

Executive response to the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission's recommendations from the Resident Engagement for Estate Regeneration session held on 20th April 2023

Recommendation one

The Commission recommends:

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).

Response

Housing Services recognises the positive impact of a good maintenance and repairs regime on residents' trust, not only on regeneration estates, but across the whole housing stock.

Housing Services provides repairs / improvements services in two main ways, responsive repairs and capital improvements. Repairs are provided in line with the council's repairs policy that sets out the priorities for responding to repair requests. It is not felt appropriate to provide a different speed of response or priority because a property falls within a regeneration estate.

The approach to capital improvements is set out within the council's HRA Asset Management Strategy. Work is undertaken on a 7 year cycle with each property being assessed every 7 years. This does not mean that each property will receive improvement works every 7 years, a property is assessed against the Decent Homes Standard both in terms of internal improvements and the external fabric of the building. Should work be required, this will be undertaken as part of the capital improvement cycle, if no work is required it will be reviewed again on the next 7 year cycle.

Where estate regeneration projects are planned, should these plans include the demolition of any homes, historically these properties have been taken out of the 7 year cycle (the main reason being that they are to be imminently demolished). However, in recent years we have seen some regeneration programmes delayed due to cost inflation impacting on the viability of schemes or some schemes run over many years, with some properties earmarked for demolition in 10 to 15 years time. Clearly these properties should not be excluded from the capital improvement programme and individual decisions should be made based on the condition of the building elements and the length of time to demolition.

We are also conscious that even if existing homes are not to be demolished, regeneration can have a significant impact on the wider community. In these

cases efforts are made to coordinate the 7 year capital improvement work to align with the regeneration works.

Recommendation two

The Commission recommends:

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.

Response

Housing Services takes proactive and long term steps to socially integrate new residents into estates affected by regeneration and works with Housing Regeneration & Delivery to ensure a smooth transition.

Housing Services are committed to facilitating effective resident engagement across all our estates. A new Resident Engagement Strategy (RES) was approved by Cabinet in December 2022 under key decision CHE S135. This strategy equally applies to regeneration estates and supporting new residents to socially integrate and existing residents.

We are committed to supporting residents to provide feedback on our services, have the opportunity to directly influence our services, policies and decisions and to contribute to (or benefit from) the development of communities and neighbourhoods through local action or engagement.

The RES co-produced with our engaged residents groups and five priority themes were identified:

- Embed a 'Resident First' culture across Housing Services - *A positive culture of resident engagement starts at the top. Through our behaviours and working practices, Housing Service leaders will demonstrate that the voice of residents is at the heart of good service delivery and lay the foundations for continuous listening and learning across the service.*
- Support our residents' groups to thrive - *We want all our residents' groups to have the support and resources they need to ensure good governance, play an active role in improving our services and promote community activities on their estates.*
- Widen the ways residents can engage with us - *We want our residents to play a greater role in informing our decisions and driving improvement in our services. With more pressure on our budgets, we need to work together to make sure our service planning reflects residents' priorities and concerns.*

- Ensure residents influence our decision-making and drive service improvements - *We want our residents to play a greater role in informing our decisions and driving improvement in our services. With more pressure on our budgets, we need to work together to make sure our service planning reflects residents' priorities and concerns.*
- Promote engagement activity that strengthens our communities - *We will continue to invest in community projects and initiatives that promote the resilience of our housing communities and promote community cohesion on our estates. We will focus on building the capacity of community groups to run projects and activities successfully, and developing strong partnerships with stakeholders who can support us in our work.*

Embedding these five priorities in all our work as well including our approach to working with residents in regeneration areas throughout the regeneration phase should have the positive impact of supporting new residents to socially integrate.

Recommendation three

The Commission recommends:

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.

Response three

- The Housing Regeneration and Delivery service is committed to collaborating with local residents on regeneration projects from start to finish.
- The service is currently reviewing the approach to resident engagement and participation on regeneration/housing delivery projects.
- The intention is to further refine the approach to resident engagement and participation to ensure that residents feel informed, involved and empowered in the process from the outset. This will include clarifying the aims and potential benefits of regeneration to residents.
- For the New Homes Programme that was approved by Cabinet in December 2022 under key decision CHE S142, a number of consultation and engagement events have already been held on estates earmarked for future development sites, and a proactive approach has been taken to engaging residents across all tenures to participate in new Resident Steering Groups (RSGs).
- The New Homes Programme seeks to expand and deepen resident participation by involving residents from the very beginning before the design process has started, by transparently clarifying the aspects and

issues which are open to shaping (and those which are determined by the Council's approvals, requirements and constraints), and ensuring participation is enabled and focused on meaningful aspects.

- Each project will develop its own Community Participation Strategy at the start of the design process to ensure a collaborative approach that facilitates residents' voices at every stage of the development process.
- Each project will also establish an RSG made up of local representatives including Council tenants, private renters, and owner occupiers. The role of the RSG is to represent the wider community; advise the Council on how to effectively engage neighbours; and influence and make decisions on clearly defined aspects of the scheme by attending site visits, regular thematic training workshops, and engaging wider residents.
- Each project will host wider community participation events on a regular basis.
- Some elements of the project and design have to satisfy certain statutory, regulatory and/or Council obligations and therefore are not suitable for extensive participation by the RSG, residents and local community organisations. This will be communicated and explained transparently at the outset, so that RSG members and residents understand the envelope they are working in, and why.

Recommendation four

The Commission recommends that:

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.

Response four

1. Hackney's Cabinet adopted a Residents Charter in March 2022 under key decision NH Q78.
2. This Residents Charter underpins our approach to regeneration and makes a number of commitments and key promises to residents.
3. For example, these key promises include a commitment to ensuring that Council tenants whose home is demolished will be guaranteed a new, modern Council home on their estate that better meets their needs. Along with a key promise that resident leaseholders and freeholders will be guaranteed the right to purchase a new, modern home from the Council on their estate.
4. The Residents Charter applies the Local Lettings Policy ('Keeping Communities Together') to new-build social homes, giving priority to Council tenants in housing need living on the estate. This includes residents with medical or accessibility needs not met by their existing home, or households currently living in an overcrowded home.

5. The Residents Charter also makes a commitment to the Housing Regeneration and Delivery programme being not for profit and council-led.
6. Further to this, there are clear commitments in the Residents Charter to holding meaningful engagement on our proposals and where appropriate, changing our ideas in response to residents' feedback, and explaining how we have done this.
7. All of the homes that we build through regeneration comply with or exceed space and sustainability standards required in national planning policy, the London Plan and Building Regulations.
8. Some existing and completed estate regeneration schemes such as Woodberry Down and Tower Court already have a bespoke residents charter. These pre-dated the overarching Residents Charter adopted in March 2022.

Recommendation five

The Commission recommends:

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.

Response

- The Housing Regeneration & Delivery service already monitors residents' levels of satisfaction with their new homes by asking all residents to complete a Post Occupancy Review Resident Survey. This asks for feedback on residents' satisfaction with many elements of the regeneration - including the design of the new homes, the finishes and fittings, the public realm and communal areas. Residents are asked to complete a survey 3 months after they move into their new homes and again after 12 months.
- Residents are also asked in the survey about how they found the experience of moving into their new home and how this experience could be improved.
- The forthcoming New Homes Programme that was approved by Cabinet in December 2022 under key decision CHE S142 will involve significant levels of engagement with residents who live adjacent and nearby to the sites being developed for housing.
- As part of developing the Community Participation Strategy for each New Homes Programme project, the Project Team and RSG will identify barriers to participation such as language, education, childcare, and accessibility and look to mitigate these. For example, by providing childcare or producing participation content in multiple languages.

- The Housing Regeneration & Delivery team will develop and implement a strategy to measure the impact of resident engagement in these schemes. This will include monitoring levels of participation and diversity profiling.