

Report of responses to tailored consultation on the Mayor of London's draft Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration

By The Campaign Company (TCC)

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Contents

Contents.....	2
1. Introduction	3
2. Key issues	6
3. Chapter 1 – Aims and objective of estate regeneration	8
4. Chapter 2 – Consultation and engagement with residents	11
5. Chapter 3 – A fair deal for tenants and leaseholders	15
6. Resident meeting responses: What does good practice estate regeneration look like?	18
What to take into account when regeneration is being considered	18
How to involve residents in important decisions	20
Finding out whether residents support proposals.....	22
How to make sure a reasonable offer and advice is provided for all residents	23
Additional comments on good practice regeneration projects and processes	25
7. Appendices.....	27
Appendix 1: Toolkit consultation questions	27
Appendix 2: Example resident meeting agenda	28

1. Introduction

About the consultation

The Mayor of London wants to increase the supply of housing in London, and has a long term aim to ensure that 50% of all the new homes built in the city are affordable. He has also set out ambitions to ensure that existing affordable homes are protected. As part of this, the Mayor has published a draft 'Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration' (hereafter 'the Guide'), setting out his vision for how estate regeneration should be carried out.

From December 2016 to March 2017, the Mayor and the GLA ran a formal consultation seeking views on the Guide. The aim of the consultation was to give residents across London the opportunity to submit their views so as to inform the contents of the final Guide, due to be published later this year.

In addition to the formal GLA consultation, the GLA commissioned The Campaign Company (TCC) to help promote the consultation to estate residents, gather submissions, and report back on the content of these submissions. As well as contacting residents to encourage participation, four meetings with estate residents and stakeholders were run across London. People who would be most directly affected by the proposals were invited to give their opinions on what good practice in estate regeneration looks like and provide a more in-depth response to the Mayor's proposals. The meetings were held between 30 March and 11 April.

Consultation methodology

Engagement with resident groups

A total of 800 community and resident organisations were contacted via phone, email or post across London to encourage participation in the consultation. The database consisted mainly of Tenant and Resident Associations (TRAs) but also included housing action groups and housing associations. In addition, a number of London Borough councils were contacted to ask them to promote the consultation to resident groups and contacts.

A 'toolkit' was produced and distributed to residents to support them to take part in the consultation and share views on the Guide – the toolkit aimed to support groups to take part, and key consultation questions (Appendix 1) were provided to encourage feedback relevant to the Guide.

Resident groups and individuals were given the opportunity to submit their responses in a number of ways: by e-mail, freepost, and an online survey. In addition, a landline was provided for members of the public if they had any queries about the consultation or the Toolkit.

Resident meetings

Resident meetings were held in community centres in four London boroughs: Brent, Camden, Hackney, and Lewisham. In addition, we attended a South Kilburn Estate residents meeting where we briefly presented the Guide and asked participants to feedback their views.

Local residents were invited to the meetings using local community and Council networks – these focussed on inviting estate residents. E-mail invitations were sent to relevant groups and followed up with phone recruitment.

Summary of submissions and events

It is estimated that 212 members of the public directly took part in the consultation – 140 people submitted their views using the Toolkit¹ and 72 people shared their views at the resident meetings.

Table 1 below sets out the number of responses by channel and where responses came from by London borough; most responses were received via e-mail and the online survey. E-mail responses sometimes referred specifically to the toolkit and sometimes gave a more general response. The online survey was based on the used in the toolkit. In addition to the people who directly participated, the TRAs that submitted responses represent an estimated 10,000 residents across London.

Channel/type of submission	Number of group responses	Where responses came from (by London borough)
E-mail response	13	Kensington & Chelsea; Sutton; Camden; Barnet; Hackney; Islington; Bexley; Lambeth; Hounslow; Pan-London
Online survey	17	Westminster; Hounslow; Merton; Camden; Kensington & Chelsea; Bromley; Tower Hamlets; Lambeth; Unknown
Paper submissions	1	Hackney
Petition	1	Across London

Table 1: Summary of consultation submissions, type and location

Meetings were structured to give participants the opportunity to feed in their views about what good practice to estate regeneration looks like. They began with an overview of the Mayor’s Guide, were followed by a discussion by table, and ended with summary feedback to Plenary about the issues discussed (please see an example agenda in Appendix 1).

Attendance at meetings varied from 13 to 25 participants each, Table 2 below sets out the details of the four meetings that were held.

Date	Location	Number of participants	London borough
30 March	Stonebridge Estate community centre	25	Brent
3 April	Frampton Park Baptist Church	14	Hackney
4 April	St Alban’s Centre	13	Camden
11 April	SE10 Community Centre	18	Lewisham

¹ This is an estimate because not every group that submitted a response specified how many people took part in the group activity.

Analysis approach

Submissions made and meeting feedback were analysed to identify dominant response themes. As the questions were primarily open questions, the data gathered was qualitative. The only exception was at the events where the first question asked of participants was multiple-choice; answers to this question are presented in quantitative form.

It is important to note that the responses in this report focus on what is important from the responder's perspective. In most cases, the responses did not refer to or critique the Guide's content; as such, they are often not a direct response to the Guide and are instead grouped thematically according to the responses given.

Report structure

The report provides a summary of all responses to the consultation, both submissions and resident meeting discussions.

Section 2 provides a short overview of the key issues arising from responses, and then Sections 3-5 discuss responses relevant to each of the Guide's chapters – these sections combine responses from the resident meetings and consultation submissions. Finally, Section 6 gives an overview of the responses and discussions from the four resident meetings.

Throughout the report, specific paragraphs are referred to from the Guide. This is to highlight where issues and concerns set out in responses are applicable to the Guide's content.

2. Key issues

While a range of responses were made on the Guide, covered in sections 3-6 of this report, a number of issues were more regularly mentioned in responses and these are outlined below.

- 1. Partnership working:** It was widely-felt that there are a number of contextual considerations, rising land and house prices and diminishing Local Authority budgets, that result in the scales of power being weighted away from resident needs and priorities. Many residents said that regeneration – proposals, decisions, design – should be conducted in partnership with residents, and this is the logical and most productive approach. This means residents should be involved as early as possible if regeneration is being considered and that their decision-making influence should be clear and enhanced where possible through: democratic structures and resident steering groups; ballots; training and support to make informed decisions and give meaningful input; and the provision of transparent, clear, information.
- 2. Genuinely affordable homes:** Residents were clear that social housing needs to be protected and enhanced as part of regeneration schemes – where possible, the proportion of social housing available should increase with homes of other tenures if the estate’s capacity increases with development. People regularly challenged the use of the term ‘affordable’ housing. It was widely held that this is too loose a definition which can be abused to serve the interests of developers. Many said that one person’s definition of ‘affordability’ is not the same as others’; some suggested that affordable housing should be aligned with pay and living costs, not market rate. Similarly, many stated a need for checks and balances to be brought in to ensure that regeneration does not lead to an increase in living costs – residents who have experienced regeneration said they have seen this happen through new and increased parking charges, more expensive heating systems, Council Tax changes and increased service charges. There was a feeling that these often hidden or unexpected costs will eventually price residents out.
- 3. Regeneration in the interests of the community:** A widely expressed concern was the often-negative impact of regeneration on communities and individuals. People strongly expressed the view that regeneration should put community interests first – investing in and protecting connections and assets, the ‘fabric’ of community. It was often mentioned that financial interests trump those of the community at the expense of good estate design. The need for regeneration to create healthy communities was explicit – that design should accommodate green space, plenty of light, and amenities like community centres and shops.
- 4. A fair deal means meeting resident needs:** When commenting on what a ‘fair deal’ for all residents looks like, responses tended to focus on the suitability of homes and ensuring that everyone currently living on estate continues to do so if that were to be their preference. Homes provided to residents should have the same or greater floor space than their current home; the rooms should be adequate to meet their current and short term future needs. In particular, it was felt that disabled residents should be offered suitable accommodation and access in line with their individual needs. It was also noted that more family homes are needed but this should not compromise the aforementioned needs of households on the estate. It was felt that all

efforts should be made for tenants and leaseholders to be able to remain living on the estate being regenerated after this has been completed, or at the very least within the boundaries of the borough.

- 5. Consultation scepticism:** An opinion or feeling that was frequently raised and expressed strongly, particularly from those who have been part of regeneration processes, was a high degree of scepticism when it comes to consultation processes. Many said their experience was akin to a 'tick-box' exercise and their opinions and views not listened to.

3. Chapter 1 – Aims and objective of estate regeneration

This section provides an overview of responses gained through direct submissions or at consultation meetings that are relevant to Chapter 1 of the Guide (Aims and objectives of consultation). The consultation submissions comments focused on three themes – housing affordability, investment in community and housing suitability. This mirrored the responses from meeting participants (outlined fully in Section 6) who were asked to answer the question: “When estate regeneration is being considered, what are the most important issues that should be taken into account?” Their top issues were: more affordable housing; building homes better suited to resident needs; and provision of community facilities.

Affordable housing and social housing provision

The importance of the provision of genuinely affordable housing was a dominant response in reference to the aims and objectives of consultation. This was an issue also strongly shared by meeting respondents with 49% of them saying this was one of the most important issues that should be taken into account (paragraph 9-10).

Many noted the need to define what is meant by affordable and for clearer definitions to be used in its place without exception. It was felt that term ‘affordable’ could be used loosely and readily manipulated or misused. The use of ‘social housing’ was suggested as a more clearly defined alternative by a few respondents.

There was agreement across submissions and responses with the principle set out in the Guide that there should be being no loss of social housing (paragraph 9) and that this should be a priority within any regeneration project. Many respondents went further in saying that there should be an increase in social housing provision where possible; if the estate’s housing capacity is being increased, then social housing provision should increase at the same rate, proportionally, in line with other tenures.

Linked to this, a few respondents raised concerns about the Council’s capacity to deliver estate regeneration which meets the needs of diverse groups, given the funding restrictions in place (paragraph 41). In reference to ensuring no loss of affordable housing, paragraph 9, several submissions noted ‘where all other options have been exhausted’ as a ‘*get out clause*’ which could be too easily reasoned by those in charge of regeneration projects.

Regeneration to invest in and create healthy, happy communities

Providing community facilities, like shops, play space, nurseries and doctors, was highlighted as an important issue by 40% of respondents. This was mirrored by opinions expressed in submissions which focussed on the need for regeneration to respect and invest in communities – going beyond the principles stated in ‘improving the local environment’ section of the chapter (paragraphs 11-13).

There was agreement from many, explicitly and implicitly, with the principle that regeneration aims and objectives should go beyond the ‘red lines’ of estate development (paragraph 11).

Several submissions raised concerns about the social impact of regeneration (paragraph 24) – and that these considerations should be prioritised and taken account of from the outset (how best to

take into account the social impacts of regeneration is covered in Section 5 – A fair deal for residents). Several people stated that estate redesign should be an opportunity to foster and create community, promoting cohesion. In good practice estate regeneration, the provision of gardens, play spaces and other types of social infrastructure, alongside homes, is prioritised (paragraphs 11-13). Too often, in their view, this is not the case, and profit is prioritised over good space design, with green spaces being filled in and light being blocked out, diminishing living standards and community collateral.

Similarly, a number of submissions noted that regeneration often leads to community fragmentation – with long standing members of the community moving away during decant phases or permanently.

One recommendation was for planning authorities to support neighbourhood planning to add value to estate regeneration and renewal projects. Another suggested the Mayor promote examples of Lifetime Neighbourhoods in the Guide.

Housing quality and suitability

Building homes better suited to resident needs was identified as a priority when estate regeneration is being considered by 44% of meeting participants (paragraph 2). Again, this shared feeling was mirrored by submission responses. As well as regeneration being seen as opportunity to better meet the needs of residents, people also stated there is a need to make sure that regeneration does not achieve the opposite – a reduction in residents' living standards. In particular, the need for the development of family-friendly, 3-bed homes was highlighted, alongside the need for ground floor disabled access and utilities. Again, access to green space and light were raised as important in this context.

Two submissions noted that the reasoning given for 'strategically-placed tall buildings' (paragraph 12) being 'to help orientation' is illogical and that design should be based on community needs following consultation. Similarly, another submission noted that 'traditional street patterns' are not always beneficial and should not be encouraged as an end in itself.

Approaches to estate regeneration

Several submissions raised concerns about drivers behind regeneration and the resulting approaches taken by local authorities and developers. There was a widely-shared view, raised particularly at the resident meetings, that estate regeneration is often not completed in the community's best interests – that other interests and motives are being prioritised and residents are being left behind in decision making.

Several respondents expressed strongly a great need for decision makers at all levels to treat regeneration efforts with utmost empathy, always keeping in mind that this involves and impact people and homes – this is not currently demonstrated or appreciated enough in their view.

A number of respondents felt that the Guide is formulated and written assuming that regeneration is an inevitability and that is a good thing. For them, the Guide, and consultation on the Guide, did not take into account the fact that for many whether regeneration should happen at all should be discussed and consulted on as good practice.

There was widespread awareness that Local Authorities are in need of extra revenue and this in conjunction with rising land and house prices is leading to firstly, a lack of investment in existing housing stock, and secondly demolition and development being the 'go to' option. A number of submissions and responses said that demolition should be the last resort with refurbishment prioritised where possible (paragraph 7).

4. Chapter 2 – Consultation and engagement with residents

The contents of this chapter were welcomed by several submissions that stated it was good to see the need for transparent and meaningful consultation being highlighted by the Mayor.

Meaningful, representative, responsive consultation

Submissions and responses raised the need for, and challenges in, achieving meaningful consultation (paragraph 18-24) – the influence and issue of vested interests was frequently raised and in particular, the influence and role of developers. Some felt that this should be more explicitly addressed in the Guide, reflecting views that developer interests too often override others, particularly considering rising land and house prices. In this context, respondents' view-points and experiences conveyed that consultations rarely felt, and simply could not be, meaningful.

Following on from these points, several submissions questioned how consultation feedback can be evaluated fairly – should, and if so how should, the feedback from different parties be weighted? It was felt by some that equity of consultee influence should be covered in the Guide, with some suggesting that those who are impacted by the decisions or are paying for the outcome should have more of a say on what happens (paragraphs 29-31).

Given these considerations and concerns, the importance of making sure consultation is *representative* (alongside extensive, meaningful, transparent and responsive) was highlighted by many. The issue of groups or individuals 's/he who shouts loudest' or more easily accessible groups like Tenants and Residents Associations having more of a say than others, and the need for this to be tackled proactively, was raised. On a similar note, non-elected bodies representing residents was raised as a concern that should be avoided: "*good practice demands democracy*". In particular, submissions and responses noted that consultee representation with regard to ethnicity, age and political party was important (paragraphs 33-38).

There was agreement with paragraph 31, from several residents, that consulting the local populace, estate neighbours of any sort, is considered important.

Finally, as well as a need for fair representative consultation, the need for decisions and consultation feedback to be acted on was frequently mentioned – agreeing with the Mayor's support for consultation being responsive (paragraph 20). The view was widely expressed that resident opinions, preferences and concerns will not actually affect regeneration outcomes, and that residents have no real agency in decision-making processes. There was widely held scepticism surrounding consultations, particularly among those who have experienced them, that they are tick-box exercises and 'authorities' in all guises are reluctant and unlikely to listen. Good practice consultation was considered to be a process whereby concerns of residents are genuinely listened to and taken on board and where they have direct influence on outcomes.

Community-led decision-making and consultation

Several submissions noted that the Guide should go further in advocating 'community-led' or 'bottom-up' consultation approaches, and should set out the benefits of these. Some went on to

explain that this is a logical approach given that it will be residents who are impacted by development and their understanding of the locality and residents' needs cannot be bettered. It was felt by many that there needs to be a change in perspective from local authorities and decision-makers, and that resident involvement is too often viewed negatively as a barrier to be negotiated and overcome.

It was felt strongly by many that residents should be given the opportunity and power to define and shape proposals and activity from the outset and throughout the regeneration project – any developments should happen in partnership with residents; they should have a leading role in decision-making. There were mixed views on the degree of influence residents should have – while advocating greater influence, some do not explicitly state what this should look like, while others say that resident views should be binding.

A number of respondents suggested that the creation of democratic structures of governance and processes that better facilitate resident decision-making, like resident steering committees, should be prioritised. In line with this it was felt by some that residents' decision-making powers should be clearly defined from the outset.

Similar to the view that residents should lead on shaping proposals, a few submissions mentioned the need for residents to co-produce the consultation process itself; they should help decide who else in the locality needs to be consulted with and in what manner.

Transparency, type and quality of information

Lack of transparency was highlighted as a key issue in development of proposals and options in the initial phases particularly. As well as a mix of channels being used for communicating with residents, submissions noted the need for proposed regeneration options specifically to be presented in different media – online, leaflets and presentations or models should be highlighted as good practice.

In agreement with paragraph 20 and the Mayor's assertion of the need for transparency, many respondents and submissions noted the need for efforts to be made for information and options to be easy to understand 'plain speaking' and presented clearly at all times. The types of information that people considered it most important to set out in initial stages of consultation were:

- Housing density and dwelling mix
- Housing type and tenures
- Development timescales
- The pros and cons of options being set out

There was shared agreement among many respondents with the principles espoused in paragraph 37 and 38 – that residents should be empowered and supported to the fullest possible extent. It was felt by many that support and training for residents is important to facilitate a meaningful and productive consultation process given that the majority of resident will have minimal prior knowledge or experience regeneration and planning processes. This support should be provided in a number of forms (paragraphs 33-38):

- Enabling all people to participate, for example through providing child care to allow families to take part;
- Resident training on regeneration and planning policies, processes and terminology made available to all residents and resident groups;
- Resources to set up consultation groups or meetings throughout the project;
- Residents have access to the advice and expertise of an Independent Tenant, Leaseholder and Freeholder Advisor (ITLA).

Use of ballots

Several submissions and respondents expressed the importance of ballots for residents to voice opinions (paragraph 33 & 35), and to be able to influence the outcome of regeneration proposal, particularly if demolition is being proposed. A number of people stated specifically that a ballot should be mandatory if demolition is proposed, while others said that a ballot should be used to decide if regeneration of any kind should go ahead. It was felt by some that as a consultation mechanism, ballots enable residents to partake in a genuine consultation – putting residents in an appropriate position of power that they are not readily afforded otherwise.

A few people said there should be advice on when ballots take place, that if circumstances change then a ballot should follow this – so they are used when major decisions are made, throughout the project, rather than just at the beginning.

There were some comments regarding the management and communication of ballots. Some felt that they should be overseen by residents, while one submission noted that need for acceptable communication protocols to be clarified to achieve a fair vote.

A few concerns about ballots were raised; that the wording of ballots can be too simplistic to accurately reflect the decisions being made, and that resident view-points may not be made in the interest of future residents and this should be taken into consideration (paragraph 33 & 35).

Ongoing consultation

The view that residents should be consulted and engage with through the life of the project, on a regular basis, was widely agreed with (paragraph 21) as essential. The focus of responses regarding ongoing consultation was on the need for residents to be involved from the outset, prior to proposals being set out. There was a view, and experiences shared indicated, that involvement at later stages decreases the chance of residents having meaningful involvement and the consultation suffers as a result of this.

The need for ongoing consultation being meaningful was reiterated – that the move to ‘telling’ residents what is happening following initial consultation efforts needs to be avoided (paragraphs 20-22).

Communications mechanisms

Respondents agreed with the principle that a range of communications approaches and channels should be used to consult and engage with residents – that these should be diverse but also tailored to audiences to meet their needs (paragraphs 33-38).

In respondents' views, the following mechanisms should be used to consult and communicate with residents: public meetings and workshops open to all residents; meetings with tenant representatives (e.g. TRA reps); engagement via social media; emails and online updates; feedback sheets and surveys; tailored one-to-one support and appointments; face-to-face engagement like door-knocking and walkabouts; notice boards; engagement through 'community liaison officers'; pop-up stalls and newsletters.

As well as these recommended channels, there were several comments regarding how this communication should be delivered. There was a view that engagement should 'go to' residents – via schools, sports clubs, religious centres and community hubs. Similarly, it was felt that a balance between providing opportunity for individual and group feedback is important, so that individuals can give their views confidentially or in a group context (paragraphs 33-38).

As discussed in section 3, the importance of consulting with a diverse and representative range of groups was noted, in particular young people and community groups.

5. Chapter 3 – A fair deal for tenants and leaseholders

This section provides an overview of responses relevant to Chapter 3 of the Guide – a fair deal for tenants and leaseholders. Responses tended to focus on the need for transparency of information, genuinely meeting resident needs, and keeping costs affordable.

The importance of transparency

In order to make sure tenants and leaseholders receive a fair deal as part of the regeneration process, a number of respondents again asserted the need for transparency of information – this is central to a fair deal being reached. Information about the options and process should be made freely available in order for residents to fully understand their position and make informed decisions. Vulnerable households in particular should receive more support to understand their options and the regeneration process (paragraphs 40-45).

Prioritising and meeting resident needs

A number of submissions and responses put forward the importance of resident needs being fully met, in a number of respects.

Some felt that all current residents' needs should be prioritised, with a few noting that their needs should be prioritised over 'incoming' residents or investors buying new homes. This was not the currently the case in the experience of these respondents who reported financial interests swaying decision-making.

In particular, there was agreement with paragraph 45 – that extra support and assistance should be offered to vulnerable households.

There was shared agreement that 'a fair deal' should focus on the suitability of the new homes being offered to residents. This means making sure that the new house offered is the right size – that floor space matches or exceeds their current home; that it has the right layout to accommodate tenants and leaseholds; that there is no over-crowding. Related to this, many noted the need to make sure that disabled people's needs are met, with accommodation, access and housing layout designed appropriately for them (paragraph 51).

Finally, meeting resident needs for many meant efforts being made to ensure they are supported, to the upmost degree, to continue to live locally, either on the estate or at the very least within the borough (paragraph 47).

Cost considerations

A frequently raised concern was the potential, and likely, increased cost of living on new developments, for both tenants and leaseholders. Residents who experienced regeneration reported unexpected or hidden costs arising late in the process and expressed frustrations that these were not always set out clearly.

Many said that new or increased costs including phased increases – rent, service charges, Council Tax – are not acceptable. Strong concerns were expressed that any increases in living costs as a result of regeneration are not fair and may price-out residents. A few leaseholders noted that they fund improvement works, and it is assumed that they can afford it.

A number of suggestions were put forward to avoid this: that rent levels should be either protected, capped or some said incrementally increased; and that service charges and Council Tax could be subsidised.

Minimising the impact of disruption

The recognition that regeneration is a ‘hugely disruptive process’ (paragraph 49) was welcomed and agreed by a number of respondents – the psychological stress it causes was particularly noted. A few respondents said that this should be better quantified and therefore better considered when weighing up the best option for regeneration. There was a widely-shared opinion that this should be taken into account when considering whether demolition should occur or if improvement of existing homes is likely to be more beneficial (as suggested in Chapter 1, paragraph 7).

The need to minimise the disruption caused was raised by many who felt that this should be a principle of any regeneration project and essential to be as fair as possible to residents. In particular, disruption to families was noted as a concern and many noted the negative impact of regeneration on elderly residents and their need for extra support and efforts being made to minimise disruption for them (paragraph 49).

Tenant-specific issues

Several respondents agreed that tenants should retain secure lifelong tenancies. Concerns were expressed that these are being eroded and there are not enough being provided as part of regenerated estates. Similarly, concerns were raised about the implications of the Housing & Planning Act on secure tenancies. A few submissions said that all social tenants, insecure and short term tenancies, should receive a secured tenancy as part of the deal (paragraphs 46-48).

There was a strong emphasis across responses on a tenant’s right to stay in the same area, and the same estate where possible, as part of the regeneration process (paragraph 46, 50).

The issue of fair compensation was regularly raised: that tenants who have had to move should be compensated for the inconvenience and time. A few said that compensation should be offered retrospectively for investments made by tenants in their properties and local environments (paragraph 46, 48).

Leaseholder-specific issues

The primary and widely raised concern was the need to ensure that leaseholders are not priced out of living locally as part of a regeneration process – a fair deal means to be able to buy a home in close proximity to their current residence and good practice requires this to be facilitated. For respondents, this meant leaseholders receiving genuine market value for their home, with some suggesting enhanced market rates (+10%) should be offered (paragraphs 56-58).

A number of issues with current valuation processes were raised – that offers do not reflect market rates and therefore do not enable residents to buy a similar property locally. A few respondents questioned what rights leaseholders have if the valuations are deemed unfair. There was a shared experience among respondents that their homes have depreciated in value unfairly; that homes and estates have been intentionally run down to make the case for regeneration; or the value is depreciated during the regeneration process due to development and that leaseholders need be protected from this occurring (paragraph 56-58).

Like views expressed for tenants, several people raised the need for leaseholders to be supported to live locally. In support of this, one response suggested that leaseholders and freeholders should be guaranteed a new home on the regenerated estate regardless of the value of their existing property, while others said that at the very least this should be enabled in whatever way possible (as suggested in paragraph 58).

Finally, with respect to leaseholder-specific issues, concerns were raised by a few respondents over the CPO process and this being abused to achieve the financial outcomes desired by local authorities and developers.

6. Resident meeting responses: What does good practice estate regeneration look like?

This section provides an overview of responses from participants and group discussions from four resident meetings held in Brent, Camden, Hackney and Lewisham in March and April.

The meeting discussions focussed on hearing from residents and stakeholders on what their views are with regard to good practice estate regeneration. Participants were asked to respond to questions focussing on the key issues covered in the Guide:

- When estate regeneration is being considered, what are the most important issues that should be taken into account?
- What should be done to involve residents in important decisions?
- Which ways should local authorities and housing associations find out whether residents support proposals?
- What needs to be taken into account to make sure a reasonable offer and advice is provided to: Social tenants; leaseholders and free holders; private tenants?
- Do you have any other comments on what good estate regeneration practices and processes looks like?

In addition to taking part in group discussion, participants were also given the opportunity to complete individual surveys on these issues – the responses from the surveys and groups discussions are summarised here.

What to take into account when regeneration is being considered

Respondents were asked to select the three most important issues that should be taken into account when estate regeneration is being considered. As Figure 1 shows, nearly half of respondents agreed that providing more affordable housing is one of their top three priorities (paragraph 9-10). This was followed closely by the need to be build homes that are better suited to resident's needs with 44% (paragraph 30) and providing good community facilities with 40% (paragraph 7).

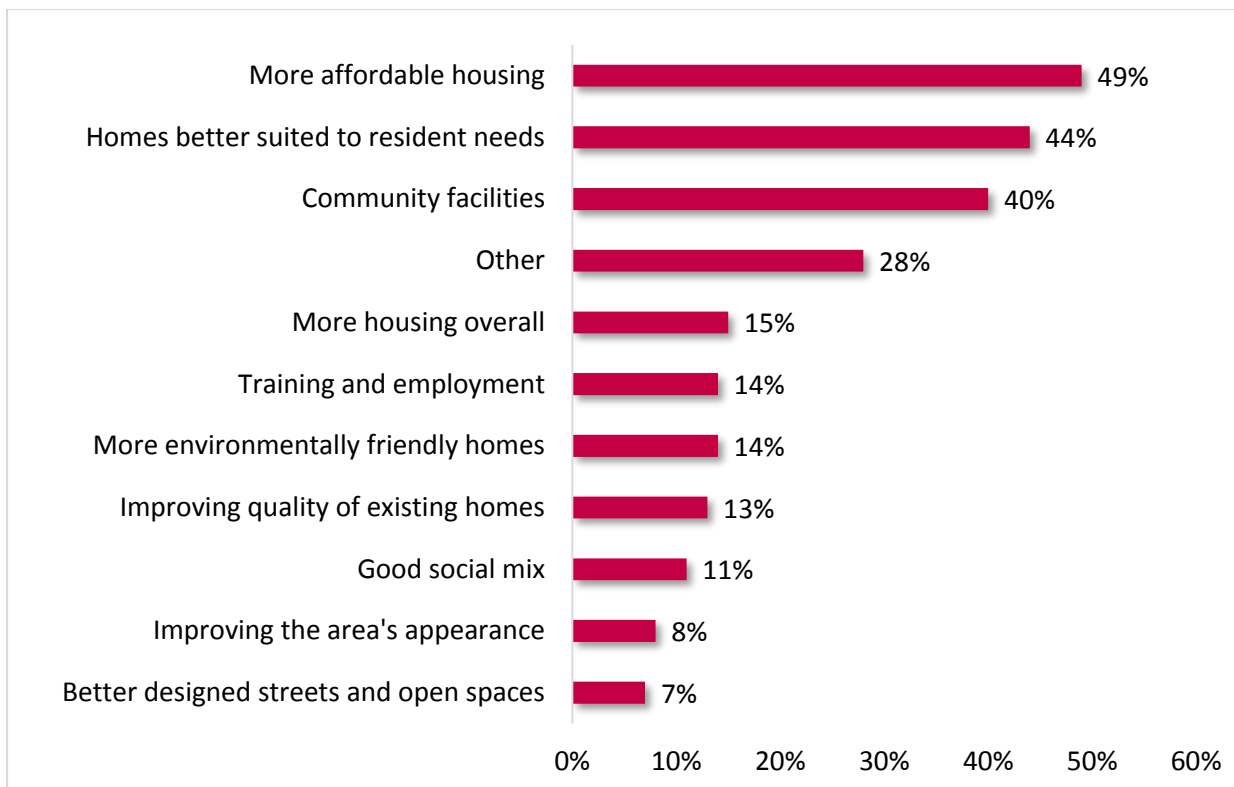


Figure 1: When estate regeneration is being considered, what are the most important issues that should be taken into account? (Percentage response from a base of 72)

Nearly three in ten respondents selected the 'other' option. Of those who selected 'other' a very large proportion wrote about the need for pre-consultation of the community before regeneration plans are brought forward (paragraph 21). Many questioned whether regeneration should happen at all, and suggested other options should be suggested before, in particular upgrading existing housing and carrying out refurbishment (paragraph 7). Above all, there was a strong emphasis on the need to genuinely listen to the needs of the community, as oppose to imposing decisions (paragraph 20).

Others who selected an 'other' option wrote about issues to do with affordable and social housing (paragraph 9-10). These participants emphasised the need to build more social housing, in particular council homes with secure tenancies (paragraph 46). Some mentioned the need to provide affordable and social housing for the needs of vulnerable groups, including elderly people, young people, and people with disabilities (paragraph 45).

A large proportion who selected 'other' wrote about the need to create, develop and maintain a sense of community. They emphasised the need for local community amenities and facilities, including play areas for children, libraries, and sports facilities (paragraph 7). It was felt that this would facilitate community cohesion.

Other issues that were raised were to do with cost – ensuring that the community continues to be able to afford to live in the area, and that services (like mental health provision) are affordable. Others raised the need for individual needs to be met, particularly people with disabilities / who are in wheelchairs (paragraph 45).

How to involve residents in important decisions

Participants were asked what should be done to involve residents in important decisions. Discussions tended to focus on appropriate communications approaches and the adequate provision of information and support.

Achieving meaningful engagement

A dominant theme was that the concerns of residents are often not taken seriously by decision-makers and that residents need to be engaged meaningfully. Several people said that consultations should not be, but often are, a 'tick-box' exercise. Others expressed cynicism about whether engagement could ever be meaningful; they said that decision-makers (councils, other public authorities, and developers) would never seriously listen to the concerns of residents (paragraph 4).

The importance of continuous engagement

In agreement with the Guide's recommendations, there was a shared view that engagement should happen on an ongoing, not on a one-off, basis. There was a dominant view that involving residents throughout the process would allow residents to shape the agenda around regeneration and make sure regeneration plans meet their needs. It was felt that changing proposals and adapting them to meet their needs at a later stage is more difficult (paragraphs 18-21, paragraphs 27-28).

Many stressed that continuous engagement should include the 'pre-consultation' stage; residents are consulted before proposals have been put together. Equally, it was said that involving residents at an early stage allows residents to argue that regeneration should be considered alongside other options (paragraphs 21-22, paragraphs 27-28).

Communications mechanisms

To achieve the aim of meaningful engagement, many suggested various different communication and engagement mechanisms that should be used (paragraph 33). These included:

- public meetings and workshops open to all residents;
- meetings with representative of tenants, for example TRA representatives;
- feedback sheets and surveys;
- tailored one-to-one support (including in other languages if necessary);
- face-to-face engagement like door-knocking;
- engagement through 'community liaison officers';
- newsletters;
- engagement via social media.

Several people said that engagement should happen in different places, like schools, sports clubs, religious centres, and community hubs (paragraphs 33-38). Different groups should be fully involved in the engagement process, in particular young people, but also faith groups and community groups (paragraph 29).

Ensuring decision-making is community-led

A widely-shared view among respondents was that residents should be given the power to shape outcomes, that decisions should not be made behind closed doors and have been made before residents are consulted. Communities should not be recipients of estate regeneration but agents determining their own future (paragraphs 18-24, paragraph 14).

Some participants suggested that structures can be developed to make sure that decision-making is led by residents. Ideas included setting up a residents' steering committee and giving resident associations the power to select a representative whose role is to be an intermediary between decision-makers and residents, thereby representing resident concerns as well as keeping residents informed. An additional suggestion was that decision-makers attend community consultation meetings in order to be held directly accountable to residents (paragraph 16, paragraph 36).

The extent of influence residents should have on outcomes was ambiguous. Several people said that residents should have direct control so that outcomes agreed at resident meetings are binding and non-negotiable. A few people said that funding for regeneration should be removed if resident concerns are not taken on board by decision-makers. By contrast, others said that the views of residents should shape outcomes without specifying whether or not they should be binding.

Giving residents support and training

There was a widespread view that residents should be given the support and training they need to be meaningfully involved in estate regeneration consultation. If residents do not have the right tools and know-how, their opportunity to participate is significantly curtailed (paragraph 37).

Several people said that residents should be given training so they understand the process and the policies they are commenting on. Many people said that there should be forms of support so that residents who have children and other caring commitments are able to attend meetings and feed in their views. Finally, several respondents said that residents should be informed of their rights and have access to an ITLA (paragraph 42).

Ensuring there is transparency of information

A dominant view was that information should be readily provided to residents – nothing should be hidden – the plans should be entirely transparent and all residents should be made aware of them (paragraph 41).

There was a shared view that information about the regeneration plans should be easy to understand, they should not be obscure so that residents find them difficult to make sense of. Some explicitly stated that a range of types of information should be made available, with one participant saying that the results of resident surveys should be publicly available, so that residents can understand the extent of agreement or disagreement with proposals (paragraphs 18-21).

A dominant view was that by providing transparency of information residents will have a clear picture and understanding as to what estate regeneration entails. When this happens, residents will be provided with a clear view of important considerations like: what the advantages and disadvantages of regenerating the estate are (paragraph 18); how much people will be compensated (paragraph 40); whether anyone will lose their homes; the status of residents' housing after

regeneration (chapter 3); and whether management of the estate will be transferred away from the council to another body.

Finding out whether residents support proposals

Exhausting all engagement channels

There was a strong consensus that all mechanisms should be used to reach out to residents and engage them in the process of estate regeneration (paragraph 33). It was felt that this was needed to make sure that everyone had the opportunity to have their say: many stated that it was ultimately the responsibility of decision-makers to make sure that all residents are engaged and nobody is left out. In addition, there was a strong sense that engagement is imperative to make sure there is an ongoing conversation about estate regeneration, so that decision-makers understand the perspective of residents better, and equally so that residents can understand the rationale behind proposals and come to a sound conclusion about them.

Participants highlighted the need for tailored support which engages residents both as individuals and in group settings. Mechanisms suggested for group engagement included public meetings, walkabouts, and pop-up stalls.

A number of mechanisms for engagement at an individual level were also suggested, including surveys, door-knocking, walk-in appointments, and ballots (paragraph 33-34). It was said that individual engagement is important to make sure individuals have the opportunity to give their views confidentially, without any constraints that might exist in a group setting. In addition, a few participants suggested that engagement should happen with the support of an independent advisor who can support them (paragraph 38).

Many participants said that awareness raising should happen through the internet and social media, so as to include groups like young people who otherwise may not be aware of proposals.

The importance of continuous engagement

As with the previous consultation question, participants stressed that there was a need for continuous engagement, from start (before proposals have been decided) to finish to find out whether residents support proposal. A few explicitly pointed to the pre-planning stages as an important point in time to include residents. This was considered important to make sure that residents have enough time to feed in their views, with a few explicitly stating that when timelines are too short, consultation processes are not able to incorporate the views of residents fully (paragraphs 20-21).

Transparency and building trust

Again, as with the previous consultation questions, there was a shared view that transparency is imperative to finding out whether residents support proposals (paragraph 20). Many stressed that transparency is important in helping residents understand the rationale for the proposals and in understanding the process of regeneration. There was a shared view that in their past experiences transparency has been lacking and as a result there has been a lot of distrust. Some residents

communicated that they did not feel able to see who is making the decisions and influencing outcomes.

A few participants also stressed that decision-makers, including councils, need to be honest with residents about the challenges they face that are influencing decisions and not try to hide them from public sight. Others raised a need for being open about mechanisms like how contractors are chosen and the timetable for the delivery of regeneration.

One idea proposed was that decision-makers attend consultation meetings to build an honest and open relationship. More broadly, there was a view that building a strong relationship between decision-maker and residents is important so that decision-makers genuinely listen to residents' concerns and ensure people's concerns and viewpoints shape outcomes. One participant explicitly said that if viewpoints do not reflect outcomes, then residents need a clear explanation as to why those views have not been taken on board.

Using ballots

Several people said that ballots should be used as a means to find out whether residents support proposals. Those that argued that ballots should be mandated put forward different reasons and conditions as to why it should be. One person said that there should be a ballot before demolition is considered and that it would help prevent 'social cleansing'. There was also the suggestion that residents should have a vote over specific aspects of regeneration, like proposed designs. Among those that said that ballots are necessary, there was an emphasis on making sure it is binding (paragraph 33-35).

How to make sure a reasonable offer and advice is provided for all residents

As well as issues of compensation and security of tenure, broader issues in terms of meeting resident and community needs were raised when discussing how a reasonable offer and sufficient advice is provided to residents.

Fair financial compensation for leaseholders

A dominant view was that leaseholders who lose their homes as a result of estate regeneration should be financially compensated appropriately: above all, this was seen as being about fairness and making sure leaseholders are given what they are owed. Several people said that financial compensation for losses incurred should be set at the price that the property would have been sold at on the market. A few suggested that compensation for leaseholders should be set at market rate plus 10 per cent (paragraph 56-60).

Protection for social tenants

Many respondents said that when social tenants are moved to new-build homes, they should be offered 'like for like' replacements at the least, if not a home which better meets their needs. Many also said that social tenants should be offered a secure tenancy following the completion of estate regeneration, concern was expressed that the number of secure tenancies being offered are

reducing. A few suggested that secure tenancies should also be extended to those who previously had temporary tenancies.

Several people said that tenants should not have to pay any more in rent than they did prior to estate regeneration taking place. A few suggested that one way of controlling rent is to introduce rent controls. One person said that a 'staircase' system should be introduced, so that if rent does have to increase it does so gradually, not all of a sudden; it was said that this would provide more security for people. In addition, a few people said that attention should be paid to making sure tenants do not have to pay unreasonable service charges.

Another key concern among many participants was the need to define 'affordable' housing more carefully. There was a very strong consensus that 'affordable' housing is de facto often unaffordable for many, if not most, people. There was agreement that 'affordable' should be tightly defined according to people's ability to pay, with some stating that it should be set as a percentage of income rather than market rate.

Finally, people said that tenants who are forced to move out of the area should get additional compensation for moving costs and that they should be compensated for the time they have to spend moving homes and the disruption this has caused (paragraph 46-48).

The importance of wellbeing

There was a strong sense that authorities should always remember that regeneration can be a traumatic experience for all those involved. As such, tenants and leaseholders should be supported so they go through the process with as little trauma as possible. Some said that the stress and anxiety estate regeneration can lead to is only exacerbated if residents feel they will get a bad deal. By contrast, if residents – both tenants and leaseholders – feel like they are going to get a fair deal, then this will give them peace of mind. One resident said that a lack of security could detrimentally impact people's mental health. Another respondent said that when residents and tenants move away from the estate during the regeneration process, they should stay as close as possible to the site of regeneration so as to minimise any disruption (paragraph 7, paragraph 24).

Keeping the community together

Many said that keeping the price of rent low and making sure that leaseholders are compensated appropriately helps prevent residents being priced out of the area and thus the break-up of the local community. To avoid community break-up, many participants stated that residents should have the right to return once regeneration is completed.

Making sure estate regeneration meets residents' needs

There was a shared view that all options should be considered carefully before the decision is taken to regenerate an estate. However, many said that when the decision is taken to regenerate an estate, the authorities should view it as an opportunity to improve existing infrastructure so that the needs of residents are better met (paragraph 7). A number of suggestions were made including:

- residents should be offered a house which is big enough to accommodate their entire family so as to tackle over-crowding (paragraph 51);
- residents should be close to public services – including health services, schools, and social services;
- residents should as far as possible be close to their family and social networks so as to enjoy a rich social life;
- accommodation should meet the needs of disabled residents. For example, this means making sure door frames and lifts are large enough to fit wheelchairs through them.

Giving residents the support and information they need

A dominant view was that residents should be given any support they need to understand the offer that is being proposed. Many said that all available options should be presented clearly and transparently so that residents can see the advantages and disadvantages of different proposals. Some said that vulnerable people, for example elderly people who have lived in the area for a long time or people who face language barriers, should be given extra support. It was also said that people's rights should be explained clearly and all aspects of regeneration with legal implications should be set out in a way that is unambiguous and easy to understand (paragraph 20).

Additional comments on good practice regeneration projects and processes

Having discussed their responses to the consultation questions, respondents were asked to share any further comments they have on what good regeneration practices and processes look like. These comments to a great extent repeat responses to previous questions, but it is fair to say, represent more strongly held views – the points residents are keen to express and make heard.

Doing what is best for the community

A dominant view was that above all else estate regeneration must be in the community's best interests. The well-being of residents must not be treated as an afterthought and the financial interests of developers should not be prioritised ahead of doing what is best for residents.

Preventing the break-up of communities

There was a shared view that estate regeneration should not lead to the break-up of communities; residents should not be priced out and should have the right to return. Communities are proud of their identity and history; the value of communities needs to be respected and protected. Several people said that new estates should be designed so that communities can continue to be cohesive and integrated and alongside this there should be adequate provision of community spaces and amenities.

Demolition as last resort

Several people said that demolition is a last resort and should not be seen as the first 'go to' option - it has significant implications for the quality of life of residents and can cause significant disruption (paragraph 6).

Building standards and design

Several people said that building standards should be of a very high quality. A few people said that density should be the same and tall buildings should not replace what existed before (paragraph 2, paragraph 12). One person said that constructors should be procured ethically, while another said that constructors should be very clear in their communication with residents about operating times and the duration of works.

Protecting social housing

There was a shared view among respondents that social housing needs to be protected. Several people stated that when estates are regenerated the authorities need to make sure the same amount of social housing is built so that there is no decrease in social housing (paragraph 9).

7. Appendices

Appendix 1: Toolkit consultation questions

The questions included in the consultation toolkit, and posed to residents at meetings were as follows:

- When estate regeneration is being considered, what are the most important issues that should be taken into account?
- What should be done to involve residents in important decisions?
- Which ways should local authorities and housing associations find out whether residents support proposals?
- What needs to be taken into account to make sure a reasonable offer and advice is provided to: Social tenants; leaseholders and free holders; private tenants?
- Do you have any other comments on what good estate regeneration practices and processes looks like?

Appendix 2: Example resident meeting agenda

Resident meeting on good practice estate regeneration

Aims of the meeting

- Share further information about the Mayor's draft Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration
- Hear your experiences and views on what good estate regeneration practices and processes look like

Agenda

Time	Item
6.30pm	Introductions, meeting aims and agenda overview
6.35pm	Overview of draft Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Purpose and how it will be used- Overview of content – the three key issues- Q&A
6.50pm	Key issue 1: Aims and objectives of estate regeneration <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Overview of key issue 1- Key question for consideration: Q1 - <i>When estate regeneration is being considered, what are the most important issues that should be taken into account?</i>- Individual response and table discussions feeding back views on the key question
7.05pm	Key issue 2: Consultation and engagement with residents <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Overview of key issue 2- Key questions for consideration: Q2 - <i>What should be done to involve residents in important decisions?</i> Q3 - <i>Which ways should local authorities and housing associations find out whether residents support proposals?</i>- Individual response and tables discussions feeding back views on the key questions
7.20pm	Key issue 3: A fair deal for tenants and leaseholders <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Overview of key issue 3- Key question for consideration: Q4 - <i>What needs to be taken into account to make sure a reasonable offer and advice is provided to: Social tenants? Leaseholders and free holders? Private tenants?</i>- Individual response and table discussions feeding back views on the key question
7.35pm	Group feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Facilitators to feedback key points from discussions
7.45pm	Next steps and meeting close