



**TOTTENHAM'S FUTURE
COMMUNITY LIAISON GROUP SERIES 2
COMBINED REPORT
JANUARY 2014**

BUILDING NEW HOUSING TO INCREASE CHOICE AND IMPROVING QUALITY OF EXISTING HOUSING

1. Social housing in Tottenham is concentrated in large housing estates, what improvements could be made to these estates?

Issues

Most discussions started with people describing what the estates are like now, and what some of the problems are. The issues that were flagged up were that they are poorly maintained with long-term under-investment. Estates are dreary and dirty, badly lit and feel unsafe to walk around. There are not enough communal places for people to go, and those that do exist are not looked after. In particular there is a lack of green space and places for young people to go or for people of different generations to mix.

Solutions

Ongoing maintenance and management

The single most important solution identified to improve the estates is decent ongoing maintenance. People want estates to be better cared for with a cyclical investment programme and a clear and quick process for dealing with repairs. There should be proper enforcement against rubbish dumping and anti-social behaviour. People wanted to see joint responsibility for communal areas being taken by the council, Homes for Haringey and tenants. A number of people suggested having care-takers on site to maintain properties; this could be tied in to training schemes for local people to do these jobs. Others suggested that grants for repairs could be devolved directly to residents, or contracts awarded to local companies who would have more of a stake in the area.

Communal spaces and amenities

Providing spaces for people to meet and socialise is crucial to building a strong community. Communal gardens, which are looked after by residents, are a great way to bring people together, and more youth facilities and activities should be provided, including playgrounds for younger children. People were keen that un-used spaces and buildings are brought back into community use, and that these should be affordable. A number of people suggested using these for social enterprises and affordable work spaces for residents.

Social housing

There was a concern not to lose social housing as a result of the regeneration or Right to Buy, and in particular residents who are moved out of their home as a result of their estates being regenerated should be able to return – the existing community should not be displaced. Overall more social housing should be provided.

Mixed communities

There was a desire to see a greater mix of people and tenures on the estates, specifically this referred to socio-economic mix as estates are already very ethnically diverse. This means building more private housing so there is less concentrated poverty and more opportunities for Tottenham's different communities to stay in the area.

Community empowerment

This has two strands – increasing tenant pride in the area which will help with keeping the place looking good; and providing more opportunities for meaningful tenant participation in how estates are run and managed, eg: Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs).

Build quality and design

The design of estates need to be re-thought so that public spaces have a more clear ownership and feel safe to use; and internally, more storage space is provided, flats are sound-proofed and decent quality materials are used. People want estates to be fit for purpose and well-designed.

Access to green space

There is a strong desire for more green space within estates to provide pleasant surroundings, with gardens and seating. Where green space currently exists, it is not well-looked after or used, but where steps have been taken, eg: planting daffodils in Millicent Fawcett Court, this made a big difference.

Build appropriate housing

As well as mixed tenure, people want to see a range of housing types built to cater for different needs. For example: providing houses with gardens for families, smaller units for single people, and ensuring there is appropriate accommodation for elderly residents.

Improved security

Better security would greatly help to improve the experience of living in the estates. Suggestions included: concierges to control entry to blocks, CCTV in lifts and communal areas, and a more visible police presence.

2. Private rented housing, which includes houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), is growing in Tottenham, what should be done to improve the quality of private rented housing?

Issues

Residents described issues around lack of maintenance of privately rented properties, especially the increasing numbers of illegal conversions of properties to Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs). Tenants and landlords have no stake in the area and so properties are increasingly run down, gardens are untended and bins left to overflow. There is a major problem with excessively high rents being charged for sub-standard properties, pushing private rents in decent accommodation beyond the means of the average person in Tottenham. Many people are increasingly vulnerable to homelessness or exploitation as landlords are less likely to take benefit claimants, and housing benefit cuts mean that properties are unaffordable.

Solutions

Licensing landlords

There was overwhelming support for the idea of licensing. Learning from similar schemes in Newham and Barking, Haringey should set up a licensing system for private landlords. Landlords will need to be compliant with minimum standards set by the council before they are given a license to rent out their properties. This ties in with enforcement so that failure to meet standards will result in landlords having their license revoked. All licensed landlords should be on a public register so they can be regularly policed by the council and so tenants can check prospective landlords. Most people felt that licensing should be managed and enforced by the council, but some thought that this could be done by a 3rd party organisation. Landlord training should be mandatory for any landlord wanting to be licensed in the area.

Monitoring and enforcing standards

Most people are keen for the council to play a stronger role in monitoring the conditions of private rented properties, and to enforce standards such as: Health and Safety, fire regulations, dumping rubbish and maintenance of gardens. More staff should be out on the streets regularly checking properties, including illegal conversions to HMOs. Landlords who do not comply with standards should be penalised by heavy fines, prosecuted and/or have their license revoked. Fines collected from landlords who fail to comply with standards should be used to employ more people in enforcement.

Rent capping / rent control

The council should set cap rents for the private sector, potentially linked to council tax band, and enforce this. While it is recognised that landlords need to earn money, there is a sense that many rents are extortionate compared to the quality and size of property being rented, and this needs to be restricted by the council to protect the people who will never get a council property and cannot afford to buy.

Maintenance

This ties in with standards and enforcement – landlords should be compelled to keep their properties in good repair, including dumping of rubbish on the streets. The council could provide grants to assist with maintaining properties. Some people suggested creating a separate organisation to buy up privately rented properties to manage them effectively and fairly.

Tenants' rights

Tenants should be given more access to information about their rights, eg; deposit security, and empowered to complain about rogue landlords, either to the council or whichever body is responsible for licensing landlords. A public rating system for landlords would help with transparency and judging the reputation of landlords.

'Buy to live, not buy to let'

This was a popular idea stemming from a GLA report into the fact that 36% of homes sold under Right to Buy are now rented out privately, deepening the housing crisis in London. The report recommends mandatory covenants to prevent right to buy properties being let privately, an end to the current system of discounts and a 'right not to sell' for local authorities. Attendees wanted to see the council regulating the future of council properties so that they would not be sold off unless owners are going to live there. Other people wanted to see the end of Right to Buy completely.

Alternative accommodation models

More socially rented properties should be built so people are not at the mercy of private landlords, plus better access to shared ownership would help get people on the property ladder.

Future housing

3. What type of housing would help to build an ideal neighbourhood?

Mixed tenure

The great majority of attendees wanted to see mixed tenure properties in Tottenham, with new developments offering both private housing for sale and rent, and social housing. The principle of providing homes for all different people, whether rich or poor, was seen key to Tottenham's future. This is both to encourage people to mix and learn from each other, drive up the level of economic activity, and in recognition of the fact that private housing developments provide the funding to build more social housing.

Social housing

Every table in every CLG meeting talked about the need for more affordable housing. There is a massive shortage currently and Tottenham's future must include the building of more social housing, with current social housing protected by stopping 'Right to Buy' or direct '1 for 1' re-provision. Any social housing demolished as part of the regeneration re-provided. Some people discussed affordable rent levels, with a consensus that affordable rents should be capped at between 20-40% of market rent.

Providing appropriate housing to meet needs

New developments should be built to reflect the needs of the population. The most commonly cited need here is for more family housing, which is lacking in Tottenham and is the key to stabilising population churn. In addition to this, people mentioned the need to provide units for single people, supported homes for the elderly and housing for vulnerable people, including 'halfway houses'.

Supporting the existing community

This issue was raised many times reflecting concerns that regeneration will result in the displacement of the existing population as they are priced out of the area. The ideal neighbourhood in Tottenham's future will have decent, affordable homes for all of the current residents, so that they benefit from this 'once in a lifetime' regeneration. Anyone decanted from their homes as a result of regeneration should be re-housed in the area. People also discussed residents having more control over the future planning of the area through Neighbourhood Planning.

Communal spaces and facilities

People want to see new housing provided with the amenities and spaces necessary to build a strong community and make a great place. Green space and outdoor play spaces for children were often mentioned, as well as sports, youth and community facilities to bring people together and provide things for people to do. Any new developments should also have the necessary infrastructure to support the growing population, including schools, health facilities, and transport networks.

Good design

Future housing should be built to last with good quality materials, with flexible designs to meet 'Lifetime Homes' standards; they should be energy-efficient, and meet Parker Morris space standards. Architecture should be creative and not homogenous, and new buildings should complement Tottenham's heritage. Safety should be built into all new developments so that the issues of current estates are not repeated – they should be well-lit with no dead spaces – and the design should make people feel proud of their environment.

Building heights

Building height was discussed at length – most people preferred the idea of low-rise developments – 4/5 storeys maximum. However other people were not averse to high rise living as it can work for some groups, eg: young people, as long as the design is great and they are well-maintained.

Controlling private landlords

Good quality, private housing with secure tenancies is needed to counter population churn. People wanted to see the council controlling 'buy to let' landlords so that properties in new developments were sold to owner-occupiers who would have a greater investment in the area. There was a lot of concern about foreign investors buying into the property market here, forcing up rents with no stake in the area, and displacing the existing community.

Housing co-operatives

Housing co-ops were mentioned by a few people as an alternative type of housing that should be supported in future developments. They are seen as successful ways of building community and giving people ownership over their homes.

4. Given the shortage of land and the need for new housing, where in Tottenham should new housing be provided?

Possible sites

The type of sites mentioned most frequently were building on brownfield, unused industrial or unused warehouse sites throughout Tottenham. In addition, it was suggested that there are several vacant/abandoned properties, including pubs, which could be compulsorily purchased and converted to housing.

Specific sites mentioned:

- Broad Lane – unused properties could be converted into housing
- Markfield Road
- Land around Ikea
- Area around South Tottenham – Green Lanes train lines
- Area around Northumberland Park - Hackney train lines
- Ferry Lane Estate – little plots of land available
- Empty shops on Park Lane could be converted to housing
- Morefield Road
- Pages Green - ex-industrial land
- Rosebery Industrial Estate – could be developed as housing or live / work units
- Former tile factory on Herbert Rd
- Markfield Road
- 500 White Hart Lane
- Selby Road/Shelby Centre
- Industrial estates along White Hart Lane
- Sturrock Close Estate could be built higher
- Small piece of land by Monument Way - could contain a small development
- Ashley Road, Fontayne Industrial Estate, Coronation sidings – brownfield sites
- Potential to redevelop existing stock, eg: on Culvert Road, Chesnuts Estate, Broadwater Farm, Park Lane
- Spurs have a lot of land which should be released for redevelopment
- Apex House, Alexandra House and other similar big buildings should be demolished and social housing built in their place
- Empty industrial estate on Albert Road

Areas that should not be considered

The great majority of people said that under no circumstances should the council build on existing green spaces. There is already not enough green space in Tottenham, and none should be given up for new developments.