

## **BALLOT REQUIREMENTS**

### Introduction

From 18 July 2018, the GLA has required any landlord seeking GLA funding for estate regeneration projects which involve the demolition of social homes to show that residents have supported their proposals through a ballot. This requirement applies to projects that involve the demolition of any social homes and the construction of 150 or more homes (of any tenure). The GLA's detailed requirements for a resident ballot are set out in the Mayor's good practice guide to estate regeneration and the Capital Funding Guide.

### Landlord offer

Residents should be asked to vote on the Council's 'Landlord Offer' which should be sent out in advance of the ballot paper. It should contain:

1. The broad vision, priorities and objectives for the estate regeneration, including information on:
  - Design principles of the proposed estate regeneration
  - Estimated overall number of new homes
  - Future tenure mix
  - Proposed associated social infrastructure
2. Details of the full right to return or remain for social tenants living in homes that are to be demolished
3. Details of the offer for leaseholders and freeholders of homes that are to be demolished
4. Commitments relating to ongoing open and transparent consultation and engagement.

### Ballot arrangements

The Council will need to appoint an 'Independent Body' (IB) to undertake the ballot and they must review the arrangements for voter registration, undertake and oversee the distribution of the landlord offer, advise on the form of the ballot question and ensure votes cast are recorded and counted accurately.

There is no minimum turnout but voters must be given at least 21 days in which to cast their vote.

### Voter eligibility

Ballots must be open to all residents on an existing social housing estate – not just those currently occupying homes that are due to be demolished – that fall into one or more of the following three eligibility criteria:

- Social tenants (including those with secure, assured, flexible or introductory tenancies named as a tenant on a tenancy agreement dated on or before the date the Landlord Offer is published)
- Resident leaseholders or freeholders who have been living in their properties as their only or principal home for at least one year prior to the date the Landlord Offer is published and are named on the lease or freehold title for their property.
- Any resident whose principal home is on the estate and who has been on the local authority's housing register for at least one year prior to the date the Landlord Offer is published, irrespective of their current tenure.

#### Guidance on resident engagement

In addition to the Capital Funding Guidance on ballots, the GLA has published guidance, within their estate regeneration good practice, on resident engagement and consultation that is relevant to the approach to ballots. Key elements include:

- Consultation should be transparent, extensive, responsive and meaningful
- Advising tenants on their rights including use of independent tenant and leaseholder advisors
- Consultation approaches should be tailored to residents' needs. For example, bespoke consultation arrangements may be required for elderly residents, those whose first language is not English, or those who have disabilities
- Independent capacity building and advocacy support for residents if they request it
- Landlords and their partners should always be open to suggestions from residents and other stakeholders about developing more effective consultation and engagement mechanisms
- Engaging with other stakeholders – many estates include other stakeholders including businesses, places of worship, schools, or community hall that should be consulted and engaged with