



Havering

LONDON BOROUGH

London Borough of Havering Council

Consultation Report January 2018

In review of the Housing Regeneration Programme:

- Local Lettings Plan
- Decant Policy & Possession Procedure

HOUSING POLICY CONSULTATION SUMMARY REPORT AND RESULTS 2018



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INTRODUCTION

This report sets out key findings from a 12 week consultation and engagement exercise, aimed to canvass the views of local residents on proposed the Regeneration Local Lettings Plan (LLP) and Decant Policy and Possession Procedure (DPPP).

The consultation enabled residents to have a direct input and to shape our offering to Council Tenants who will need to relocate as a result of the Regeneration Programme. It provides the Council with an opportunity to understand public attitudes, opinions and the satisfaction relating to each document. Residents were asked to respond to the consultation questions attached at Appendix 1.

Sample limitations

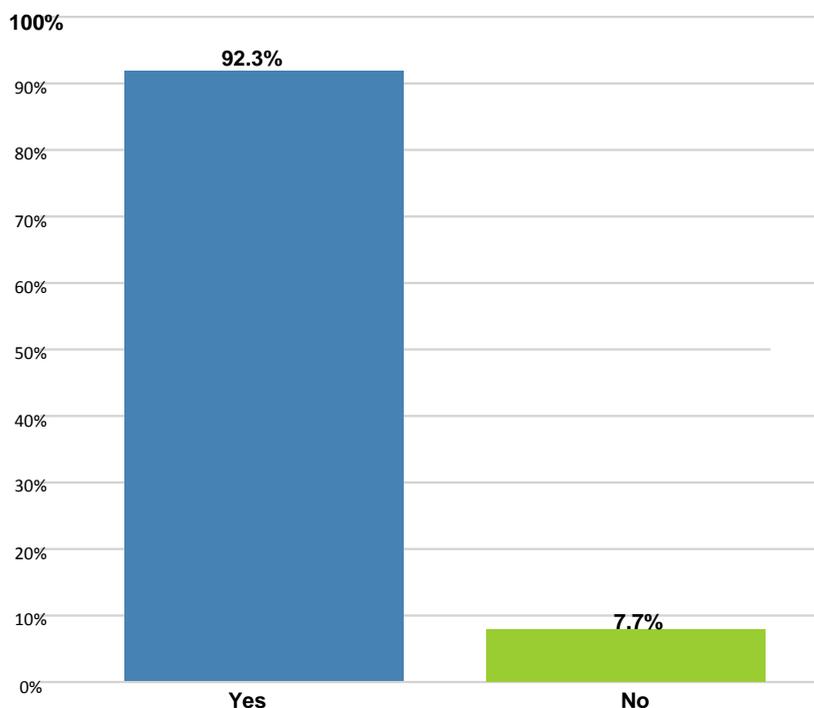
The survey response rate was lower than anticipated. This may be because this is a revised version of the LLP which has been informally consulted upon since June 2016. The self-completion nature of the survey may have also limited the response rate.

PART 1: LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN RESULTS

Section 1.1 Quantitative Responses

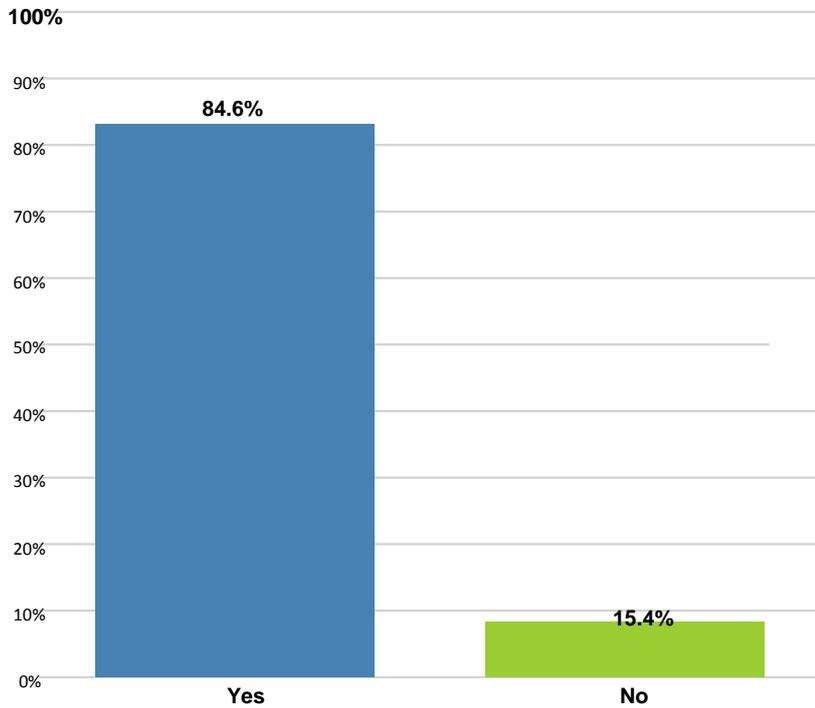
The responses to the consultation indicate overall approval of the Local Lettings Plan (LLP).

Q1. Results show that the 92.3% understood the implications of the LLP for Council tenants affected by the regeneration programme.



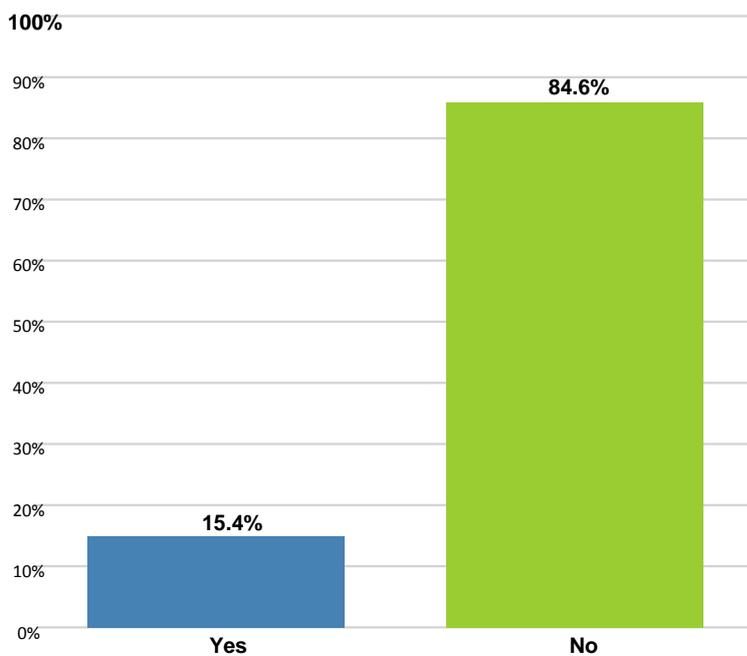
Response Options	Percent
Yes	92.3%
No	7.7%
Number of Respondents	13

Q2. Results show that the 84.6% of respondents thought that the rehousing options in the LLP were fair for Council tenants affected by the regeneration programme.



Response Options	Percent
Yes	84.6%
No	15.4%
Number of Respondents	13

Q4. The majority of respondents felt that there was nothing further than could be added to the LLP (84.6%). Two of the 13 respondents felt as though more information should be included in the LLP, though only one suggestion was made. This has been discussed in section 1.2.



Response Options	Percent
Yes	15.4%
No	84.6%
Number of Respondents	13

Section 1.2 Qualitative Responses

Q3. What do you think could make the Local Lettings Plan fairer to Council Tenants?

'Ensure that existing residents are given properties in the same area once the regeneration has happened as this seems to be a case of social cleansing if not.'

Residents that have been moved from a regeneration site will have the Right to Return i.e. an opportunity to move into a new property on the redeveloped site. This intention has been stated within **Option 6** of the LLP *'Move to a new property in the new Development once completed'*. In order to facilitate and give tenants as many options as possible should a tenant want to move to a Housing Association or Council Tenancy in another borough, they will still be given priority to return.

'I would like to see more shared ownership for people to buy houses and flats who have difficulty buying.'

C.300 Shared Ownership / Low Cost Home Ownership properties will be developed as part of the regeneration programme.

'The Local Lettings Plan should be applied equally to all secure tenants on the regeneration estates and all under occupiers should qualify for an additional bedroom above their assessed need.'

The LLP forms part of the Council's Allocation policy which gives under occupying tenants the opportunity to retain one more bedrooms above their housing need. This is to give the opportunity for tenants losing several bedrooms to move into accommodation more suitable and affordable **and** to give families who need larger sized properties the opportunity to take up such accommodation. This only applies to households we have identified as "under-occupiers" rather than all tenants and is being applied equally to all under-occupiers on the regeneration sites.

'In point 4.27, the amounts paid for each room given up should be the same because this would incentivise tenants to give up additional rooms if all under occupiers are treated equally and qualify for an additional bedroom above their assessed need, which is the fair thing to do; those giving up more rooms receive more money rather than entitlement to additional rooms.'

Extensive research was carried out with a decision agreed by the Council of the need to increase the downsizing incentive. Surrounding boroughs were contacted and it was deemed that a sliding scale in terms of payment for rooms given up was the most ideal solution to downsizing. It has to be noted that there has been a considerable increase in the incentive payments having risen from £250 per room to £1000 for the first room being given up. It is agreed that this is the best way to free up much needed larger sized properties thus enabling the Council to make best use of the family sized accommodation that it has

Q5. Having read the Local Lettings Plan do you think there is anything else that should be included in it?

'All properties to be given to local existing Council Tenants.'

Properties developed as part of the Regeneration Programme will primarily be for local people. In the first instance, all Council stock built on the sites will be offered to residents that have been moved as part of the Regeneration Programme and have expressed an interest to return. Subsequent affordable housing (including affordable rented and shared ownership stock) will be

allocated to residents on the Housing Register who meet the eligibility criteria. Properties for open-market sale will be priced in line with the local property market.

Q6. If you have any further comments on the LLP, please state below.

'Please check your point 4.23 re: Bedroom Standards. It seems to state 1 bedroom for 10-20 year olds of the opposite'

We recognise that this paragraph could be written in a simpler way. This has been amended in LLP to ensure better clarity and understanding. To clarify, the bedroom standard allocates a separate bedroom to each pair of adolescents aged 10-20 years of the opposite sex.

'To ensure that tenants can still downsize if they are in arrears'

Should a tenant affected by the Regeneration Programme choose to downsize to a smaller property that meets their housing need, they will be entitled to a downsizing payment of £1000 for the first room and £500 for any subsequent room returned to the Housing Service. Any rent arrears will be deducted from this payment. This applies to any Council Tenant irrespective of whether they are affected by the Regeneration Programme. The use of the downsizing payment to clear/or contribute to the clearance of rent arrears has been made clear in the revised version of the Local Lettings Plan.

'The court costs involved with changing from a joint to sole tenancy – if one tenant is not living in the property and cannot be found, who pays legal fees, usually the tenant. As the tenant is having to move as a result of the regeneration programme, will Havering Council pay?'

For tenants affected by the Regeneration Programme, the Council will pay court costs associated with amending a tenancy from a joint to a sole tenancy or vice versa.

Regarding section 5 on page 14 of the LLP and at the end of the last meeting at the Salvation Army, residents asked whether - if they are rehoused before offers have been made - they will still be found accommodation in line with what is on their form.

In accordance with section 5, all tenants will receive 2 offers of accommodation before any order for possession is enforced. Tenants are also being given further opportunity to update their decant assessment form and also the opportunity to understand where all the voids have become available since April 2017. This gives tenants the chance to be more flexible with their areas of preference. This was the basis of the discussion that at the last meeting.

'At the very first drop-in at the Salvation Army, residents were told different things, e.g. that they would get like for like regarding number of bedrooms or that it would be according to housing need. It took a very long time before it was made known to residents what the policy was and it turned out to be neither option.'

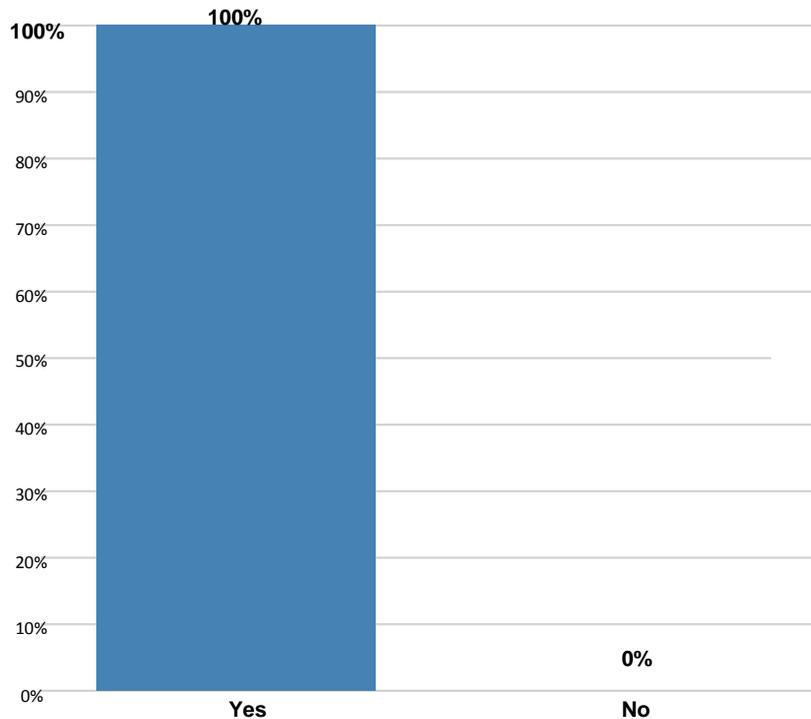
The LLP forms part of the Council's Allocation Policy. In paragraphs 4.20 and 4.21 of the LLP the size and type of property allocated to an applicant will depend on the size of the household and will be in line with the Council's Bedroom standard. The current version of the LLP supersedes all previous versions.

PART 2: DECANT POLICY & POSSESSION PROCEDURE

Section 2.1 Quantitative Responses

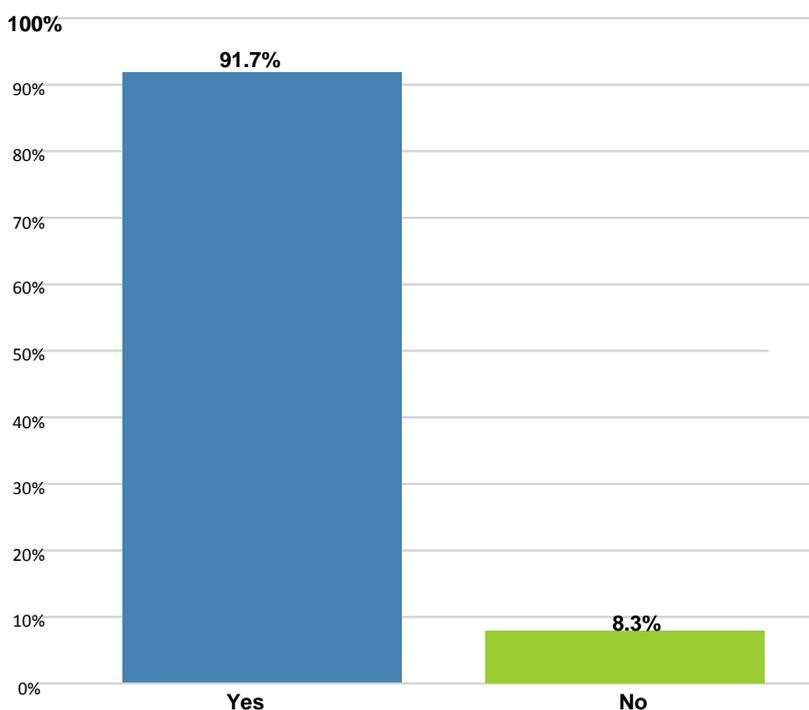
The responses to the consultation indicate overall approval of the Decant Policy and Possessions Procedure (DPPP).

Q1. Results show that all respondents (100%) understood the implications of the LLP for Council tenants affected by the regeneration programme.



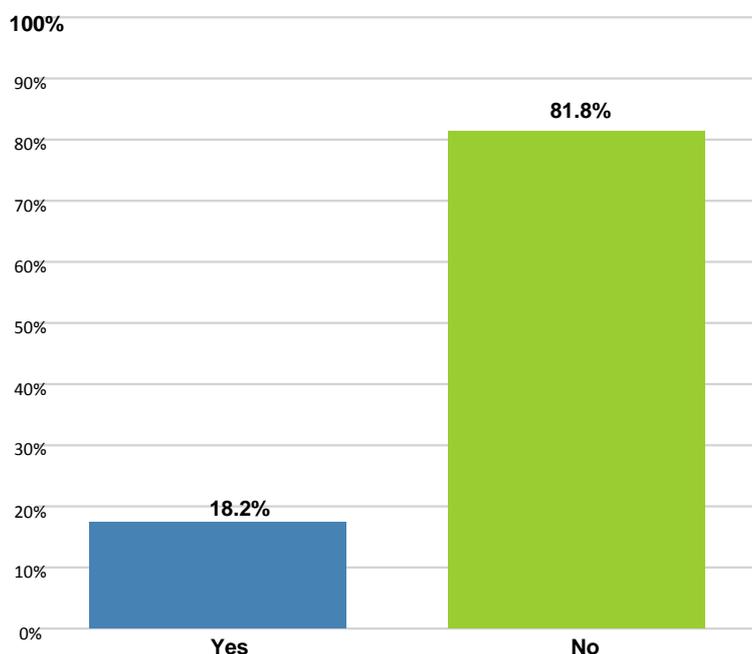
Response Options	Percent
Yes	100%
No	0%
Number of Respondents	12

Q2. Results show that the 91.7% of respondents thought that the DPPP was fair for Council tenants affected by the regeneration programme.



Response Options	Percent
Yes	91.7%
No	8.3%
Number of Respondents	12

Q4. The majority of respondents felt that there was nothing further than could be added to the DPPP (81.8%). Two of the 11 respondents felt as though more information should be included in the LLP, though only one suggestion was made. This has been discussed in section 2.2



Response Options	Percent
Yes	18.2%
No	81.8%
Number of Respondents	11

Section 2.2 Qualitative Responses

Q3. What do you think could make the Decant Policy and Possessions Procedure fairer to Council Tenants?

‘Doesn’t give all options’.

This response underlines a flaw in the way the consultation question was framed.

Point 1.3 of the DPPP refers readers to the LLP for full details of the rehousing options for Council Tenants. It is intended that both documents complement one another and remain separate stand alone documents, each serving a different purpose and intention.

Q5. Having read the Decant Policy and Possessions Procedure, do you think there is anything else that should be included in it?

‘I live in Beehive Court, I have been moved without the option to remain as part of this programme – yet Beehive is not listed’

This comment has been made by a tenant who is not affected by the Regeneration Programme. This resident has been contacted to identify whether the tenant has any needs which still need to be addressed.

Q6. If you have any further comments on the DPPP, please state below.

The two responses to this question were about Council tenants’ individual cases. Both response were concerning their individual eligibility for financial compensation and have been dealt with by Council Officers.

PART 3: RESPONDENT EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY PROFILE

Housing Services received Equality and Diversity information from 10 of the 13 respondents who answered the questionnaires.

- 70% out of the ten respondents were female, 30% male.
- 60% of the ten respondents were married, the remaining 40% of the respondents declared their marital status as single
- 70% of all respondents were of working age. The largest number of responses came from residents aged 45 – 54 years of age, this was closely followed by residents who belonged to 25 – 34 year age group (20%), Residents who identified themselves as belonging to the 25 -34 years of age and the 55 – 64 age group respectively accounted for 10% of responses. Respondents aged 65 and above accounted for 30% of responses.
- A total of 100% of respondents identified themselves as heterosexual in their sexual orientation.
- The majority of respondents (78%) identified their religious belief as Christian, with 11% identifying their religious belief as Buddhist. A further 11% declared that they did not have a religion or a faith.
- 89% of respondents identified themselves as being White British in their ethnic origin. The other respondents identified themselves as originating from another White ethnic background. We did not receive any equality or diversity information from any other protected racial or ethnic characteristic in support of this consultation
- 25% of those responding considered themselves to have a disability, impairment or health condition.

APPENDIX 1: CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Housing Regeneration Programme - Local Lettings Plan Consultation Questionnaire

Please enter your e-mail address:

The aim of the Local Lettings Plan is to clearly explain to Council tenants how the Council will manage their rehousing and compensation entitlements during the Housing Regeneration Programme.

Having read the Local Lettings Plan, do you understand what this means for Council tenants affected by the Housing Regeneration Programme?

- Yes
- No

The Local Lettings Plan sets out six options for Council tenants to be rehoused after leaving their current home.

Do you think the rehousing options presented in the Local Lettings Plan are fair to Council tenants affected by the Housing Regeneration Programme?

- Yes
- No

If you answered no, what could make the process fairer?

Having read the Local Lettings Plan do you think there is anything else that should be included in it?

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes, please give details

If you have any comments about the Local Lettings Plan, please state below.

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Send

Housing Regeneration Programme - Decant Policy and Possession Procedure Consultation Questionnaire

Please enter your e-mail address:

The aim of the Decant Policy and Possession Procedure is to clearly explain to Council tenants how the Council will manage their rehousing needs during the Housing Regeneration Programme.

Having read the Decant Policy and Possession Procedure, do you understand what this means for Council tenants affected by the Housing Regeneration Programme?

- Yes
- No

The Decant Policy and Possession Procedure sets out the options for Council tenants to be rehoused after leaving their current home.

Do you think the rehousing options presented in the Decant Policy and Possession Procedure is fair to Council tenants affected by the Housing Regeneration Programme?

- Yes
- No

If you answered no, what could make the process fairer?

Having read the Decant Policy and Possession Procedure do you think there is anything else that should be included in it?

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes, please give details

If you have any comments about the Decant Policy and Possession Procedure, please state below.

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[Send](#)