

Capital Works Resident Engagement Guide

Capital works projects can make a huge difference to our residents by providing important upgrades to their homes, improving fire-safety, maintaining buildings and heating systems, addressing any issues, and making estates nicer places to live.

We identify many projects based on our “stock condition survey” (a rolling process of checking all Camden housing buildings across the borough). We also take into account repairs history, resident reports, and Fire Risk Assessments.

Projects are planned up to five years in advance, and we publish our draft programme of Capital Works online, where it is updated monthly. You can find it by going to opendata.camden.gov.uk and searching “Better Homes” (remember to check the dates as there are older data available as well as current).

Listening to residents’ voices and understanding their views is crucial to making sure a project delivers what our residents need. We know that residents have a unique insight into their homes, buildings, and communities, we understand that things could have changed since the project was originally identified.

The way we engage with residents varies between projects and locations, but similar broad strokes apply across many of the projects we deliver. This includes:

1. Identifying and scoping a project
2. Initial engagement with residents
3. Procurement & ‘section 20’ consultation
4. Introducing the contractor
5. Engagement during the works
6. When the main works are finished

1. Identifying and scoping a project

What we do	Some of the ways we do it
Identifying that a capital works project needs to be carried out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From our rolling stock condition survey – most useful for identifying Better Homes projects (projects to upgrade or overhaul things like windows, brickwork, roofs, and communal areas) • Considering recent repairs history to see where there have been problems – especially useful for Mechanical & Electrical projects (projects to upgrade things like heating systems, lifts, and gas & electric supplies) • Fire Risk Assessments tell us where fire-safety works are needed, sometimes this is also supported by advice from the London Fire Brigade or our own fire engineer • Looking at the energy efficiency of buildings – this is mainly useful for energy retrofit projects, to help us focus on the homes that need it most
Scoping the project (ie working out what the project should include)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrying out detailed surveys of the building(s) • Examining closely whatever was highlighted by the stock condition survey and resident feedback • Checking the repairs history for the buildings • Working with specialist surveyors, architects, and/or other consultants (depending on the nature of the project) • Confirming what needs to be included in the project, ready to discuss with residents and get their input

2. Initial engagement with residents

What we do	Some of the ways we do it
Letting everyone know about the project, and what we plan to include in it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving an easy-to-understand overview of what we are planning to do as part of the project, and why it's needed • Offering a way for people to give us their feedback and ask their questions directly (often with a simple online form) • Sharing the project manager's contact details so that residents can get in touch personally if they need to
Explaining in more detail, answering questions, and listening to everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inviting everyone to a public meeting to discuss the works • Presenting and explaining the project scope • Understanding and answering everyone's questions – we know how important this is, so we always try to leave plenty of time for questions • Gathering residents' thoughts, concerns, and suggestions
Reviewing everyone's feedback, and confirming or updating what's included in the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing all the comments and suggestions from residents, including those submitted online, emailed to the project manager, and brought up at public meetings • Adding to, removing from, amending, or confirming what's included in the project • Depending on the project and any changes, possibly holding another public meeting online or on site discussing the updated scope and gathering further feedback

3. Procurement & 'section 20' consultation

Once the scope has been finalised, we start the procurement process by looking at how to achieve the best value for money on the project with different contractors. We procure most projects through our "procurement framework", which includes a shortlist of good quality contractors who have demonstrated that they are able to provide a high quality of work and good value for money – we call these "framework contractors".

Once we have evaluated tenders, we will consult with leaseholders on the scope and estimated cost of work, and provide an estimate of their contribution. This is often called "section 20 consultation" because of the legislation which describes this. We will also inform leaseholders of the contractor we intend to award the contract to.

Once the consultation with leaseholders has concluded, we will award the contract to the contractor who offers the best value for money. For framework procurement, where we already know that the contractors can provide good quality work, this is usually the framework contractor who submits the lowest bid.

4. Introducing the contractor

What we do	Some of the ways we do it
Introducing the contractor to the residents, and explaining the works in more detail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding a public session for residents to meet the contractors • Explaining the contractor's programme of work – what order they will do different parts of the work in, and when they plan to do them • Discussing things like where a site office or worker's rest facilities will go, whether any scaffold will be needed, and other details • Explaining what level of disruption residents can expect from the works, for instance noise, dust, scaffolding, or reduced access • Understanding and answering everyone's questions – we know how important this is, so we always try to leave plenty of time • Gathering residents' feedback, especially thoughts or concerns about disruption from the works, and anything we can do to minimise or ameliorate it
Introducing the Resident Liaison Officer (RLO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not always applicable to smaller projects • The RLO works for the contractor and is first point of contact for questions or concerns • They lead on face-to-face engagement and any home visits • They are usually based on site throughout the works. • If there isn't an RLO, then the project manager remains first point of contact

Around this time the contractor will start 'mobilising'. This is where they get everything ready – setting up the work site and rest facilities, moving materials, and getting prepared to carry out the work.

After we've introduced the contractor to residents, reviewed everyone's feedback, and made any changes we need to make to the programme of works, the contractor will start work on site. If there are any non-trivial changes to the project, we'll always let people know about them and listen to any further feedback.

5. Engagement during the works and quality assurance

What we do	Some of the ways we do it
Working with the contractor to keep everyone up to date with works progress	<p>This is often the part of the engagement process which varies most between projects, depending on the scale of the project and the impact of the works. It could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular newsletters – either from the Camden project manager, or from the contractor but reviewed and supported by Camden • Drop-in sessions with the contractor and/or project manager • Regular catchups with the contractor & project manager and residents associations – this could be an existing TRA or RTA • Residents are able to contact the RLO or Camden Project Manager throughout the process.
Making sure the works are being done to a high standard, and rectifying any issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clerk of works appointed by the council is there to check and ensure that work is done to a high standard. Depending on the nature of the project this might be an iterative review of the works, or checks on each specific element of the work as it is completed • If a resident is concerned about any element of the works, the RLO will listen to the concern, offer an explanation, and take any necessary action • If the RLO can't address a concern appropriately (or if there isn't an RLO), then the project manager will step in to assess and address the issue • Where it's safe and practical, residents can often join the project manager in reviewing the works on site

6. When the main works are finished

What we do	Some of the ways we do it
Resolving any issues or concerns which come up after work has finished	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a certain period after the works are completed (often 12 months) the contractor is responsible for sorting out any problems which might arise from their work • There is no additional cost to Camden (nor leaseholders) for the contractor returning to rectify faults • During this period, we ask residents to tell us about any problems which have come up with the contractors' work • Where appropriate, we remind residents of this again before the end of the defect liability period
Asking residents how they feel the project went and gathering detailed retrospective feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We commission an independent satisfaction survey to find out how residents feel about the works • The survey asks separately about: how Camden engaged & communicated with residents; how the contractor communicated and behaved; and the quality of the work • The survey results form part of the performance metrics our contractors are required to meet, and we hold them to account if they don't meet the criteria • The project manager reviews all feedback scores, addresses any specific concerns raised, and follows up with the contractor as appropriate