

Summary of consultation on Newham’s draft Asset Management Strategy 2023-25

On the 8th of June 2023 Cabinet gave permission to consult on a draft Asset Management Strategy. The consultation ran through 18th June to 14 August 2023.

Residents are our key stakeholder where the quality of our homes is in question, their opinions are paramount in shaping the way in which we develop and maintain them.

To encourage resident participation LBN took the opportunity to offer a variety of channels for the residents to communicate with our officers. These included dedicated drop-ins, local area forums, online and via email.

The intention was to use a blended approach: to work with existing and established forums for residents to address housing issues in the borough, as well as creating further opportunities for residents and other interested parties to give us their views on the draft Asset Management Strategy 2023-25. This approach met with a very positive response.

Given the draft Asset Management Strategy is a high-level document, it was felt that this was the most effective way of gaining meaningful feedback. This work ran alongside consultation on the Damp and Mould Strategy and the Residents Engagement Forums.

How we consulted on the draft strategy

We presented and discussed the draft Strategy in detail at a number of forums and events:

- Local Area Forum - Stratford and New Town, West Ham & Forest Gate
- Local Area Forum - Green Street, Plaistow & Boleyn
- Local Area Forum - Canning Town, Custom House, Royal Docks & Beckton
- Asset Management Strategy and Damp and Mould Strategy Consultation Event – Stratford Library
- Cyclical Preventative Works Residents Drop in, E16 addresses – Stratford Library
- Cyclical Preventative Works Residents Drop in, E12 addresses – Manor Park Library

The draft Asset Management Strategy was also published on the Council's website, alongside an opportunity for anyone else to submit responses either via the survey or to a unique inbox for the project. Participants reviewing the online page were also able to submit comments in a free text box. These channels ensured that the process was simple, straightforward and engaging.

The comments from all channels of consultation are reflected in the word cloud below, which highlights a number of the strategy's key themes, but also indicate the breadth of the topics residents raised:



Advertising the consultation

Newham website:

The consultation was advertised through the Newham website's news page at the launch of the consultation.

Local media:

The Newham Recorder was issued a press release at the start of the consultation. This echoed the information available on the Newham Council Website..

Social media:

A Social media campaign relating to the AMS was highly visible throughout the consultation period, beginning at the start of the consultation period and running until the day it closed. The messaging featured across Twitter and LinkedIn. Regrettably owing to technical issues, the Facebook page was unavailable to utilise.

Email:

Attractive and informative invites to stakeholder meetings were sent via email, with attendees invited to share details of the consultation to interested parties in their wider networks.

Limitations to the consultation

The consultation took place in facilities spread across the borough, these however, were limited in geographic relation to the out of borough properties.

Whilst electronic forms of communication were available, those limited in mobility and with restricted access to electronic media may not have been able to contribute.

What the feedback told us

Overall, consultation participants welcomed the draft strategy. Key points included:

- Communication is key to residents
- The strategy is a very welcome sign of the Council's commitment to tackling the maintenance of an ageing stock
- Overall agreement with the scale of ambition in the draft Asset Management Strategy, recognising that significant alignment of the capital investment is required
- Recognition of the relevance of TRA's is crucial to the future of the borough

- Residents want to be involved: in terms of both consultation and engagement, and being part of the solution, be this on an individual, TRA or individual block with works planned.

Those agreeing with the focus of the strategy were very happy to say that it was a welcome statement by the Council and fully recognised that the Council was investing resources to navigate a tangible way forward.

The following sections break down the feedback, using the structure of the three key priorities identified in the draft strategy

Priority One: Quality & Safety -providing high quality homes to residents

Key messages from the consultation were:

- The necessity for the council to understand the current status of the properties.
- To appreciate not only the buildings - but the homes and neighbourhoods they contain.
- Aligning necessity and “nice to have” in the context of the current economic environment.

Priority Two: Decarbonisation - taking positive action to address the climate emergency

Key messages from the consultation were:

- That whilst it may assist in fuel poverty, advanced technology is not something at the fore of residents thoughts.
- That technology is advancing readily and that it makes no sense to rush into making immediate change.

Priority Three: Resident satisfaction – listening to residents through effective resident engagement, involvement and co-production.

Key messages from the consultation were:

- Re-establishing resident associations was widely welcomed
- Explore new ways to inform and engage residents
- Co-production and really meaningful engagement needs to be actively supported as a new way of working through sustained resourcing, training for residents and officers and a clear set of protocols
- Residents should be able to evaluate processes and services, not just a limited role – for example influencing how an estate is managed or how the repairs/waste/vermin services works

In addition to the main priorities, residents found the in-person meetings very useful in provide them with a forum to air other issues which affect them, their homes and their neighbourhoods. This they felt was a very positive step in the engagement and communication process.