



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Estate Regeneration National Strategy

Resident Engagement and Protection

Introduction

This section of the Estate Regeneration National Strategy sets out the government's expectations for how landlords, developers and local authorities should engage with residents throughout an estate regeneration scheme and how residents should be protected.



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Transparency, choice and opportunity for estate residents

1. Early and ongoing engagement

Residents are key partners in any regeneration scheme, particularly where they are personally affected. They should be given opportunities to be involved throughout the process, including developing the vision, initial decisions, options appraisal, design, procurement and delivery of schemes.

Early and ongoing discussions about plans for the estate and residents' personal housing needs, choices and opportunities build relationships and trust between parties to the scheme. This helps create the conditions for a collaborative approach to regenerating the estate, ensuring plans meet the needs of residents, reducing the likelihood of future challenges and delays and encouraging residents to actively participate in transforming their neighbourhood.

Open and honest dialogue between landowner and residents about the overall goal of the regeneration should include all the factors that need to be considered. Landowners should make sure residents have a good understanding of the necessary technical processes that will take place, such as procurement and planning permission, so that they can fully participate in the regeneration process.

Training should be made available for residents if it is needed to enable effective participation. Where residents need to assess options, all financial and other information they need to make informed decisions should be made available to them. Plans and business cases should be available in an accessible format in non-technical language.

Residents should not be engaged separately by councils, developers and landlords but via a joint approach. This should be owned and led by the landlord or the local authority, possibly using an independent third party to facilitate the engagement.

In the initial stages of engagement, connecting with existing forums such as resident boards or panels and community anchor groups may be most effective. Existing groups can help develop plans for communicating with residents and the community more widely, once there is a realistic proposition.

Engagement should be with all tenants, owner-occupiers and private landlords. It may also be appropriate for local groups with a vested interest in the area, and adjacent neighbours whose lives may be affected by the scheme, to be included in discussions.

There should be a formally agreed approach for developing and maintaining a relationship with residents throughout the lifetime of the regeneration scheme. There should also be a formally agreed approach to estate management after the regeneration has been completed. This could be conducted through using resident representation on boards and steering groups, resident panels or by regular contact with local community anchor organisations.

Engagement should be inclusive and enable all voices to be heard. This might mean investing in participation support for under-represented groups of residents such as young people or new migrants. Inclusive engagement will help build stronger relationships with and across different communities, as well as ensuring that any scheme is part of the wider regeneration of the area.

2. Demonstrating resident support

All approaches to regeneration should have the support of a majority of the residents whose lives will be affected by the scheme. Working collaboratively with residents by testing support for regeneration proposals at the start and throughout the regeneration can help to build trust and consensus on regeneration activities.

Estate residents and the wider community should have the opportunity to have a say at the milestone stages where there are choices to be made, such as at option appraisal, master-planning, procurement and design stages. Where Neighbourhood Plans exist or are in development, these should be taken into account in all discussions.

It is particularly important that residents have the opportunity to express their views on the final options for regeneration, whether as individuals or via a democratic process using representatives. The mechanism chosen for residents to do this should be agreed locally and should be suitable for the activity being taken. For example, a vote may be appropriate before complete demolition, whereas workshops or surveys could be used to communicate views about partial demolition or refurbishment.

It may be appropriate for the wider community who may be impacted by the scheme, whether as individuals or businesses located in or adjacent to the estate, to take part in decision making. Whether or not to include the wider community should be a local decision.

The status of residents (e.g. secure tenant, leaseholder, freeholder, private landlord, private renter) and the variation in the impact of the regeneration on these different groups should also be reflected in the way the process is managed. Whichever approach is taken, the wishes of residents should be understood and respected.

3. Protection, choice and opportunities for residents

Estate regeneration can mean an uncertain time for residents. Agreeing and setting out a clear set of commitments about how the regeneration process will work, and the housing options available, should help minimise the uncertainty and anxiety faced by those affected. Providing this security and confidence early on will help to establish trust and foster positive discussions about the scheme.

A residents' charter which defines commitments and opportunities for all tenants and leaseholders should be developed in collaboration with residents as early as possible in the process. This is a good way of agreeing commitments and should include specific tenant rights, residents' entitlements for home loss and disturbance payments, and opportunities for shared ownership and equity. It should also contain information about how people can participate in the regeneration process and in the ongoing management of the estate. A charter template is available in **Annex A: Residents' charter template**.

We believe that all existing council and housing association tenants, whether on a lifetime or fixed-term tenancy, should have the option to return to the estate, alongside at least two other housing options which address their needs, in accordance with the social housing policy of the local authority.

It is a legal requirement for leaseholders to be compensated if their home is demolished. However, we expect that schemes will go further and offer leaseholders a package that enables them to stay on the estate or close by. We also expect leaseholders to be offered the option of an independent valuation of their property.

Home purchase options could include shared ownership (if the percentage payable in rent is affordable) or an equity stake with alternative funding approaches to address the gap including compensation payments to mitigate the risk of displacement from the neighbourhood. It is good practice to offer residents the opportunity to change tenure and rent where they have previously owned, or buy where they have previously rented.

Shared ownership has an important role to play in helping those who aspire to home ownership but cannot afford to buy and should be offered as an option for tenants and leaseholders. Other options that could be offered to residents include cash-back deals and home swaps. Definitions of these are included at **Annex B: Definitions of models for resident offer**. Providing a number of options to buy will enable more residents to take up an offer that suits their situation and aspirations.

4. Minimising disruption to residents & maintaining community ties

The regeneration process should be carefully planned so that community ties are not undermined. The aim should be to move residents only once, from their existing home to a new home on the estate. This usually requires a phased approach to regeneration.

It is important that, where possible, people are able to remain close to family and friends, work and schools. Maintaining these community links could help reduce the burden on public services from displaced people. In particular, consideration should be given to how elderly and disabled people, families with young children and residents with strong religious and cultural ties will be able to maintain their support networks.

Making sure residents only need to move once could also reduce the requirement for disturbance payments and remove the requirement for and cost of temporary accommodation. In addition, it means that residents can follow the building of their new homes, and are likely to feel more connected with the scheme as a result.

When taking a phased approach to construction, it is important to understand what temporary community facilities and amenities residents may need and to provide necessary support during the regeneration process.

5. Residents' involvement in the management of estates

The ongoing management of the estate is vital to its sustainability. Residents should have the opportunity to participate in the ongoing management of the regenerated estate. In some cases this may be through a formal tenant or resident management organisation or through a resident-led board. Ongoing opportunities should be provided for residents to influence decisions and develop the necessary skills to take on more responsibility, if they choose.

Where elected or self-selected residents represent the estate, landlords should provide them with the resources to communicate and engage with all residents to ensure their representative approach is inclusive. This could include a place to meet or computers for preparing and distributing communication materials.

Estate regeneration schemes can play an active role in identifying community facilities which can be owned and managed by resident and community groups. Where community assets are run by the community, people are more likely to have an active and sustainable voice in their neighbourhood.

It is also important to undertake post-occupancy evaluation to understand the impact of regeneration, and to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to residents by acting on the results of any evaluations. This maintains trust with the local community, and encourages social sustainability and community cohesion.

Annex A:
Residents' charter template

Annex B:
Definitions of models for resident offer

Annex A:

Residents' charter template

A suggested format and content for the charter.

Summary:

Summary of the offer for residents.

Background and context:

Rationale for the regeneration of the estate and how it fits with the wider regeneration plans for the area.

Offer to Residents:

Details of the offer to residents, setting out clearly what this means for each group, for example:

- *Secure tenants*
- *Resident freeholders*
- *Resident leaseholders*
- *Non-resident homeowners*
- *Other resident groups, such as non-secure and private tenants*

Commitments to residents and the wider community affected by the regeneration:

For example:

- *How and when will people be able to be part of the process*
- *The housing options for residents*
- *The rights of secure tenants, including rent levels*
- *The offer to leaseholders and freeholders*
 - *buy back offer?*
 - *shared ownership and equity offer?*
- *Energy efficiency savings and other improvements for new or refurbished homes*
- *Maximum expected number of moves*
- *Disturbance payments – criteria, when payment is due, etc.*
- *Support for vulnerable residents*
- *Maintenance of the estate during the regeneration process - individual properties, community spaces, local infrastructure*

Residents' commitments:

Summary of the commitments agreed with residents

Contact details:

Provide scheme partners' contact details. These should be named people/person that can deal with enquiries without referring on elsewhere and should include email, telephone details and opportunities to meet in person.

Annex B: Definitions of models for resident offer

Shared ownership model

This enables residents to buy a share of a property that they can afford. This is generally between 25% and 75%. They will also pay rent on the share that they do not own but at a level below market value. They will have the option to increase their share as and when it is affordable. The estate landlord retains a long term investment in the property and is able to generate an ongoing income from the rent.

Shared equity model

This gives residents an opportunity to purchase a property which is of a higher value or larger than their current home. The estate landlord retains a share in the property until such time as the leaseholder or the freeholder can purchase the remainder of the property or sells the property. The homeowner is not required to pay interest on the value of the share or rent. The estate landlord will have a long term investment that they can expect to appreciate in value.

Early buy-back model

Freeholders and leaseholders are given the option to purchase a property at less than the forecasted market value during the early stage of the scheme. This enables the estate landlord to secure revenue early on.

Home swap model

Leaseholders receive market value for their home plus a home loss payment. Residents can use this payment to move elsewhere, or take a Home swap option to use the payment to buy property on the estate. The difference in value becomes a charge on the property that is repayable if the property is sold within seven years. This enables the estate landlords to secure revenue early on.

Cash-back deals model

Residents will undertake some of the finishing touches to the home e.g. tiling in return for a reduction in the market value or rent. Can be beneficial for custom built or community-led schemes.

