

**PUBLIC**

**HOUSING**

**REVOLUTION**

**LESSONS FROM LONDON**



**CHPC**  
NEW YORK CITY

CITIZENS  
HOUSING  
PLANNING  
COUNCIL

**OCTOBER 2019**

## About CHPC

**Citizens Housing & Planning Council (CHPC)** is a non-profit research and education organization focused on housing policy and planning in New York City. Since our founding in 1937, CHPC's mission has been to develop and advance practical public policies to support the housing stock of the city by better understanding New York's most pressing housing and neighborhood needs.

For more than 80 years, CHPC's research and education work has helped to shape public policy to improve the City's housing stock and quality of life in NYC's neighborhoods. A team of expert research staff is led by a diverse board of practitioners in the fields of urban planning, architecture, zoning and land use law, housing finance and development, and community development.

Our work brings clarity to NYC's housing issues by presenting research in relatable and engaging ways. Our agenda is practical and always begins with questions, not answers. It is the data, our analysis, and its relevance to the real world that drive our conclusions.

# PUBLIC HOUSING REVOLUTION

This report is part of a CHPC initiative to learn about how England's public housing conditions were radically improved, by pairing the expertise of residents with the resources of the affordable housing industry, and how these principles can be applied in New York City.

This report concludes with an overview of primary source documents, providing an in-depth resource for practitioners who want to dive deeper into the specific tools used in the regeneration of England's public housing. All of the documents (which range from minutes from meetings with residents, to corporate strategies for resident engagement, to tenant ballots) can be downloaded from CHPC's online Resident Engagement Toolkit.



### DOWNLOAD PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENTS

All documents highlighted at the end of this report can be downloaded from CHPC's website:

[chpcny.org/publichousingrevolution](https://chpcny.org/publichousingrevolution)

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## CHPC'S COMMITMENT

### TO PUBLIC HOUSING

Citizens Housing & Planning Council's (CHPC's) first efforts in the 1930s focused on working with state legislators to pass an amendment to the New York State constitution, to facilitate the construction of the nation's first public housing development: First Houses on the Lower East Side.<sup>3</sup>

Today, CHPC's work on public housing is focused on:

1. Evaluating the public-private partnerships that will serve as a model for NYCHA's future;
2. Showcasing lessons learned from other cities;
3. Identifying best practices in property management;
4. Proposing reforms to support NYCHA's capital budget needs; and
5. Creating new tenant engagement strategies.

*New Partners in Public Housing: Evaluation of NYCHA's Triborough Pilot Project*, a report published by CHPC in 2018, compared buildings involved in the Triborough public-private partnership with a control group of buildings, which remained under NYCHA ownership and management.

CHPC data analysis showed that the volume of work orders went down, while rent collection rates went up, at Triborough buildings. Hundreds of residents shared their impressions of the transfer through a tenant survey conducted in partnership with Baruch College Survey Research. Residents living in recently renovated apartments with new management reported more positive reactions to their built environment and to the prospect of staying in their homes compared to the control group of residents that remained in apartments owned and managed by NYCHA.<sup>4</sup>

In 2019, CHPC conducted analysis to better understand New York City's Co-op & Condo Tax Abatement and put forward ideas to reform the program, to help pay for NYCHA's capital needs. CHPC joined a coalition to advocate for reform of the tax abatement that could redirect \$3.3 billion in savings to NYCHA.

**CHPC is committed to researching and sharing strategies that will help NYCHA deliver safe, high quality, affordable housing to its residents.**

## CURRENT STATUS OF

### NEW YORK'S PUBLIC HOUSING

After decades of crippling federal subsidy cutbacks, severely deferred maintenance, and massive capital needs, New York City's public housing is at a precipice. Despite the sharp increase in political and media attention on the terrible conditions that many public housing tenants are living in, there is no substantive plan for the future of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). Pessimism is pervasive among residents, the housing industry, and elected officials alike.

NYCHA's dire financial situation is continuously used as a political talking point by Federal, State, and City elected officials, but none take responsibility for it. NYCHA is left with few resources, and there are no compelling suggestions for how the authority can address its operational challenges, along with the growing capital needs of its buildings.

The NYCHA 2.0 plan leverages the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program and infill development to create as many new resources for NYCHA as possible.<sup>1</sup> However, these programs will not address the capital needs of every public housing development. NYCHA 2.0 will take over a decade to complete and, afterwards, NYCHA will remain the largest landlord in the country.<sup>2</sup> The plan also falls short of implementing the reforms necessary for NYCHA to address its operational and management needs. Meanwhile, new development plans have not meaningfully engaged NYCHA residents as partners.

Despite the operating and financial shortfalls of the authority, NYCHA continues to provide a safety net for low-income New Yorkers: homes for families in a city with growing housing costs. NYCHA houses at least 400,000 residents (some believe this number to be closer to 600,000), living in 174,000 apartments across all five boroughs.

## WHAT CAN NEW YORK CITY LEARN FROM LONDON?

To find solutions for New York's public housing crisis, CHPC has looked to other cities to show that change is possible. In 2019, CHPC invited a group from London to share lessons from their experiences regenerating public housing over the last 40 years. CHPC hosted the group at meetings with City Hall, City Council, and NYCHA tenant leaders, as well as at a public panel event. The visit provided an opportunity for New York City policymakers and NYCHA residents to hear about how England solved an even larger public housing crisis than the one NYCHA faces today. This report draws on the key principles and ideas distilled from that visit and from subsequent research conducted by CHPC.

England's regeneration efforts are still underway. It is important to note that this solution is neither perfect nor quick, but there is much to learn from the structures and systems England is using to address their public housing crisis. The scale of the crisis in NYC feels insurmountable, but London's public housing system was larger and more complex. London and NYC are both large international cities; centers of commerce, culture and government.

While the two cities share many similarities, it is also critical to consider significant structural and historical differences. Because such a large portion of London's population lived in public housing, there was a broader base of public and political support to address the crisis. New York's history of racial inequities have kept the crisis hidden and out of the political and public eye for far too long. To add to the visibility of London's crisis, the public housing stock was distributed across 33 different housing authorities, each led by an elected local council, providing for a level of accountability that NYCHA lacks.

To solve the crisis in London, some developments brought in new management, some tenants exercised a right to buy, public-private partnerships were formed to renovate entire developments, and in some examples developments were demolished in phases, with tenants given the right to return.

Entirely new neighborhoods have been created, out of what were once superblocks of poorly maintained public housing. These transformations were only possible because there was a broad consensus that something had to change to improve the living conditions of residents.

LONDON  
IN THE 1980s



800,000 UNITS OF PUBLIC HOUSING

30% OF LONDON'S POPULATION  
LIVED IN PUBLIC HOUSING

6.6 MILLION TOTAL POPULATION

20% NON-WHITE POPULATION

33 HOUSING AUTHORITIES

NEW YORK CITY  
IN 2019



174,000 UNITS OF PUBLIC HOUSING

5% OF NYC'S POPULATION  
LIVE IN PUBLIC HOUSING

8.4 MILLION TOTAL POPULATION

57% NON-WHITE POPULATION

1 HOUSING AUTHORITY

### CHPC identified three principles that have enabled the transformation of England's public housing stock:

1. A Decent Homes Standard was created, and local councils are required to meet the standard.
2. The expertise of residents is paired with the resources of the affordable housing industry.
3. A menu of different options provides residents and local councils the ability to decide how to reach the Decent Homes Standard.

Because there was an acknowledgment that government resources alone could not solve the problem, the government created new partnerships with the affordable housing industry, requiring that the expertise of residents was central to all decision-making.

These principles are both radical and self-evident. In New York City's current public housing landscape, it can be difficult to imagine a departure from the existing top-down structure. However, New York City has many assets that England lacked, and England's demonstrable success should serve as inspiration that change is possible. Adherence to the status quo by all levels of government and well-deserved distrust from residents are two major barriers to improving public housing in New York City. These practical and tenant-centered principles are a road map for New York City.

**In England, these tenant-centered principles have helped overcome roadblocks and built trust to move forward.**

Setting a clear, shared goal (in England’s case, the Decent Homes Standard) becomes the catalyst for all stakeholders to work together. Residents are rightly put at the center of decision-making, with acknowledgment of their expertise as consumers of housing. The affordable housing industry is given an elevated role and brings new resources to public housing, but must work alongside residents to create a plan that works for all parties. True tenant participation is only possible when a menu of options exists, as tenants are able to make real choices about the future of their development.

It is time to acknowledge that federal resources will not be enough to solve New York City’s public housing crisis, and that the City and the housing authority need to bring in new partners. New York City has a robust affordable housing industry. Public housing residents’ expertise should be considered a resource.

**CONTEXT FOR ENGLAND’S PUBLIC HOUSING CRISIS**

Production of public housing in England started in 1875 and culminated in the 1980s, with about 800,000 units in London alone.<sup>5</sup> By that time, England’s original stock had gone decades without significant investment. Not only had the stock built in the early 1900s deteriorated, the housing built just a few years prior was poorly constructed and already in need of repair. Housing authorities were faced with a combination of declining conditions, abandoned homes, growing operating costs, lack of local subsidies, reductions in national subsidies, insufficient management, and tenants who were alienated from the system.

**In London, housing authorities are closely tied to the elected local council, facilitating political buy-in on a neighborhood scale.**

In the 1980s, London’s 800,000 units of crumbling public housing were divided across 33 different housing authorities. While this had some drawbacks, one advantage was that each was able to work out its own strategy to meet the Decent Homes Standard.<sup>6</sup>

Over the past 40 years, England has experimented with different approaches to improve housing conditions for residents and substantially transform housing authorities into functional, strategic and asset management entities.

**RIGHT TO BUY**

The first phase of England’s policy response to its public housing crisis was the Right to Buy, enacted by the Thatcher administration.<sup>7</sup> The goal of Right to Buy was to reduce the operational burdens of housing authorities by reducing the size of

their housing stock. Across all of England, over 1.9 million homes have been sold to tenants; 310,000 sold in London alone.<sup>8</sup>

The Right to Buy program has had a lasting impact on the social and economic fabric of the country. One consequence of this policy response was that it left those households who were not able to purchase their homes living in inferior conditions. Meanwhile, after selling large portions of their portfolios to residents, housing authorities were left with the stock that was in the worst condition.

<b>ENGLAND TO NYC TRANSLATION</b>	
<b>IN ENGLAND</b>	<b>IN NEW YORK CITY</b>
<b>LOCAL COUNCIL OR LOCAL AUTHORITY</b>	<b>CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT</b>
<b>REGENERATION</b>	<b>REDEVELOPMENT &amp; IMPROVED MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>COUNCIL HOUSING OR COUNCIL ESTATE</b>	<b>PUBLIC HOUSING OR NYCHA DEVELOPMENT</b>
<b>REGISTERED HOUSING PROVIDER OR HOUSING PROVIDER</b>	<b>AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPER</b>

# PRINCIPLES

# FOR A

# REVOLUTION!

## **CHPC identified three principles that have enabled the transformation of England's public housing stock:**

- 1.** A Decent Homes Standard was created, and local councils are required to meet the standard.
- 2.** The expertise of residents is paired with the resources of the affordable housing industry.
- 3.** A menu of different options provides residents and local councils the ability to decide how to reach the Decent Homes Standard.

## THE DECENT HOMES STANDARD

By 2000, Right to Buy had left local authorities with a crumbling housing stock and no commitment from the UK government to pay for repairs. The vast majority of public housing developments would need to undergo considerable physical improvements (known as 'regeneration'), which would draw on the capacity and expertise of both public housing residents and the affordable housing industry.

The Decent Homes Standard was set in 2000, requiring every public housing unit to meet the Standard by 2010.<sup>9</sup> Units that failed to meet the standard would be deemed 'non-decent' and local councils that were unable to bring their public housing stock to the Standard would lose their operating funding from the federal government.

While there have been challenges in bringing the UK's entire public housing stock to meet the Decent Homes Standard, its creation marked a significant shift in how housing authorities operate. There are many different ways a public housing development can reach the Standard, which vary due to that development's unique conditions and needs.

To decide what ownership and management structures will best achieve the Standard, local councils have had to bring both tenants and the housing industry to the table.

These rules are still in effect today. The Decent Homes Standard requires that all homes:<sup>10</sup>

- be in a reasonable state of repair;
- have reasonably modern facilities and services;
- provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort; and
- be free from hazards classified under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

### KEY PRINCIPLE:

**A Decent Homes Standard was created, and local councils are required to meet the standard.**



# RESIDENTS AND THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING SECTOR TOGETHER AS PARTNERS

To enable the public housing stock to meet the Decent Homes Standard, both tenants and the affordable housing industry are given elevated, more balanced roles. When the Standard was introduced, the affordable housing sector in England was relatively small. Yet affordable housing providers had access to the finances needed to bring housing to the Standard, because they could leverage private debt. Affordable housing providers also brought with them development and management expertise.

To counterbalance its new partnership with affordable housing providers, the government also required any regeneration plan to include residents as key decision-makers, placing public housing tenants at the heart of all rehabilitation strategies.<sup>11</sup> Core to this new balance of power was the idea that service-users know best; in other words, that residents have expert knowledge on what their housing needs are.

*The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment (TIE) Standard states:*

*“Registered providers [i.e. public housing providers] shall consult with tenants, setting out clearly the costs and benefits of relevant options, if they are proposing to change their landlord or when proposing a significant change in their management arrangements.”<sup>12</sup>*

The TIE Standard is comprised of three overarching themes for tenant involvement:

1. Customer Service, Choice and Complaints.
2. Involvement and Empowerment.
3. Understanding and Responding to the Diverse Needs of Tenants.

The TIE Standard also dictates: expectations of local authorities to communicate key information and data to tenants; the opportunities local authorities must create for resident involvement; and, how local authorities should demonstrate to tenants that they have taken their consultation into account when reaching a decision about the future of their housing.

The National Framework for Tenant Participation states that TIE Standards: *“...ensure that tenant involvement is properly integrated and resourced and the values of the compact are embedded throughout the [housing providers] organisation. Tenant involvement should be part of mainstream housing services, not a bolt-on, and responding to tenants’ views should run through all landlord activities as part of the organisation’s culture and the way it delivers those services.”<sup>13</sup>*

**The Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard ensures that tenant involvement is properly resourced and well integrated into the work of the housing provider.**

The TIE Standard ensures that public housing tenants are given an equal seat at the table, to decide what strategies will be deployed to regenerate their developments. Residents are able to play this role because they are provided with transparent information about the capital needs and operating budgets of their development, as well as the ability to select the Independent Tenant Advisor and, sometimes, the affordable housing developer.

This transparency allows residents to provide continuous input throughout the process of a regeneration plan, starting with the development of master plans, to the ongoing management of their homes.

In England, any public housing provider can comply with the TIE Standard by creating their own tenant engagement strategy or by contracting with an Independent Tenant Advisor. Independent Tenant Advisors have helped residents and developers work together by ensuring a clear and transparent process for all parties.

## KEY PRINCIPLE:

**The expertise of residents is paired with the resources of the affordable housing industry.**

## THE ROLE OF AN

# INDEPENDENT TENANT ADVISOR

Independent Tenant Advisors guide all the stakeholders involved in a regeneration plan through the menu of options that are available. There are many options for public housing developments to reach the Standard, and choices are made based on each development's unique conditions and needs.

Independent Tenant Advisors ensure that all parties in the decision-making process have complete and unbiased information. They also help to create partnership agreements and Memoranda Of Agreement, and to distill project information and development finances into understandable, relevant information.

Independent Tenant Advisors can be used throughout all stages of the redevelopment process, depending on the needs of the housing provider and the approval of residents. Residents can vote on which advisor they want to use, or on if they want to use one at all.

The list below highlights some of the roles that Independent Tenant Advisors can play:<sup>14</sup>

- “Information, engagement and consultation with community groups and on a 1-1 level, with stakeholder groups, or project teams
- Tenant capacity building through formal and informal activities
- Project management facilitated by robust project plans, recording and reporting and attending project meetings
- Wider community information, engagement and consultation through intentional and targeted outreach
- Supporting residents by assisting them through the processes involved in temporarily relocating
- Identifying additional opportunities for joint work (between the housing provider and residents) to maximize engagement and involvement
- Feedback and attendance at project stakeholder meetings”

## OPTIONS

## BRING EVERYONE

# TO THE TABLE

In England, public housing residents, local authorities and housing providers have balanced roles because they must make decisions together. To reach the Decent Homes Standard, the national government authorizes local councils and residents to develop a menu of options based on the unique needs of each development. This facilitates an environment for residents to move forward with a plan that fits their needs and values.

The table on page 21 outlines the different options that are available to residents and local authorities to bring housing conditions up to the Decent Homes Standard. Decisions are made by a representative tenant board or through a tenant vote.

Residents of public housing can decide which of these options will meet their long-term housing needs, based on the unique needs of the development and on the values held by the community.

Some public housing residents have chosen to transfer to an affordable housing owner and manager, demolish existing buildings, and re-develop the sites with new affordable housing, with the guarantee that they will be able to receive brand new homes. In other cases where rehabilitation was not needed, residents have been allowed to choose a new management structure. For example, residents can opt to contract with their housing authority, to run certain aspects of their housing management themselves. Each decision reflects the residents who make up that community.

The ability to choose from a menu of options acknowledges that there is no one perfect solution, and that people will differ in their approach to public housing regeneration.

### KEY PRINCIPLE:

**A menu of different options provides residents and local authorities the ability to decide how to reach the Decent Homes Standard.**

# OPTIONS

## TO MEET THE

## DECENT HOMES STANDARD

Once a tenant organization and local council decide to regenerate their estate, residents, Independent Tenant Advisors, and the local council chart which options are feasible for the development. This work is done with full **transparency** to ensure that any option ending up on a **tenant ballot** is feasible and the **trade-offs** for each choice are clear. The options listed to the right show the many choices residents could use to meet the Decent Homes Standard.

For example, residents could decide that the best way to meet the Decent Homes Standard is to transfer the existing stock to an affordable housing developer and build infill housing to help pay for the costs of rehabilitating their current units. Different options outlining the amount of infill development for their estate are then included on the ballot. Often, infill development options are paired with a scope for rehabilitation to currently existing units. These vary from in-place rehabilitation to demolition of existing public housing units and building new ones.

### STATUS QUO / DO NOTHING

This option is included on tenant ballots and outlines the lifespan of the current housing stock, providing residents a baseline to weigh other options against.

### STOCK TRANSFER

Complete transfer of building ownership and infill land to affordable housing providers. Residents later choose from several options to redevelop or rehabilitate their buildings.

### PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVE OR PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

This option establishes a long-term contract between local authorities and development teams to manage, maintain, rehab or rebuild public housing.

### ARM'S LENGTH MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION (ALMO)

The local authority establishes an independent organization and creates long-term contracts with it to manage and rehab part of the authority's stock.

### TENANT MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION (TMO)

Residents create an independent legal body and elect a tenant-led management committee to run it. The TMO then enters into a legal management agreement with the local council or affordable housing provider (similar to ALMOs).

### INFILL DEVELOPMENT

After assessing different scenarios for infill development, residents work directly with affordable housing providers to decide how much development of new market-rate housing is needed on their estate to meet the rehabilitation needs of the current public housing units.

### SCOPE OF REHABILITATION

Residents and affordable housing developers negotiate the tradeoffs between the scope of rehabilitation including the amount and affordability level of infill development.

# CASE STUDIES

The developments in these Case Studies are creating their own paths to meeting the Decent Homes Standard. In both cases, a group of passionate and future-thinking residents are leading the charge, guided by the values of their community.

	SERPENTINE COURT	WOODBERRY DOWN
<b>RESIDENT CHOICE</b>	Tenant vote on all components of the regeneration plan	Representation on resident community board
<b>INDEPENDENT TENANT ADVISOR</b>	Yes	No
<b>MANAGEMENT CHOICE</b>	Full stock transfer to new housing provider	
<b>REDEVELOPMENT CHOICE</b>	Full redevelopment with mixed-use housing and additional market-rate units	
<b>CURRENT PHASE</b>	Residents, alongside a new housing developer, are choosing elements of their redevelopment master plan and will work together until construction starts in 2020.	Project has 8 phases, some of which are already complete. All construction expected to be complete by 2035.
<b>ORIGINAL PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS</b>	199 units	2,000 units
<b>RENOVATED PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS</b>	199 units	2,000 units
<b>NEW MARKET RATE UNITS</b>	+ 201 units	+ 3,500 units
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF NEW UNITS</b>	400 units	5,500 units

## CASE STUDY: SERPENTINE COURT

The process at Serpentine Court started with a group of young mothers planning for their children's future. The development was in dire need of repair, and this small group of residents knew that they needed a change, if their homes were going to meet the needs of the next generation. They decided to work with an Independent Tenant Advisor to understand how their development could meet the Decent Homes Standard and to learn more about the trade-offs involved in the options for regeneration. Resident buy-in was important to the leaders, so an initial vote was held to decide which Independent Tenant Advisor to work with. The selected advisor then worked to ensure that all residents who wanted to be were involved in developing options for regeneration, and that residents received all the information needed to make an informed decision on redevelopment plans.

Resident engagement at Serpentine Court began more than a year before a formal vote was cast on a regeneration plan. Residents were invited to several visioning and education sessions to craft the initial list of options. These options were later refined in public meetings, drop-in sessions and by collecting feedback through door-knocking and in-person conversations.<sup>15</sup>

In the fall of 2018, after a year of learning the nuances of each regeneration option, residents at Serpentine Court held a vote for the regeneration plan for their estate. The ballot outlined three options for residents to choose from:<sup>16</sup>

### OPTION A—STATUS QUO:

The 'No' option meant that there would be no redevelopment (demolition or construction) at Serpentine Court.

### OPTION B—PARTIAL REDEVELOPMENT:

In this option, 68 public housing units of the original 199 would be retained, and 300 new market-rate homes would be built.

### OPTION C—FULL REDEVELOPMENT:

In this option, all public housing units would be demolished and rebuilt in addition to 201 market-rate units.

Over 84% of residents voted, with 93% of the votes going to **OPTION C**, full redevelopment of their estate. Since then, Serpentine Court residents have provided continuous input on the redevelopment plan. In the summer of 2019, a design exhibition invited residents to weigh in on the community spaces, road configuration, unit layouts and parks. This is one of several formal roles that tenants have as their development undergoes regeneration. Construction is expected to begin in 2020, and resident engagement is ongoing.

## CASE STUDY: WOODBERRY DOWN

The Woodberry Down estate has a long history of resident engagement and activism. In the 1980s, tenants fought to preserve the reservoirs that surrounded their homes, after the local council proposed to fill and build housing on top of them. In the years since, the area's picturesque reservoirs and nature paths have made the neighborhood around the estate an attractive place to live or visit.

During their fight to save the reservoirs, residents of Woodberry Down formed the Woodberry Down Community Organisation (WDCO), an elected body to represent the residents and shopkeepers of the estate. Since its establishment, WDCO has fought for a balanced, integrated community. This has remained a guiding principle in WDCO's efforts to bring Woodberry Down's public housing to the Decent Homes Standard.<sup>16</sup> Residents elected two co-chairs to represent them in meetings with the local council and the housing developer, along with the Mayor of Hackney. Given the representative structure of WDCO, along with its history of tenant activism, residents at this estate did not elect to use an Independent Tenant Advisor.

Prior to the regeneration process, the 2,000 public housing units at Woodberry Down were in need of significant repairs. Through a series of meetings, agreements and negotiations, it was decided that Woodberry Down would be demolished

and replaced through extensive regeneration.<sup>17</sup> This regeneration project, now underway, is one the largest in Europe. It includes the construction of 3,500 additional market-rate apartments, along with the rebuilding of the original 2,000 public housing units. The market-rate units will help pay for the reconstruction and ongoing maintenance of the new public housing units.

Woodberry Down's residents were temporarily relocated on-site to allow for redevelopment, with all residents given a right to return. Slowly, as the construction of the new public housing units is completed, residents are moving into their new homes. Per their partnership agreement, both the local council and the developer have agreed to work alongside WDCO in deciding how the units are designed, how the views of the reservoirs are distributed and how market-rate and public housing units are integrated across the development.<sup>18</sup> For example, residents opposed the developer's original design for open-plan kitchens, and negotiated for a higher number of market rate units in exchange for each child to have their own bedroom. WDCO also has a formal say in the type of community facilities placed on the estate, which have included additional retail, a swimming pool, community center, and school.

# RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

The documents described in the following pages are available in the online version of this Resident Engagement Toolkit:

[chpcny.org/publichousingrevolution](http://chpcny.org/publichousingrevolution)

All documents were provided to CHPC by groups that are currently involved in, or have completed, the process of regenerating public housing in England.

The Resident Engagement Toolkit gives an overview of primary source documents from England, providing an in-depth resource for practitioners who want to dive deeper into the specific tools used in the regeneration of England's public housing. Some documents report back on the work stakeholders have done with each other; some documents dictate the rules and regulations that enable a fair and equitable partnership; and others outline how resident engagement aligns with the overall mission of housing development and management.

The toolkit provides a summary of each document along with a quote pulled from each, to give readers a brief overview of their contents. **All documents are available for download from the online version of the Resident Engagement Toolkit on CHPC's website.**

## TOOLKIT KEY

Each document is assigned an icon, based on its primary user. However, most documents can be used by multiple stakeholders.



**AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROVIDERS**



**INDEPENDENT TENANT ADVISORS**



**RESIDENTS**



**THE LOCAL COUNCIL**



## DOWNLOAD PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENTS

All documents can be downloaded from the Resident Engagement Toolkit on CHPC's website: [chpcny.org/publichousingrevolution](http://chpcny.org/publichousingrevolution)

# TENANT BALLOT



Created by Meeting Place Communications, a consultancy who provided services in support of engagement within the Resident Ballot process



## BALLOT PAPER

### Westhorpe Gardens and Mills Grove Estate Regeneration Ballot

Metropolitan has asked Electoral Reform Services Ltd to conduct this ballot. You should have received a Landlord Offer document recently which provides details of the proposal for Westhorpe Gardens and Mills Grove Estate.

Question	
<p>Are you in favour of the proposal for the regeneration of the Westhorpe Gardens and Mills Grove Estate?</p>	
<p>YES</p> 	<p>NO</p> 

### How to vote:

 **VOTE BY POST**  
Vote by marking a cross 'X' in the box next to your chosen answer.

▶ Your completed ballot paper should be returned in the pre-paid envelope provided and received by the Independent Scrutineer no later than the time and date shown below.

**OR you can cast your vote using one of the methods on the reverse of this ballot paper.**

**VOTING CLOSES**  
**5PM on MONDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2018**

Security Code Part One	Security Code Part Two

K1532\_1\_P1/29488

## DEMOCRACY IN THE UK



### VOTE ONLINE

Go to:

██████████

Vote using your security codes.



Security Code Part One
Security Code Part Two



### VOTE BY TEXT\*

Text the codes and numbers opposite in the order shown, including spaces, to ██████████. You may select one answer only.

\* Text messages are charged at the cost of a standard text according to your contract with your mobile phone network provider. Text votes received after voting closes will not be counted but your provider may still charge you for sending the message.

TO VOTE YES			
Election Code	Security Code Part One	Security Code Part Two	ANSWER
WGE	123456	1234	YES

TO VOTE NO			
Election Code	Security Code Part One	Security Code Part Two	ANSWER
WGE	123456	1234	NO



### VOTE BY PHONE

Call Freephone

██████████

Vote using your security codes.



Security Code Part One
Security Code Part Two

Residents at Westhorpe Gardens and Mills Grove Estate used this ballot to vote in favor of the regeneration plan for their estate. The proposed plan includes the demolition of over 100 units, replacing them and constructing new market-rate housing. All residents are given the right to return.

After many years of experimenting with tenant ballots as an option for resident involvement in public housing regeneration, the Mayor Sadiq Khan of London made tenant ballots mandatory in 2018. This policy requires that any estate requesting funding from the city for regeneration work must ask residents directly whether they approve the plan through a formal vote.

K1532\_1\_P1/29488



Download all of these Primary Source Documents!

Visit the Resident Engagement Toolkit at: [chpcny.org/publichousingrevolution](http://chpcny.org/publichousingrevolution)

## RESIDENT VISION STATEMENT

Created by  
Woodberry Down  
Community Organization (WDCO)



In response to resident concerns over the progress of regeneration at Woodberry Down, WDCO (the tenant group) sent the developer and local council a formal vision letter, outlining each concern and its related component of the plan. After several meetings between all three parties, WDCO's demands were met and its concerns addressed.

**“ WDCO has made and will continue to make every effort to integrate our new residents into our activities, and have had some success in doing so. We know that social and economic integration is not easy. We know there are important issues.... that need to be tackled. ”**

## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEETINGS

Created by  
Serpentine Court Regeneration  
tenant group



The code of conduct is used by Independent Tenant Advisors and residents to maintain the highest standards at resident meetings. This example document demonstrates how codes of conduct can be used to set a standard for communication not just within meetings, but outside of them as well.

**“ Group members shall:**

- **Represent the views of the wider community and not seek to further one's own interests.**
- **Communicate the agreed position as a whole outside of meetings and not individual views or positions, whether one's own or those of other members of the group.**
- **Be truthful and do not provide false information to residents about the business of the regeneration. ”**

## ROLE MATRIX

Created by  
Independent Tenant Advisors



This matrix outlines the roles of an Independent Tenant Advisor to help the local council and tenants understand how the advisor will be involved. Independent Tenant Advisors have unique roles to play in the regeneration process, which address each of the deliverables outlined in their contract.

**“ Independent advisors can benefit both tenants, the local council, and developer by ensuring that everything communicated to all parties, is legal and to generate buy-in from all stakeholders.**

- **Identify and agree to clear milestones that the community can related too.**
- **Ensure residents are consulted at the right time about the right thing in the best possible way.**
- **Help deliver coherent strategic consultation, helping people understand the big picture.”**

## RESIDENT RECRUITMENT PACKET

Created by  
Independent Tenant Advisors



The resident recruitment packet outlines the roles that tenants can and should have in the regeneration process, from selecting board members, to outlining the roles of the Independent Tenant Advisors, to listing the activities of the various project boards, to creating codes of conduct for meetings.

**“ The role of resident board members is to represent directly impacted residents. They participate in the project board meetings so that they can provide a resident perspective in the decision making process; raising issues and ideas from those directly impacted by regeneration. ”**





## TENANT BALLOT OVERVIEW

Created by  
affordable housing developer  
and local authority



This flyer outlines the three options that residents of Serpentine Court could choose between for the regeneration of their estate, including site plans, the number of new and/or existing homes, and the scope of rehabilitation proposed by each option.

“ **The result of the ballot will dictate the future direction of regeneration of Serpentine Court. Ballot options B and C will require further development if selected as the preferred option.**

**There will be more opportunities for you to input into and shape development of the preferred option after the ballot. We will communicate how you can do this once the ballot has taken place. ”**

## LETTER TO RESIDENTS TO ATTEND DESIGN WORKSHOP

Created by  
affordable housing  
developer and  
local authority



This letter was sent by the affordable housing developer and the housing authority involved in the regeneration of Serpentine Court to residents of the development, prior to crafting any regeneration proposals for residents to vote on.

“ **At the Shaping Neighbourhoods workshop you will be able to tell us what you would like any possible future buildings and open spaces to look like, and the materials you would like us to use.**

**You will be able to comment on the future: design of streets; play spaces; parking; refuse storage; bike storage and new homes.**

**Your ideas will be put together to create a Design Code for the Lakes Estate to make sure that any regeneration or new development results in high quality homes, facilities and spaces that the existing residents like, want to use or live in. ”**

## INITIAL & FINAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Created by  
Woodberry Down  
Community Organization  
(WDCO)



The initial MOA for the regeneration of the Woodberry Down estate was drafted by WDCO, the tenant group, and signed by the affordable housing provider. The MOA was later replaced by a final partnership agreement, signed by all stakeholders. While not legally binding, these agreements provide guidance and set expectations by outlining how the partners will work together over the course of the project.

“ **The purpose of the Partnership is to:**

- **Build trust between Partners and facilitate Partners working together in an open and transparent way.**
- **Ensure clear communication between partners**
- **Encourage collaborative working across partner organisations in Woodberry Down.**
- **Address challenges and/or changes which arise from the regeneration of Woodberry Down**
- **Set out the approach we will take to implement the vision. ”**

## CORPORATE STRATEGY

Created by  
Notting Hill Genesis, an  
affordable housing developer



The Corporate Strategy of social housing developer Notting Hill Genesis explains how resident engagement is included as a key strategy for the organization.

“ **Notting Hill Genesis is resident focused. We value our roots and remain close to our communities. We are on the side of those we house, and those who need our services...”**

**Every resident will have a named officer who is responsible and accountable to them for service delivery. ”**



Download all of these Primary Source Documents!

Visit the Resident Engagement Toolkit at: [chpcny.org/publichousingrevolution](http://chpcny.org/publichousingrevolution)

## CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Created for Independent Tenant Advisors by the local council



The Declaration of Confidentiality is a legal document signed by independent tenant advisors, requiring them to keep information about the regeneration plan confidential.

This allows independent tenant advisors to evaluate several regeneration options and eventually present this information to residents.

**“ I shall treat all information supplied by the Authority in connection with ITN as confidential and we shall not, without the prior written consent of the authority, at any time, make use of such information for any purpose other than the evaluation process. ”**

## RESIDENT WORKSHOP FACILITATORS GUIDE

Created by Independent Tenant Advisors



This agenda shows the format, activities and questions used in a workshop for social housing residents aimed at drawing out their ideas and recommendations for regeneration. This helps developers build trust with residents, by getting to know their perspectives and explicitly seeking their input.

Prompt for discussion with residents and resident responses from agenda below:

**“ What does it feel like to live here and how do you feel about change? ”**

- People don't want to leave but are being forced to leave
- Change is exciting- it's happening everywhere, so here is great too! ”

## INTRO TO INDEPENDENT TENANT ADVISOR

Created by Independent Tenant Advisors



This letter introduces tenants to the selected Independent Tenant Advisor for a project. While the Tenant Association chooses the advisors, not all tenants will know who they are.

The letter provides the advisor's contact information, as well as the hours and locations throughout the housing development where tenants can meet their new advisors.

**“ Our role is to provide independent and impartial advice to any resident who lives in Serpentine Court. We will support you and work on your behalf to ensure that you are fully informed and involved throughout the regeneration project. ”**

## RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES

Created by Notting Hill Genesis, an affordable housing developer



This presentation is an update from an affordable housing provider to its Board of Directors on resident engagement initiatives. The presentation outlines the 'resident promise', the purpose or goal of each working/stakeholder group involved, and the work that each group has completed to date.

**“ The Notting Hill Genesis pledge:**

- Your tenancy or lease agreement will not change
- Residents will be at the heart of overseeing and shaping services
- We will build more homes for low-cost rent
- Rents and service charges will only increase in line with normal guidelines
- Residents will not be asked to move ”



## STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Created by  
affordable housing provider



This packet is sent by an affordable housing provider as part of its planning application for the regeneration of an estate. The packet outlines the various ways that the provider has incorporated resident priorities into its regeneration plans.

**“ The planning applications submitted have been strongly guided by the Aylesbury Area Action Plan (AAAP) a framework document prepared by the Council in consultation with the community between 2008 and 2010. As a result, many of the local communities’ priorities have been designed into the plans as part of the bid process. ”**

## SERVICE CHARTER

Created by  
Independent Tenant Advisors



This guide was created for communities who are working with an Independent Tenant Advisor, to help them understand the principles that underpin the tenant advisor’s roles.

**“ The scope and role of the Adviser will be determined by the needs of the community and regeneration partners and will be set out in an initial work programme to ensure clarity on our role and our independence.**

**Our Advisers will always be open and transparent about contact they have with the council, landlord or other professional bodies involved in the project and will provide documented evidence of this. ”**



# PUBLIC HOUSING REVOLUTION



Download all of these Primary Source Documents!

Visit the Resident Engagement Toolkit at: [chpcny.org/publichousingrevolution](http://chpcny.org/publichousingrevolution)

## ENDNOTES

1. *NYCHA 2.0, Part 1: Invest to Preserve & Part 2: Fix to Preserve*, The City of New York, released December 2018.
2. New York's public housing stock is more than double the next largest housing authority - Puerto Rico has just over 53,000 units.
3. *Housing and the Constitution of the State of New York: Recommendations to the New York State Constitutional Convention*, Citizens' Housing Council of New York, April 1938.
4. The more positive views of Triborough residents were reflected in their assessments of their buildings as a great or good place to raise a family and their willingness to recommend the building to a friend or family member. Results can be found in CHPC's report, here: <http://chpcny.org/wp-content/uploads/Public-Housing-Triborough-Interim-Report.pdf>
5. *Housing in London 2017: The Evidence Base for the Mayor's Housing Strategy*, Greater London Authority, February 2017.
6. *Dwelling stock: by tenure, England (historical series)*, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, Live tables on dwelling stock, Table 104.
7. Right to Buy was codified through the First Housing Act of 1980.
8. *Annual Right to Buy Sales: Sales by Local Authority 1979-80 to 2017-2018*, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, Live tables on dwelling stock, Table 685.
9. *A Decent Home: Definition and Guidance for Implementation*, Department for Communities and Local Government, June 2006.
10. For full definitions of the Decent Homes Standard see "A Decent Home: Definition and guidance for implementation," June 2006- Update, Department for Communities and Local Government
11. *Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard*, Homes & Communities Agency, updated 2017
12. *Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard*, Homes & Communities Agency, updated 2017
13. *National Framework for Tenant Participation Compacts*, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: London, March 2005
14. Independent Advice Services- Consultancy, Tpas, tenant engagement experts
15. Resident Engagement Toolkit, page 32: Letter to Residents, Milton Keynes Council
16. Resident Engagement Toolkit, page 32: Tenant Ballot Overview
17. Resident Engagement Toolkit, page 30: Resident Vision Statement
18. Resident Engagement Toolkit, page 33: WDCO Partnership Agreement



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