

Overview & Scrutiny

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To:

Cllr Guy Nicholson, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Delivery, Inclusive Economy & Regeneration

Cllr Clayeon McKenzie, Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation

Resident Engagement for Estate Regeneration Scrutiny Session - 20th April 2023 (Recommendations)

The Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission held a discussion on the Council's approach to resident engagement for estate regeneration in Hackney on 20th April 2023. This was a helpful meeting which enabled members to further understand the Council's approach to engaging and consulting residents when making decisions about the future of council managed estates.

The [video recording](#) of the meeting, alongside the [agenda papers](#) and [minutes](#) provide a public record of the meeting. As part of the scrutiny process, the Commission also held a [focus group](#) with residents living in council managed estates that have been affected by estate regeneration schemes to understand their experiences of engagement and consultation, and what they may like to see happen additionally or differently in the future.

The Commission would firstly like to place on record its thanks to Rachel Bagenal, Strategic Head of Housing Regeneration & Delivery and Hermoine Brightwell, Project Manager Woodberry Down for their valuable contributions to the meeting. Similarly, we would like to thank Paul Watt, Professor of Urban Studies at Birkbeck University for sharing his insights and research into estate regeneration schemes across London.

The Commission would also like to thank Cllr Guy Nicholson, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Delivery, Inclusive Economy & Regeneration and Cllr Clayeon McKenzie, Cabinet Member for Housing Services & Resident Participation for their contributions and ongoing engagement with the scrutiny process.

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The Commission thanks those residents from across Colville, Kings Crescent, Woodberry Down and Regents Court estates for giving up their time to share their views and experiences of resident engagement for the schemes underway on their estates. Their engagement with the scrutiny process is a testament to their commitment to holding the Council to account, playing an active role in improving local services, and championing the housing issues that matter to them.

On the evidence provided and through consultation with officers, members of the Commission have made five recommendations to both Housing Regeneration & Delivery and Housing Services, recognising the importance of these services working closely together to ensure joined up and efficient housing related services for residents on council owned and managed estates.

It is hoped that these will contribute further to the positive work that is already taking place, including during the refresh of the new Housing Strategy and subsequent delivery, and we look forward to receiving an update on the recommendations that are taken forward at a future scrutiny meeting.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Soraya Adejare
Chair, Living in Hackney Scrutiny
Commission

Councillor Clare Joseph
Vice Chair, Living in Hackney Scrutiny
Commission

Cc:

- Rickardo Hyatt, Group Director Climate, Homes & Economy
- Stephen Haynes, Strategic Director Inclusive Economy, Regeneration & New Homes
- Steve Waddington, Strategic Director Housing Services
- Rachel Baganel, Strategic Head of Housing Regeneration & Delivery
- Ben Bradley, Head of Mayor and Cabinet Office

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Recommendations of the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

The Commission was encouraged to hear about the Council's approach to engaging with residents affected by estate regeneration schemes, which has evolved over the last decade and is a culmination of an ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and innovation in regard to resident participation.

The Commission strongly supports a collaborative approach to estate regeneration, which puts local people at the heart of proposals and gives them the opportunity to be involved in making decisions about their homes throughout the regeneration process. When done in this way, estate regeneration can offer existing residents better homes, more new and affordable housing, and improvements to the local environment.

The Commission heard about the [Residents' Charter](#) and [Housing Services Resident Engagement Strategy](#), both of which play a positive role in informing the Council's approach to engagement and setting out a range of principles which aim to ensure it is timely, informs meaningful change, includes under-represented groups, and gives residents a leading role in the future of their estates.

We also heard about the encouraging work going on across a number of estates in Hackney, for example in Woodberry Down. The Commission views this as an example of good practice, and was pleased to hear that residents on the estate had been extensively engaged with on the masterplan, design of each phase and rehousing process, and that the Council positively engages with community leaders such as the Woodberry Down Community Organisation and Independent Tenant and Leaseholder Advisors.

During the Commission's focus group with residents affected by estate regeneration schemes, many examples of good practice were identified by the residents we spoke with, particularly around the Council's efforts to provide residents with the opportunity to have their say on proposals and act on their feedback where appropriate.

Having said this, residents did raise some concerns around open and transparent early engagement with residents on proposals and how they will affect them, being kept informed and updated about the progress of the proposals (and specifically the impact of the high turnover of regeneration staff on this process), and the Council's ongoing role in maintaining homes to a good standard and promoting better community cohesion and integration through engagement activity.

It is recognised that these issues are not isolated to regeneration schemes in Hackney, with similar issues being highlighted to the Commission across several other schemes in London. For example, the high turnover of regeneration staff is

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reflective of the difficulties seen across the sector in attracting and retaining suitably qualified regeneration personnel, and the extended periods of time regeneration projects often go on for. The Commission was encouraged to hear that the Council nonetheless recognised its impact on residents, and was looking at an area based staffing model to allow staff to build an in-depth knowledge of estates, and closer relationships with residents.

On reflection, the Commission feels that Housing Regeneration & Delivery and Housing Services could work more closely together to ensure existing homes on regeneration estates are of a decent standard, and help build social networks and promote community cohesion between residents living on regeneration estates.

Moreover, the Commission believes more can be done to ensure that Housing Regeneration & Delivery is as clear as possible with residents about the aims, benefits and potential issues that may arise for regeneration projects on estates, and explore the ways it can measure, demonstrate and learn from the impact of its engagement with those residents affected.

The Commission therefore recommends:

- 1) Housing Services should recognise the positive impact of regular, efficient and egalitarian maintenance and repairs' provision on residents' trust in the estate regeneration process, and look to prioritise addressing repairs and maintenance issues across estates affected by regeneration (including temporary accommodation units).
- 2) Housing Services should take proactive and long term steps to socially integrate new residents into estates affected by regeneration (including temporary tenants), and work closely with Housing Regeneration & Delivery to ensure a smooth transition from the regeneration process.
- 3) Housing Regeneration & Delivery should work collectively to set out clear parameters from the outset when presenting residents with regeneration proposals for their estates by acknowledging the potential challenges regeneration and rehousing may create, as well as clarifying the aims and potential benefits of regeneration and to whom they will apply.
- 4) Housing Regeneration & Delivery should create a bespoke resident charter, such as that adopted in Tower Court estate, for every estate regeneration scheme which can be referred to during and after the regeneration process, to ensure that promises and/or guarantees made at the outset are fulfilled.
- 5) Housing Regeneration & Delivery should explore the ways it can measure the impact of its approaches to all encompassing resident engagement for regeneration schemes, as well as the opportunities for learning and improvement, such as monitoring levels of participation, engagement (including diversity profiling) and satisfaction with the regeneration process and end result.