

TITLE OF REPORT - Residents Charter Key Decision No - NH Q78	
CABINET MEETING DATE 14 March 2022	CLASSIFICATION: Open
WARD(S) AFFECTED All Wards	
CABINET MEMBER Mayor Philip Glanville Councillor Guy Nicholson, Deputy Mayor for housing supply, planning, culture and inclusive economy	
KEY DECISION Yes	
REASON Affects two or more wards	
GROUP DIRECTOR Ajman Ali, Group Director for Neighbourhoods and Housing	

1. CABINET MEMBER'S INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Hackney's Council housing provides a safe, stable and affordable place to live for more than 20,000 families in the borough. As the demand for homes has grown and house prices and private sector rents have increased, the availability of Council homes has become more important than ever.
- 1.2. Hackney Council, since 2011, has led on its pioneering, not-for-profit approach to building new homes. This approach has directly delivered more than 1,400 new homes in the borough. More than half the homes built are for social rent, shared ownership or for Hackney Living Rent, and the rest are sold outright to help pay for them – a model now followed by other Councils across London and the UK.
- 1.3. Building new homes can cause huge disruption to local residents and we believe it's only fair that local residents should always be the first to benefit from a new Council development. That's why the Council is committed to always put local residents first, which means guaranteeing the right to return for any affected residents or giving first preference for new Council homes to local neighbours in housing need, or putting Hackney residents ahead of others when marketing homes for sale.
- 1.4. The Residents Charter sets out the Council's commitment to ballot residents whose homes are to be directly affected by a proposed new development and guarantees the right to return and support protocols that residents are entitled to if their homes are impacted by Council-led regeneration involving demolition. This report sits alongside the ballots policy also on the agenda at March Cabinet.
- 1.5. I commend this report to Cabinet.

2. GROUP DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. Our successful, award-winning estate regeneration programme is helping transform unmodernised estates into new thriving, mixed tenure communities, with high standards of design and community facilities. We are building thousands of new homes, over half of which will be for social rent and shared ownership and Hackney Living Rent.
- 2.2. We fully recognise, however, that our regeneration plans cause major disruption for local people affected by the changes taking place and for existing tenants who have to move out of their homes in order for redevelopment to take place. The Residents Charter helps address this by clearly setting out the Council's principles underpinning building homes and the key promises Hackney makes to residents involved in regeneration proposals. These principles and promises include, for instance, ballots of directly affected residents on whether the proposals should go ahead, close

collaboration with local residents from start to finish, and first dibs for local people.

- 2.3. The Residents Charter is an essential way of ensuring that existing residents, particularly those directly involved in redevelopment projects, are aware of their rights and guarantees.

3. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1. That the Cabinet approves the Residents Charter attached as Appendix 1.**

4. REASONS FOR DECISION

- 4.1. As Hackney is facing an unprecedented housing crisis, the Council is building new genuinely affordable homes across a range of sites in the borough to help meet housing demand, engaging and consulting with the local community and putting residents at the heart of any proposals for redevelopment.
- 4.2. To ensure that regeneration brings real benefits to local communities and opportunities are given to existing tenants, the Council has already developed and adopted Local Lettings Policies as well as the Leaseholder and Freeholder Options Document. Moreover, the Council follows the guidance provided in the 'Better Homes for Local People', the Mayor of London's Estate Regeneration Good Practice Guide. The latter sets out good practice and principles to deliver better homes for local communities, and encourages housing providers to openly engage with residents affected by a regeneration project, from its inception. Among the recommended principles of good practice is introducing a residents charter to set out specific and deliverable commitments.
- 4.3. The proposed Residents Charter clearly sets out the Council's principles underpinning its not-for-profit and Council-led approach to regeneration, and its key promises to the community, such as introducing ballots of directly affected residents and making decisions in response to residents' feedback.
- 4.4. The Residents Charter sets out Hackney Council's commitments to its community if a redevelopment proposal involves the demolition of existing residents' homes. The charter presents the Council's commitments toward specific groups of residents (Council tenants, resident leaseholders or freeholders, and non-resident leaseholders and freeholders) in a transparent and specific way, identifying each group's rights and options, by tenure, in case of regeneration projects involving the demolition of their homes.
- 4.5. There are no direct financial implications of introducing the Residents Charter, although among the Council's key promises is organising ballots of residents directly affected by a demolition proposal. Ballots may generate some additional costs because independent bodies may have to be procured to give

more independence to the votes. However, Hackney Council already invests in extensive engagement with residents and wider stakeholders when developing regeneration schemes and the costs of arranging ballots as part of this engagement process would not result in a relevant increase in costs.

5. DETAILS OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 5.1. The alternative option would be not introducing the Residents Charter. However, this would:
 - a. disregard one of the best practice principles set out in the Mayor of London's regeneration guide that Hackney Council embraces;
 - b. deprive residents of an opportunity to see their rights and the Council's key promises and commitments to them clearly set out together in an accessible document.

6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1. Resident Charters form part of the good practice examples and principles set out by the Mayor of London in his 'London Estate Regeneration Good Practice Guide: Better Homes for Local People', which recognises Hackney Council's arrangements for consultation with residents as an example of best practice.

6.2. Policy Context

In the Hackney's year-long consultation with residents in 2015/16 - 'Hackney: a place for everyone', that informed the Hackney Housing Strategy 2017-22, the surveyed residents expressed concerns about housing availability and affordability in Hackney and suggested that building more social housing and other genuinely affordable housing formed part of the response to their concerns. 'Building high quality, well-designed and genuinely affordable new homes' became the first key theme of the 'Delivering the homes Hackney needs' Housing Strategy.

In combination with other policies, the Residents Charter reinforces Hackney's commitment to build new, genuinely affordable homes for the local communities, taking into account the views of local residents particularly of those directly involved in redevelopment projects, and ensuring that local communities benefit from the regeneration taking place in the borough.

6.3. Equality Impact Assessment

The Residents Charter is a transparent and accessible document that will facilitate engagement with residents and early discussions over estate regeneration proposals. It clearly sets out the Council's promises and commitments to its residents involved in regeneration projects, and reiterates the importance of Council-community collaborative work.

Residents in a variety of tenures (secure Council tenants, leaseholders, and freeholders) as well as non-resident leaseholders or freeholders will all benefit from this document that clearly sets out their rights and options in case of Council-led regeneration proposals involving their homes.

6.4. Sustainability

There would be no new impacts on the physical and social environment from proceeding with the recommendations of this report.

6.5. Consultations

There is no requirement for statutory consultation in relation to developing the Residents Charter which clearly sets out the rights and guarantees of residents affected by regeneration proposals. Through the process of developing the charter, however, officers have engaged with:

- officers from relevant council services,
- groups representing residents of regeneration projects.

The responses of these groups have been taken into account in finalising the Residents Charter for consideration by the Cabinet.

6.6. Risk Assessment

Balloting residents directly affected by a demolition proposal is one of the key promises set out in the Residents Charter. Ballots may generate additional costs as, for instance, independent bodies may have to be appointed to give more credibility to the vote. However, adequate and effective project and cash flow management will ensure that additional costs for ballots-related engagement are manageable.

7. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES

There are no direct financial implications from this report, however the commitments made in the Residents charter may limit the viability of schemes and therefore ultimately impact on the quantity of affordable homes that can be delivered.

8. VAT Implications on Land & Property Transactions

Not applicable.

9. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL & GOVERNANCE SERVICES

- 9.1 The Mayor's Scheme of Delegation provides that the Mayor and Cabinet shall approve all corporate policies and strategies, which includes the Residents Charter exhibited as Appendix 1.
- 9.2 Once formally adopted, the Residents' Charter will give residents certain legal rights to hold the Council to account in terms of its contents and application.
- 9.3 The Hackney Housing Strategy 2017- 2022 is referred to at paragraph 6.2 above and careful consideration should be given by Officers to ensure that the proposed Residents Charter is complementary to that Strategy and to the Council's other Housing and Regeneration policies.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Residents Charter

EXEMPT

Not applicable.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

In accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) England Regulations 2012 publication of Background Papers used in the preparation of reports is required

Description of document (or None)

None

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