held a Halloween disco to engage with younger people.
- 1.9 It is important to talk to the local estate management team, local housing officers, and ward councillors in order to identify local issues, such as parking or anti-social behaviour problems.
- 1.10 Hackney has found the "you said, we did" approach helpful with resident engagement.
- 1.11 The use of an Independent Tenant and Leaseholder Advisor (ITLA) has also been helpful with large-scale estate regeneration projects. An ITLA would only be used for particularly complex infill sites.
- 1.12 The resident offer is particularly important with infill development.
- 1.13 Hackney has moved from a site-by-site approach to estate regeneration to a programme-wide approach.
- 1.14 Hackney explains to residents where any money that is being made goes – from private sales, for example. There can be suspicion otherwise.
- 1.15 It is important to be clear during engagement about what might be feasible – public realm improvements, for example, can be expensive if clear guidelines are not given.

- 1.16 It is important to link back to early engagement and what residents' priorities were. There are some priorities, such as parking, that can be addressed through design.
- 1.17 Tenant and Resident Associations (TRA) are involved in the engagement process where they are established. On the Colville Estate regeneration, for example, the TRA has formed the resident steering group for the project.
- 1.18 Other key local stakeholders will be mapped.
- 1.19 It is important to explain where it is unviable to refurbish homes due to poor condition. It can sometimes be residents who push for regeneration.
- 1.20 It is important to engage on measures to mitigate noise and dust during construction.
- 1.21 Hackney has recently started carrying out post-occupancy evaluations in order to ask questions about size, storage and room size. This can help with engagement on future projects. They also work with residents on financial viability.
- 1.22 Online engagement is not widely used with housing engagement. Social media has been used with mixed results.
- 1.23 Hackney piloted a local lettings policy with the King's Crescent Estate, which gave priority for new social rent homes being built to residents living close to the development sites in priority need, such as under-occupying and overcrowded for example.

## **Appendix 5**

### **Resident engagement in housing development - evidence session**

#### **Phoenix Community Housing – 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

Angela Hardman (Head of Development, Phoenix Community Housing) delivered a presentation on Phoenix's approach to engaging residents through the development and delivery of new homes. The following key points were noted from the presentation:

- 6.1 Phoenix are aiming to deliver an increasing number of new homes in Lewisham. The majority of their development programme is due to be delivered over the next 3-4 years.
- 6.2 All of the sites Phoenix will be developing sit within existing communities and estates. The impact on existing residents is an important consideration when thinking about how to deliver.
- 6.3 Phoenix's approach to resident engagement on housing development, called "building together", sets out a number of commitments to residents affected by new homes.
- 6.4 When Phoenix was established a number of promises were made to residents and Phoenix are looking to follow a similar approach with the delivery of new homes.
- 6.5 Phoenix wants to develop proposals together with residents in a similar way to how it has with improvements to properties in the past.
- 6.6 They also intend to engage residents when they start to buy land for development in order to hear residents' views on affordable housing options such as shared ownership for example.
- 6.7 Phoenix aims to ensure that residents have an opportunity to get involved at every stage. This includes considering and funding environmental improvements identified by residents
- 6.8 Phoenix are conscious of the risk that existing residents may see investment in new homes as something that's not necessarily for them and want to ensure that the new homes programme is aligned with the interests and aspirations of existing residents.
- 6.9 Establishing and understanding existing residents' priorities and ideas for environmental improvements comes through the consultation process when developing new homes.
- 6.10 Phoenix's approach is intended to address the question "what's in it for us?".
- 6.11 Residents are engaged at the beginning of the development process, when development is initially being considered on a certain piece of land, to ask what's important to them in their neighbourhood, while stressing the importance of delivering new homes.
- 6.12 They also intend to discuss with residents the balance between maximising new homes and economic viability.
- 6.13 At later stages in the process, residents will help select architects. Residents will also be involved in the selection of contractors and how to minimise disruption during construction and ongoing engagement during construction. During the construction of Hazlehurst Court, for example, Phoenix offered free coffee and cake at the Green Man community centre while the foundations were being laid.

- 6.14 Phoenix also carry out post-occupancy surveys with residents to gather feedback to help improve future developments.
- 6.15 Phoenix recognises that some of the money being invested in new homes has been raised through the rental stream that existing residents pay.
- 6.16 If environment improvements are identified and committed to, they are funded and put into a programme to be delivered over the course of the development programme.
- 6.17 One of the different ways Phoenix seeks to engage residents is through an informal resident consultation event it calls "Chat and Chips", where residents are asked for their views on current and future plans while enjoying free fish and chips.
- 6.18 They held seven "Chat and Chips" events last year and engaged with more than 400 residents, 64% of which were residents that they had not engaged with previously.
- 6.19 Other methods include newsletters, door-knocking and looking at hard-to-reach groups.
- 6.20 On a recent development Phoenix have found that the use of 3D polystyrene models is a particularly useful way of engaging residents and discussing options and proposals. It can be difficult for some people to get a sense of a development from 2D plans alone.
- 6.21 In terms of engaging with hard-to-reach and under-represented groups, Phoenix's tenancy sustainment officers help to identify vulnerable tenants, older people, disabled people, or young people who may not be engaging.
- 6.22 They also use data to identify potential groups that may be interested in a new development. For a new intergenerational scheme Melfield Gardens, for example, Phoenix has started looking into how to engage with different groups right from the beginning of the process. The idea is to attract residents who are under-occupying in order to generate chain lets.
- 6.23 One of the other commitments is to try to establish a local letting policy for Phoenix residents. On a previous development, Hazlehurst Court, a third of new homes were allocated to residents that were under-occupying existing Phoenix homes. This generated more than 60 chain lets.
- 6.24 From carrying out resident engagement on a recent development, Ravensbourne Estate, Phoenix established a number of commitments. The commitments included providing a community facility, new refuse facilities, addressing parking issues, and looking into ways to empower residents to manage some of the landscaped areas so that their children could play there.
- 6.25 Phoenix carried out five consultation events at different stages in the process to reach as many residents as possible and so that most of the issues could be resolved by the time it came to submitting plans.

The committee asked a number of questions. The following key points were noted:

- 6.26 Phoenix's approach to resident engagement on housing development involves a lot of up-front work to try to understand residents' concerns and come up with solutions through open and honest conversations. They do still get objections, but they want to bring residents on the journey rather than presenting a proposal as a done deal.
- 6.27 The funding for Phoenix's new homes programme comes from GLA grant funding, refinancing, rental income subsidy, and support for social homes from Lewisham

Council. Building on their own land allows Phoenix to provide a high proportion of homes for social rent.

- 6.28 There are no resident ballots proposed in Phoenix's new homes programme.
- 6.29 In Phoenix's experience, young people aged 18-25 tend to be the hardest to reach and under-represented during engagement. Younger young people, under 18s, tend to use the Green Man Community Hub, but not 18-25s. The typical cohort tends to be older people and some families.
- 6.30 Phoenix are also trying to engage smaller groups of young people by providing training and support.
- 6.31 While Phoenix's development programme consists of mostly small infills, they are still calling it regeneration.

Resolved: the committee thanked the representatives from Phoenix for their presentation and noted the evidence provided.

## **Appendix 6**

### **Housing Select Committee - resident engagement in housing development review**

#### **Notes from meeting with group of residents local to Hillcrest and High-Level Drive**

**30<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

One resident lived on the Hillcrest Estate, two lived on nearby roads, and two were members of the Sydenham Society. The discussion was centred on a set of six questions, which had been sent around in advance. Some of the key points of their feedback are noted below:

- 1.1 In relation to now-withdrawn development proposals on the estate, the group were unhappy with the location and timing of the consultation events.
- 1.2 The consultation events were held a long way from the estate itself and it was felt that the timing of the public consultation events, 4-8pm, excluded many people.
- 1.3 It was felt that everyone affected by a major development within a certain area, taking into account local geography, should be engaged.
- 1.4 The whole community should be involved in discussions about where to put local housing as local people have valuable local knowledge.
- 1.5 Engagement should also involve local services to address concerns about these.
- 1.6 It was felt that residents should be engaged earlier – residents should not be presented with a done deal involving one evening consultation well away from the site involved.
- 1.7 With a recent development proposal, it was felt that the process was well underway before local residents were involved.
- 1.8 Discussions with residents should start with a blank piece of paper. Discussions should be open and honest. Solutions should not be offered – problems should be posed and residents involved in co-design.
- 1.9 Developers should recognise the uniqueness of areas and listen to suggestions. Developers should also acknowledge when they have made mistakes.
- 1.10 Architects should walk around estates to understand the landscape. It was felt that desktop designs without understanding the 'on the ground' situation are a waste of time and money.
- 1.11 In terms of engagement methods, in-person and on-site engagement was preferred. On-site community centres should be used.
- 1.12 There should not be an overreliance on digital engagement tools such as Commonplace.
- 1.13 Local Tenant and Resident Association's (TRAs) should be encouraged, formed and engaged.
- 1.14 Ward Councillors should be engaged.
- 1.15 A planning officer should attend consultation events.
- 1.16 It was queried whether it is appropriate for Lewisham Homes to carry out consultation as they are not independent.
- 1.17 With a recent development proposal, it was felt that the design pictures used in the consultation boards were misleading. It was felt that dull colours were used to depict the estate, including play and games areas, as run down and unused, while wide-angle, full

colour images were used to depict the proposals. Some of the design images produced did not include existing buildings.

- 1.18 It was noted that pictures could be very influential, particularly for those who may only pay a quick visit to a consultation event.
- 1.19 The headers of two consultation event letters for a recent development only referred to one site on the estate when the events were in relation to all sites on the estate. It was felt that this could have given the impression to some residents that the events were not be relevant to them and prevented them from being involved.
- 1.20 It was felt that the feedback presented on the consultation excluded some of the points made and didn't accurately reflect the concerns. Information presented only included the concerns that had already been addressed. The concerns petitioned by local tenants and residents were not acknowledged.
- 1.21 There needs to be more information to address concerns about congestion and overcrowding, emergency vehicle access, use of garages, lack of amenities, lack of public transport, and lack of a community centre.
- 1.22 There was criticism of a public meeting held in response to local opposition to a recent development on the Hillcrest Estate. It was felt that the meeting should have enabled residents to properly voice their concerns, however a high proportion of time was allowed for the consultants, including the appointed architects, to present their proposals again.
- 1.23 The meeting was held on a weekday in the Civic Suite. There was no agenda and it fell on the same night as an England World Cup Game.
- 1.24 One member of the group mentioned resident ballots and spoke about a loss of trust and felt that it was unclear what would happen if residents voted against a development.
- 1.25 Other Council departments might be able to help identify some hard-to-reach groups. Care workers might be able to help identify people who may have just been discharged from hospital and health visitors might be able to help identify new and isolated mothers.
- 1.26 Engaging people through local libraries was also suggested as a way of reaching some hard-to-reach groups.
- 1.27 A multi-use games area, with a sports programme, would help to engage young people.
- 1.28 It was felt that local engagement would be vastly improved if the community centre on the estate was re-opened for use by tenants and residents.
- 1.29 Facilities on the estate should be regularly improved for existing residents – upgrades should not be dependent on new housing being built.
- 1.30 Given the lack of transport, community facilities and the hilly topography on the estate, it was queried whether any new housing would provide 'lifetime homes'.

## **Appendix 7**

### **Housing Select Committee – resident engagement in housing development review**

#### **Notes from workshop with Tenant and Resident Associations on Pepys estate**

**3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019**

Cllr Aisling Gallagher (Housing Select Committee), Chantelle Barker (Head of New Initiatives, Lewisham Homes), and John Bardens (Scrutiny Manager) were present.

The workshop was based around table discussions on a set of questions that had been shared in advance. Participants separated into small table groups, chose the questions to discuss and then reported back to the wider group.

The questions that the groups focused on during the workshop related to: the best ways for residents to be informed and involved; how to reach as wide a range of people as possible; and what should be done differently in the future. The key points of the workshop are summarised below.

(Photographs of the groups' full written comments are also attached.)

#### **Engagement methods**

- 1.1 On the best ways for residents to be informed and involved, the group suggested a number of tools including, online engagement and newsletters, with regular updates up to construction, and community events held in different locations, with all residents in the area made aware.
- 1.2 It was also suggested that the contact details of key people involved in the development of proposals should be made available to residents and TRAs.
- 1.3 One table noted that events and meetings are not always accessible for everyone. Meetings held in the evening, for example, can make it more difficult for those with children to give their views.
- 1.4 A numbers of tables also warned of “token” and “tick box” consultation exercises, and the feeling of consultation “being done to” residents as opposed to being given the opportunity to influence the process.
- 1.5 One table suggested “panels” to provide residents with a meaningful role in decision-making and also advocated the involvement of residents in the detail of regeneration schemes through design reviews, for example.
- 1.6 Engagement with architects was cited by one group as an example of where engagement has gone well in the past.
- 1.7 There were calls from a number of tables for more co-design and co-production with residents.
- 1.8 Another table said that it was also important that engagement starts early, with residents informed and involved from the outset, so that plans can be tailored in response to feedback at the ideas stage.
- 1.9 There were calls for engagement to be more strategic and proactive through the development of local masterplans.

- 1.10 There was a strong feeling among the groups that engagement should be in plain English and jargon-free. One table said that engagement should aim to meet the visual and verbal preferences of residents and that imagination was required to devise creative engagement exercises, such as on site exhibitions and community theatre.

### **Hard-to-reach groups**

- 2.1 On the topic of what the council can do to ensure that it hears from as wide a range of people as possible (particularly so-called hard-to-reach and under-represented groups), the group suggested several methods, including:
- 2.2 Family and community events; directly involving young people; notices and events through schools and other community hotspots; community theatre; door-to-door visits; and a permanent section in Lewisham Life on new developments.
- 2.3 The group stressed the importance of going out into the community and engaging people through, for example, places of worship, toddler groups, disability groups, and not relying on a few groups to speak for the whole community. One group also suggested keeping a register of people who aren't digitally connected
- 2.4 One table said that engagement with residents should start with what the community needs and the benefits that a development could bring. Another group felt that there needed to be a sense of urgency to get people involved.
- 2.5 There was also discussion about overcoming the history of poor relationships and mistrust built up over the years. There was a feeling that there's nothing to show for the years of consultation and engagement in the past and that residents are only engaged when things have already been decided.

### **What should be done differently**

- 3.1 In terms of what residents would like to see done differently, the groups said they wanted to see earlier engagement. They wanted to be able to have open and honest discussions with developers to find solutions to residents' requests, and for practical views to be listened to. They also wanted to see their promises kept and design details, such a play areas and communal spaces, not being lost post planning.
- 3.2 The group said that it was important for a wider range of people and groups to be engaged. They said that having good local intelligence is key to this, and that having local leaders on board, Block reps, for example, can make a significant difference. There was also a feeling that local Councilors should play a key role.
- 3.3 The groups called for a local masterplan to coordinate all of the regeneration in a ward, and across boroughs, and to help old and new communities and developments integrate. One group specifically called for a local "heritage plan" to preserve and promote local history. Another table suggested engaging with charities that successfully run community centres and other facilities in other areas.

There were also a number of other comments more related to the planning process, rather than pre-planning engagement. These included:

- 4.1 It was felt that residents and TRAs should be given advance notice of any plans in their areas due to go to planning committee, and that they should have the opportunity to engage with planning committees before planning permission is given. One table said that the major findings of planning committees should be displayed at local community hotspots.

- 4.2 It was also felt that a dedicated planning officer should be assigned to local communities to create local masterplans in order to join up various developments and help residents get the best deal. A number of tables said that s106 and CIL money should be ringfenced and spent on local needs and infrastructure of the community.

## **Appendix 8**

### **Housing Select Committee – resident engagement in housing development review**

#### **Notes from meeting with Jessica Leech, Community Engagement Manager, London Borough of Southwark**

**10<sup>th</sup> October 2019**

Cllr Aisling Gallagher (Housing Select Committee) and John Bardens (Scrutiny Manager) were present. Some of the key points of the discussion are set out below:

- 1.1 In 2014 Southwark carried out a significant consultation and established a charter of principles on resident involvement in the development of new homes (in estates).
- 1.2 One of the key principles was that consultation on new sites would be led by local project groups of residents and local councillors in each area.
- 1.3 In 2015 Southwark asked residents to identify sites where new council homes could be built, using an online map and talking to TRAs.
- 1.4 It was a collaborative process – tenants recognised the need for new council homes.
- 1.5 In 2015 Southwark worked with people borough-wide to develop the design principles that should be adopted.
- 1.6 This identified, for example, a preference for separate kitchens and living rooms; the value placed upon green spaces on estates; and how the sense of space contributed to a sense of wellbeing and value of place.
- 1.7 Project group membership is drawn from a mixture of TRA representatives and people who express an interest at initial drop in sessions.
- 1.8 The wider engagement process involves discussions with ward Cllrs, TRAs, open drop-ins, project groups, meeting three or four times, with the first session including training with an independent advisor.
- 1.9 Those that are invited to open drop ins are anyone who lives in the vicinity of the potential site, taking into account natural boundaries such as railway lines and major roads, and ensuring that rows of houses or parts of estates, where development is proposed, are not excluded.
- 1.10 It is the council's view that through collaborative working it is able to design proposals that can be supported locally and bring benefit to the community within which they are located whilst delivering new council homes for local tenants and others in desperate need of a home they can afford to rent.
- 1.11 Southwark carried out an evaluation of four schemes, two that worked well and two where there were challenges, to find out how residents felt.
- 1.12 In some areas there was little take up of the offer to form project groups and the way residents were involved in the design process adapted to ensure that residents continued to be engaged.
- 1.13 Residents groups for one site expressed concern about involving residents that are not living on the estate affected and on another residents in private homes near a proposed development complained that they were not involved.
- 1.14 Some residents have requested repairs to existing properties first.

- 1.15 There have been sites that Southwark has not been able to move forward.
- 1.16 Southwark also carried out a Housing Commission in 2013 to assess the state of housing in Southwark, which, without an ALMO had not qualified for funding for decent homes.
- 1.17 This included community and stakeholder engagement on what should be the way forward for housing and establishing a Futures Steering Board of council tenant and homeowner representatives, with independent facilitation and the capacity to co-opt members.
- 1.18 The Futures Steering Board is very supportive of building council homes and has been a good forum to talk about the challenges and get insight on working with tenants. It is however quite resource intensive for key officers.
- 1.19 In 2017 Southwark made amendments to the charter and engagement process.
- 1.20 This included stating the importance of TRAs in the process and recognising that one size does not fit all and on some occasions the council may wish to modify the way in which it works.
- 1.21 Council officers will also now prepare engagement plans based on gathering local intelligence much earlier in the process where delivery is based on the council's estates.
- 1.22 The council will also endeavour to involve residents who may move into the new homes when they are completed.
- 1.23 There is another review planned of the council's wider engagement process.
- 1.24 There are plans to provide guidance and toolkits for staff, to run master classes and training for staff, and to involve people from the community and voluntary sector in the training.
- 1.25 Southwark has an engagement plan template, which asks a series of questions to guide the engagement process. This includes questions about purpose, stakeholders, and what residents need to contribute. TRAs are also consulted about draft engagement plans.
- 1.26 There can be a tension between good quality engagement and time, but each site is different. It is important to be aware of site history when planning engagement.
- 1.27 Southwark produced a template Terms of Reference for setting up project groups, which is flexible based on local intelligence.
- 1.28 There's a difference between letting people know something is happening and helping them to shape it.
- 1.29 Who should be involved in projects should be informed by sensible analysis of the geography of the estate.
- 1.30 There are different levels of engagement depending on the stake someone has in the development.
- 1.31 There are significant barriers to setting up TRAs in terms of resourcing support.
- 1.32 Southwark's new homes programme also includes infill development.
- 1.33 Southwark is also amending its statement of community involvement to include a development consultation charter setting out the consultation requirements for developers pre planning application. Requirements depend on the scale of the development. The charter is then considered as part of the planning application process.

- 1.34 The statement of community involvement in a planning document with legal force.
- 1.35 It is important to be clear which stakeholders the council has a responsibility for, i.e. tenants, while recognising that leaseholders are as much part of local communities. The council has a relationship with everyone.

## **Appendix 9**

**Kevin Farrell, Senior Associate, TPAS, delivered a presentation on resident engagement in housing development.**

The presentation covered TPAS's National Engagement Standards, good practice for Independent Tenant Advisors (ITAs), how to engage with "need-to-reach" communities, engagement on infill development, and aspects of the social housing green paper.

The work being carried out by the council and Lewisham Homes was acknowledged by the TPAS representative, as was the research carried out for the review.

Some of the key points of the presentation included:

- Engagement should be planned to, among other things, achieve accountability and transparency. This is one of the first issues that will concern residents. Developers should be available to residents, have dialogue, provide answers, and be open and transparent about decision making and funding.
- Engagement should be allocated sufficient resources. It is important to have the right people and resources to support communities through an often stressful and anxious period of change.
- Tenants, leaseholders and community members should be provided with the appropriate levels of support to be effectively engaged. This includes capacity building to help residents understand and take a meaningful and active part in the process. It is important to understand the existing level of knowledge among residents as this varies from community to community.
- Volunteers should be recruited, supported and trained so that they can influence, co-design and scrutinise. There should be mechanisms in place to enable residents to influence thinking and decisions.
- Communities have a huge amount of knowledge and experience about where they live and engagement should start with a "blank piece of paper" and build up. Enabling residents to scrutinise plans, funding, designs etc is an important step in building confidence and trust.
- Communities affected by housing development often want expert advice. Independent Tenant Advisors (ITA) can provide advice to residents independent from the council.
- TPAS, which provides an ITA service, believes ITAs are essential to regeneration projects and that communities should be given the opportunity to choose their own ITA.
- In order to engage with "need-to-reach" (also referred to as "hard-to-reach") groups, there are some important initial steps, such as having a customer relationship management system in place and carrying out analysis of the community in relation to equalities.
- Engagement should be planned, monitored and measured so its impact can be assessed, and regularly reviewed with the community you're engaging with.

- It is important to understand residents' preferred channels of engagement and engagement activity should be used to gain further insight into communication preferences.
- Engagement on infill development should acknowledge the impact it will have on neighbours but also promote its benefits. There should be boundaries for different levels of engagement. Developers should take an inclusive approach and be prepared to talk to anybody. There should be excellent resident liaison.

The committee asked a number of questions and a discussion followed. The key points noted were:

- The first challenge with engagement is to connect and relate to the communities you're working with and to build their trust.
- The biggest challenge is speaking the right language and translating between the developer and the community. Key to this is having well-trained staff to speak to communities and translate back to council officers in a way they can understand.
- Speaking the right language can help build the trust and respect necessary to work together positively and constructively. It can take time, however, where communities have a long history of bad experiences. It helps to focus on the solutions to problems.
- On the Carpenters Estate, Newham, TPAS worked with the community to co-design a residents' charter. The community produced the charter and presented it to the council. This process created a dialogue, provided the community with an opportunity to highlight its priorities, and built trust.
- In order to assert their independence, some ITAs ask residents to monitor and agree to their activity. Residents should accompany ITAs at project meetings and be copied in to correspondence. ITAs should constantly demonstrate they are there to represent the views of the community.
- When recruiting volunteers to be involved in the engagement process it's important to recognise that the majority of people do not have lots of spare time. Engagement activity that involves significant time commitment can be off-putting. Engagement is increasingly about short burst of work, such as task and finish groups, over a few days.
- It's also important to ask residents how they would like to organise themselves to be engaged on a project, if they do at all. Developers should avoid imposing engagement models on residents.

### **Housing Select Committee – resident engagement in housing development review**

#### **Notes from meeting with Paul Simpson, Head of Operations and Engagement, Homes for Lambeth**

**1<sup>st</sup> November 2019**

Cllr Stephen Penfold (Housing Select Committee) and John Bardens (Scrutiny Manager) were present. Some of the key points of the discussion are set out below:

- 1.36 Lambeth is currently engaging with residents on [six estate regeneration schemes](#) in the borough: Cressingham Gardens; Knights Walk; Westbury; Fenwick; Central Hill; and South Lambeth. Engagement has been ongoing since 2015 in some cases.
- 1.37 Lambeth has produced 10 Housing [Design principles](#) that will need to be met by every new home they build. This includes involving residents in the design process where they are being re-housed.
- 1.38 Lambeth has also produced Key Guarantees on estate regeneration, setting out what secure tenants and home owners can expect from the council. This includes, for residents choosing to stay on their estate, being involved in the design of the new homes and the estate as a whole and influencing decisions around the phasing of building new homes and the construction works.
- 1.39 The Key Guarantees were first published in July 2015 and, following a review by TPAS, re-published in 2016.
- 1.40 Lambeth has used Independent Resident Advisors (IRAs) on estate regeneration schemes for some time. Each of the six current estate regenerations schemes has its own independent advisor. The IRAs role is to support and advise residents of their rights throughout the process, but not advise them on how to oppose a development.
- 1.41 Lambeth has established, and supports, a monthly Resident Engagement Panel (REP) meeting for each estate to update residents on the scheme. Each REP has terms of reference, but is able to work in its own way.
- 1.42 Lambeth avoided using local TRAs as a forum for regular updates on estate regeneration as TRAs have a broader role. It also wanted to avoid overlapping discussion with general housing management issues.
- 1.43 As well as a website for storing relevant information about the scheme, there are regular (4-6 weeks) Newsletters for each estate. This helps to inform residents and prevent misunderstandings. IRAs are given the opportunity to contribute to newsletters. There are also weekly or fortnightly drop-in session on each estate held together with the IRA.
- 1.44 Engagement with hard-to-reach groups is considered on an estate by estates basis and through working with IRAs. The IRAs know their estates, the residents they see and those they do not. They are then able to carry out targeted door knocking.
- 1.45 Door knocking has its limitations, however, so (social value / social investment) engagement events and activities have also been organised to target particular communities and reach new groups.

- 1.46 It was recognised that communities are often based around interests and activities, not necessarily where they live. So on each estate there is a physical engagement hub for running events. Engagement like this allows the council to meet a broader range of residents and increase awareness and understanding among residents. It's important to focus engagement around key decision points.
- 1.47 It is important to recognise that resident want to engage on different levels, from short animations to newsletters on business plans to sessions of design. Some residents may be interested in finances and funding but commercial sensitivity needs to be considered carefully.
- 1.48 It's important to be clear, across the programme, about where residents are going to be involved in, what they can influence, and what they will be informed about, so that residents understand the boundaries.

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## The Peabody Approach to Resident Engagement around Housing Development

### Introduction

Peabody has over 150 years of history, experience and expertise in working with residents. Our mission is to help people make the most of their lives by providing good quality homes, working with communities and promoting wellbeing.

- We develop and help create great places at scale – designing, building and maintaining homes and neighbourhood.
- We are working to enhance our local impact through building long term partnerships which includes our relationship with our residents but also with other local stakeholders in the neighbourhoods in which we work.
- Our engagement with residents is at the heart of what we have set out to do, namely to grow and use our position of influence to create positive change.

We can't do any of this work effectively unless our residents and the communities in which we work have the opportunity to become involved by being consulted about our work both during the planning stage and onward throughout the time they live in a Peabody home or in the proximity of one.

### Range of Methods

There are many different ways in which residents can be engaged, and at the end of this paper a list is included of many of the ones we use<sup>55</sup> to reach out to residents. These vary from the statutory formalised consultation exhibitions which can be used to communicate plans during the formal planning process to more informal methods such as drop in sessions and contacting community groups and Councillors. A portfolio of options is essential in order that all stakeholders have the chance to contribute their ideas.

A good example of where a variety of methods are in use at Thamesmead, Peabody's largest regeneration project, where in addition to the standard meetings there is an opportunity to engage with the plans in a large variety of ways including; through the website [www.thamesmeadnow.org.uk](http://www.thamesmeadnow.org.uk), various resident groups, an information centre to enable residents to ask questions in person and they hold a variety of events which are also promoted through forms of social media such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook as well as the more traditional fliers and posters to reach as large an audience as possible.

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<sup>55</sup> Appendix A – Methods of Engagement

## Hard to Reach Communities

There are many groups who are difficult to reach as part of the engagement process. Standard exhibitions and drop in sessions will not be effective methods to use with certain groups. Young people, for example, are notoriously difficult to reach, older people, people who are time poor and groups who may be hostile to the plans, and groups with limited language capacity or mobility issues can also be more isolated from the debate. For these groups it is important to go to them, or specifically invite them to attend. Recent resident consultation at Parkside in Lewisham held with young people on play equipment took place during a nursery session, and a youth club session, although it was still open to the wider community.

Our Thamesmead team ran a virtual reality workshop allowing residents to work with VR software to help formulate designs for a public realm project (Claridge Way). In this way it was possible to engage with young people in particular as they were very interested in using this medium to feed into plans.

Similarly with local interest and pressure groups the development team from Peabody would look to invite to meet with the group to listen to their specific concerns away from the setting of a generic planning meeting to see if there is any potential for common ground and to establish any room for negotiation as part of the planning process.

## Supporting Residents [building capacity]

We are fortunate in having resources within Peabody to call upon to assist us in supporting residents through the consultation process if required. We have colleagues available in community development, employment and training, and an older persons team, to assist us with advice and guidance, and in some cases with practical support for residents. All these specialists can help us work with in the communities we work with over the long term to improve 'capacity'<sup>56</sup> 'so they are able to engage with us more fully. With 'capacity' in mind we do try to get our engagement pitched at the right level, so that residents who may not have good literacy or numeracy skills are still able to contribute to the debate affecting their community.

In this way residents contribute through steering groups and focus groups to the ongoing conversations in long term regeneration schemes which lead to planning applications. Specialist training can be provided to help residents manage committee work and to be able to interrogate the information they are given by Peabody and our contractors as part of the steering process. Resident steering groups have become a vital part of the decision making

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<sup>56</sup> Community capacity building is about promoting the 'capacity' of local communities to develop, implement and sustain their own solutions to problems in a way that helps them shape and exercise control over their physical, social, economic and cultural environments,

process affecting their communities on our regeneration project, as can be seen currently at Thamesmead and also at St Johns Hill in Battersea.

We will look to form partnerships with other organisations in the area where we work, as appropriate, to assist with the engagement process. Currently our community development colleagues are working together with a school at Lewisham to run parenting classes as an example of the sort of support Peabody can help provide as part of our longer term commitment to communities, which goes well beyond planning. This team are also providing activities and training for our younger residents, so there is additional support to residents throughout the regeneration process and beyond.

## The Role of Councillors

Councillors have a vital role to play in supporting the residents through the consultation process by being a source of information between Peabody and residents, providing the interface between the parties and by signposting the consultation to community leaders, and other interested groups within the community to distribute information more widely. The local intelligence of councillors about their community should help Peabody target engagement activity to reach the widest audience.

Regular briefing of ward councillors will mean they will be able to disseminate the information to the wider community on our behalf. For example one of the councillors we work with in Wandsworth comes back to us for comment on social media posts which concern our planning application. This is extremely helpful for Peabody as we are able to provide accurate information and reach more of the community, but it is also helpful for the councillor as he knows we are responsive to him and the wider community he serves.

Another example of working together with councillors is at The Moorings, a local area within Thamesmead which has established a Neighbourhood Forum with the support of Peabody, and local councillors attend these forum meetings where local plans are discussed and the local communities input is being used to help design the redevelopment of the former social club which is being refitted by Peabody along with funding from the GLA.

## Providing Feedback & Influence on Outcomes

The influence on outcomes from engagement can be hugely significant during the planning process. An example would be the design competition held at Thamesmead to decide the preferred option for their new library. A number of architects submitted proposals of options for the design of this library, and it was the one which was most popular during the consultation with the general public that was the one Peabody went to planning with. In this way it is possible to really give local people a sense of ownership of a building within the public realm.

We aim to give residents feedback on their engagement and this can be shown by the evolution of a planning application. Current engagement at Archway campus, Islington provides a useful example of where the engagement is shaping the plans during the planning application process. The key with all schemes seems to be to begin consulting with the community and neighbours of a development from an early stage, to allow for changes to be made before the planning application is submitted.

At Archway local residents have had concerns which are often raised during the engagement process. These worries were around massing, the proximity of the new development to existing homes and the impact this will have on privacy. These concerns of residents there have resulted in changes to the massing. To achieve this the greatest density has been moved further away from the closest neighbours. Although this does not mean that there has been a reduction in the number of homes we are planning to develop, we have been able to be responsive to this by changing the massing.

Residents also have an important contribution to make to the choice of materials used in the scheme, vitally important as they are the ones who are going to look at it and live with it. Similarly in this scheme there has been an issue with concerns around privacy. As pictured this has contributed to the evolution of the plans for the North Wing Gallery.

There are many ways of giving feedback which include by newsletter, website or holding events to let people know how their opinions have shaped our plans. We have also created project booklets of major projects such as this example from The Moorings intended to summarise how we have arrived at particular designs through previous consultation<sup>57</sup>. This was issued to residents before we started on site.



### Archway, North Wing Gallery

Pictured above is an attractive building with an access gallery which was originally designed as a steel framed structure which would be open above balustrade height. However as a response to feedback from the neighbourhood options for potential screening are being considered because of privacy concerns of the local neighbours.

<sup>57</sup> Attached - Your Moorings Booklet

At Thamesmead the Wolvercote Road Steering Group directly feeds into the masterplan for the regeneration of the Wolvercote Road area which is currently being designed by architects who use feedback on their designs from this group to shape those overall plans. There is also a South Thamesmead Forum which consists of an open group of residents across the whole south area of Thamesmead. This group is an information sharing forum to allow residents to understand the plans taking place across the whole area, and their feedback is often incorporated in plans going forward, particularly if there is a strong opinion on a particular subject.

Resident engagement at St Johns Hill, Battersea, has influenced outcomes throughout the regeneration process that is currently taking place. This is an old Peabody estate which is being regenerated at greater density because the old 1930s homes were no longer fit for purpose. This is being achieved over three phases. A Residents Steering Group was established to guide the regeneration through the first phase and on to completion. The residents have contributed their ideas and been part of the process throughout from the early stages when they helped to choose the architects and the contractors, and contributing their ideas to the planning process. This has included contributing their ideas to the artwork delivered on the scheme. This has resulted in artwork that is meaningful to the residents of the old homes and local community. It is entirely appropriate that the artwork links the new homes to the old and this has been achieved through the resident's involvement. At many new developments the artwork seems to have very little connection with the neighbourhood, and consultation has been key in drawing the strands of development and community together here.<sup>58</sup>

**About the Brick Relief Sculptures**  
Phase One redevelopment St Johns Hill

The Sculptures on the new buildings celebrate the philanthropy of George Peabody, his unique values and how that translated into life on the original estate. They explore the history and memories from the original Peabody St John's Hill estate.

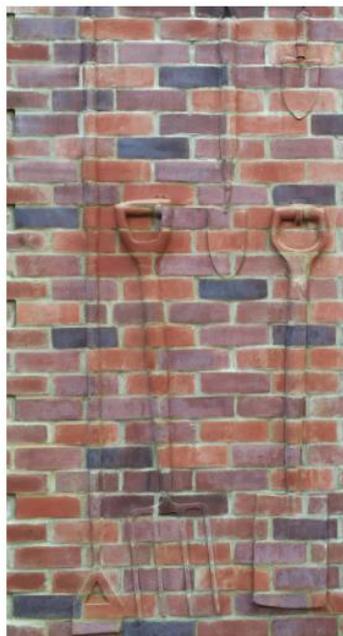
How natural light falls on the works determines their clarity, so as light changes throughout the day the sculptures appear more or less defined.

Each of the images were developed following workshops, discussions and events with tenants and local people and attempt to give a flavour of what life was like when the estate was built. Each work is placed in a suitable context and location to reflect its original purpose and to develop a Sculpture trail throughout the site.



**Tools**

The Tools sculpture reflects the culture of self-help that existed on the estate: homes were offered to those who helped themselves. The central square that used to be opposite this piece became allotments during the second world war and tools such as these would have been used.



**Sink**

Communal washing facilities were the only source of hot water on the estate. These washrooms became important social meeting places.

**Uniform**

The Uniform sculpture represents the many men from the estate who went in to the services or were porters. It also reflects the moral code tenants had to adhere to in order to gain a home.



<sup>58</sup> Pictured overleaf three of the brick sculptures from phase one St Johns Hill, SW11

*Pictured three of the brick sculptures at St Johns Hill*

It is also possible to discover through this kind of engagement activity preferences that residents have, which we may have previously had no idea about. At the Parkside scheme in Lewisham there has been ongoing consultation throughout phases 1 to 4 of this scheme. The context of this scheme is this one is where Lewisham Homes residents have moved to new Peabody homes as part of a land transfer regeneration scheme of mixed tenure over multiple phases. Through engagement associated with planning the Peabody team have found out that social rent tenure residents do not like underfloor heating. They do not like open plan living and they do not like living in tower blocks. Although we were not aware of these preferences in time to influence the designs for social homes in phase one, they have been fed through to the design team and these preferences have informed the plans for subsequent phases.

## Evaluation of Engagement Activity

A successful planning application can be a tangible sign of positive engagement activity, with few objections. Other ways in which we can start to measure the engagement of residents could be the numbers in attendance at meetings, the feedback we receive, and the hits on a consultation website or responses to text messages. Surveys that have been completed and knowledgeable feedback from councillors can all show us that residents and the wider community are interested and have been informed about our plans.

In consultation exercises leading up to planning we would always hope to be able to demonstrate how this engagement has influenced the plans. Please see overleaf for an example of how we have been able to demonstrate the changes to planning which have been made as a result of resident engagement from the Archway scheme.

Welcome to this follow-up consultation event. We wanted to provide residents on the residential roads immediately to the north of the site with some more detailed information on how the plans relate to your properties. Please see the images below for more information on how the plans have evolved since we began consulting the local community back in 2015. Following the first set of consultation events, a series of changes were made to blocks 5B and 5C which are the two northernmost new residential buildings proposed. We have amended these again since our follow-up consultation event in July and we look forward to hearing your views on the current plans.

BLOCK 5B and 5C MASS AND FORM Consultation events November 2015	BLOCK 5B and 5C MASS AND FORM Consultation events July 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5B proposed as 8 storeys across</li><li>• 5C proposed as ranging from 4, 5 and 7 storeys</li><li>• 8 storey building proposed along Highgate Hill</li><li>• 12 storey building at the apex of the site</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5B proposed as 7 storeys</li><li>• 5C proposed as staggered from 2 to 7 storeys</li><li>• 8 storey building removed along Highgate Hill</li><li>• Additional massing added to the apex building bringing it up to 20 storeys</li></ul>
	

**Haworth Tompkins** **calfordseaden** **Farrer Huxley Associates** **MONTAGU EVANS** **PHILIP PARK** **conisbee** **Newington**

For further information please contact Daniel Stern at [archway@peabody.org.uk](mailto:archway@peabody.org.uk) or telephone 020 7234 3668

## The Challenges

Challenges can include hard to reach communities already discussed here, but also consultation fatigue when a community has been involved in regeneration proposals for a number of years. For example at Parkside in Lewisham, because the residents have had the opportunity to be involved for around 10 years, and all the social rent tenants have now been decanted from the old Lewisham stock to new Peabody homes there is much less interest in future outcomes. Therefore it becomes much more difficult to maintain the same degree of interest in engagement. So for a recent engagement exercise for outside gym equipment held on this scheme, the engagement was kept it very simple. A leaflet to choose pieces of preferred equipment rather than anything more involving. This seems appropriate when a high level of consultation has already achieved good feedback on the contents of the new linear park, and the desire for outside gym equipment had already been established.

At Thamesmead when we took over in 2014 the area was a product of under investment and broken promises by previous organisations who managed it. This has created cynicism amongst residents who did not believe any of the improvements under discussion were going to come to fruition, making engagement very difficult in the early stages. However as buildings start to come out of the ground and public areas are being improved, this cynicism is softening, but the team there feel there is still some way to go before the residents are able to fully trust and engage with us.

## The Future

There will be more updates and information available online for residents to look at in the future. Large scale regeneration projects are likely to increasingly use apps to engage with the general public over plans which will impact on multiple communities and they will be able to capture real time data which may be very useful. Innovation such as the virtual reality workshop described here, and the increasing use of three dimensional images as a result of technological advances has the potential to make engagement more exciting and also easier for residents to understand.

Social media can be effective when reaching the part of the audience who are technologically savvy, but it will be important not to leave behind the traditional methods involving face to face meetings and written communication in the future. For older people and those who are less comfortable with technology for whatever reason, it is important that they are not left behind during advances in engagement technology. You will still need to reach out to residents to get them to engage with an app, particularly with young people, so outreach at youth events, drop in sessions and fun days are still likely to be part of the process for some time to come.

At Peabody we know that our residents want to engage with us in an increasingly varied number of ways. We will look to continuously improve our methods of engagement so the

conversation with our residents remains meaningful and they can provide valuable input into the shape of their communities for the foreseeable future.

## Appendix A - Range of Methods

This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but it will give some idea of the variety of methods we use.

### **Meetings**

Structured Meetings & exhibitions

Resident Steering groups and focus groups, but also less formal meetings such as;

Drop in sessions, fun days, stalls

Door knocking

Individual appointments

Going to residents gatherings such as coffee mornings, youth clubs

### **Correspondence such as;**

Newsletters

Letters

Text messages

Email

DVD

Translation services can be made available depending on the demographic of the community we are trying to reach

### **Social media**

Websites

Facebook

Instagram

Twitter

Apps

## Appendix 12

### **Centre for London, STOPPED: why people oppose residential development in their back yard, July 2016**

Summary of key relevant points from report:

- 1.1 This study by the Centre for London (a politically independent, not-for-profit think tank) focused on why people oppose development in their area. The study noted that opposition from local residents can have a meaningful impact on supply (slowing things down, adding costs, and reducing units) but that while it's easy to caricature opposition as NIMBYism this explanation has been roundly criticised by academic researchers.
- 1.2 Based on a literature review and interviews with resident groups and industry experts the study identified a number of typical areas of concern\* and discussed the importance of resident engagement in addressing several of these. Recognising, however, that each development will have its own blend of issues specific to its location, history and demographics the final report also stressed the importance accurately understanding opposition before tailoring solutions to any particular development.  
  
(\*Services; Trust; Outsiders; Place; Politics; Engagement; and Disruption)
- 1.3 Under the section on Engagement, the report cites academic research suggesting that residents are more likely to support development if they can influence it. The report notes, however, that engagement is often poor – statutory planning consultations kick in too late and budget cuts have led to more proactive engagement work being scaled back.
- 1.4 The study found that some developers have begun taking the lead on engagement, referring to the example of a developer of a 500-unit scheme in a West London town centre writing to all residents in the borough and holding weekly resident meetings for two years.
- 1.5 The report also notes, however, that the methods of engagement are perhaps more important than the quantity. It cites academic criticism of consultation in which information is collected without any intention of being used and stresses that “engagement is only effective if it goes beyond collecting information to genuinely listening to residents”, to “both listen to residents and to be seen to be listening”.
- 1.6 Under the section on Place, the report goes on to discuss the importance of listening in order to understand people’s “place identity” or “place attachment” – when the look and feel of the place someone lives comes to form an important part of their identity.
- 1.7 According to the report, place attachment has significant implications for residential development in London. It cites empirical research suggesting that place attachment is among the most powerful motivations for opposition. But also cites research showing that place identify can be harnessed to win local people around to support local development.
- 1.8 The report acknowledges that not all sites benefit from strong local identities, but maintains that by listening carefully to residents to develop a nuanced, site-specific understanding of how people identify with their local area, more homes can get built with less opposition.

- 1.9 The report notes that most developers assess the character of a local area before design work and suggested that adding an assessment of residents' sense of home could be a valuable addition. (See Ealing in scoping paper for example)
- 1.10 Under the section on Politics, the report discusses the influence of "framing" and the importance of early engagement. The report notes that residents tend to make sense of proposals through discussion with others and that the way facts are presented (or "framed") has a big impact on how people respond to those facts. The report cited research showing that explaining the effects of high house prices on family life and children, for example, significantly reduces opposition to development.
- 1.11 The report states that developments can therefore receive very different levels of opposition depending on how residents first become aware, and that the influence of framing shows how important it is to start communication with residents early in order to frame new housing development as a social necessity that benefits real people.
- 1.12 Framing can also help address concerns relating to services early on, while early engagement can help to build or rebuild trust by making and keeping small commitments - for example, instead of winding down maintenance, keep going and rebrand under the regeneration project.
- 1.13 The report also argues that Councillors need to be given additional support and suggests that one way of boosting the quality of debate around housing development could be to hold "town hall seminars" bringing together architects, urban designers, councillors and council officers to explore, for example, how the quality of high-density developments can be improved.
- 1.14 According to the report, events like this could help equip councillors and officers with the expertise and confidence to guide developers and defend against opposition. The report also suggests that inviting residents groups to such events could give all stakeholders a common language and help make debates more constructive.

## **Appendix 13**

### **Camden's Community Infrastructure Programme and Community Liaison Advisors**

#### **Notes from report submitted to Camden Housing Scrutiny Committee Dec 2018**

Camden plans to directly deliver 1,100 council homes and 300 affordable homes to rent as part of its Community Investment Programme (CIP) – its long-term programme of investment into in schools, homes and community facilities.

Camden notes that CIP housing schemes are often complex requiring engagement and commitment over time and describes its approach to development as “community led”.

It says that it seeks to build homes and schemes that address local issues – from housing need to reducing crime – and ensures that “residents are involved in the design and development from the outset and throughout”.

This ranges from residents helping to select architects to co-developing decant strategies and local lettings plans and includes paying for residents to attend workshops to help them understand and participate in the regeneration process.

Camden is also piloting a new peer-to-peer engagement model where local residents, known as “Community Liaison Advisors” (CLAs), are employed to help tailor the approach to delivering community-led regeneration.

On a recent estate regeneration development (of around 300 homes) CLAs worked with officers to set out principles of inclusive and collaborative engagement.

CLAs then identified a range of communication tools to inform and involve residents and set out a clear feedback mechanism to show how residents have influenced process.

Other engagement activity included home visits; letters hand-delivered by CLAs; drop-ins; exhibitions; estate newsletters; site visits; walkabouts with architects; resident training in design and appraisal, and a setting up a ward-member-led steering group.

Camden said CLAs have helped residents to understand the regeneration process and encouraged residents to be actively involved in the appointment of lead architects.

<https://www.camden.gov.uk/west-kentish-town-estate>

<https://cip.camden.gov.uk/>

<https://cip.camden.gov.uk/housing/>

<https://cip.camden.gov.uk/housing/council-homes/>

<https://www.camden.gov.uk/community-investment-programme>

## Appendix 14

### **Centre for London, Capital Homes: Trust, design and community engagement (roundtable report), July 2019**

Summary of key relevant points from report:

- 1.1 This paper presents a summary of expert roundtable discussions held on the topic of trust, design and community engagement in housing development in May 2019.
- 1.2 The introduction to the report noted that engagement is often viewed as tokenistic, rather than as part of a genuine effort to involve local communities in decision making, and asked how can better engagement create the housing that London needs, and the type of places that communities value, as pressure for new development intensifies?
- 1.3 Given the low uptake of community powers such as neighbourhood plans, the paper noted that most people's experience of engagement on housing development will be the thumbs-up or -down planning process, as opposed to a discussion about how a neighbourhood is going to change as a whole.
- 1.4 Early and prolonged relationship building with local people was noted as good practice in conveying the potential benefits of a development to an area, as was the need to maintain different levels of formal and informal engagement over the course of the project.
- 1.5 The report noted that good local engagement was viewed as a way of improving schemes and even raising densities. Roundtable participants discussed examples of residents pushing for higher densities where they felt in control. There was a feeling that residents are not against high densities, but against bad design.
- 1.6 The report noted the demonstrating local benefits can be powerful and mentioned cases of developers changing narrative of development from simply changing the built form to revitalising a community through providing training, employment opportunities, community assets and facilities.
- 1.7 There was some discussion about whether arrangements could be more formalised as a "deal" between local residents and developers, where the community negotiated on their own behalf the benefits to be delivered from new building.
- 1.8 Some caution was expressed, however, about the time demands of engagement where developments are time sensitive and cost constrained.
- 1.9 The report noted that honesty is undervalued, with some participants saying that developers and local authorities are not entering into honest engagement with the public or each other about the potential limitations and constraints.
- 1.10 Some felt that there needs to be better management of expectations, noting that the development industry can be reluctant to say 'no' and explain the financial and other constraints at play. The report also noted that while councils acting as developers can deliver benefits it can also create suspicion about the role of the local authority and the interests they serve
- 1.11 The report noted that local people are pragmatic and perceptive enough to understand potential trade-offs and that there is therefore capacity for greater honesty in the system.

## **Appendix 15**

### **Future of London, *Delivering Infill development: A London 2050 briefing paper*, 2015**

Summary of key relevant points from report:

- 1.1 This report focuses on the infill development, the main barriers, and how to win the support of the existing community.
- 1.2 It notes that increasing densities in existing locations plays an important role in meeting housing need, that London has capacity for infill development at significant scale [SHLAA capacity chart], but that thoughtful schemes may improve existing communities and provide benefits beyond contributing to housing targets.
- 1.3 The report states that local concerns are to be expected, but that that winning local support within existing communities is crucial and part of this is about acknowledging negative impacts and mitigating them wherever possible – whether by allocating some homes for existing residents or by investing in shared amenities.
- 1.4 The report states that an important part of working with existing communities is about how you tell the story of change. It said that paying early attention to the narrative, and identifying and working with community leaders, is time well spent.
- 1.5 While big sites take years but offer eventual benefits to existing residents, the report notes that the benefit to existing residents of infill development may not be so clear and that local communities will use their voice to prevent change unless the process is carefully managed.
- 1.6 The report also discusses confronting cultural and social attitudes towards density and space and winning people over to the idea that increasing the local population is good for neighbourhoods – providing, for example, more customers for local shops and increased funding for local services.