

Engagement plan for proposed demolition of John O’Gaunt building

Updated version, 25/06/2025

1. Introduction and Overview

- 1.1 Background of the John O’Gaunt building and proposed demolition: The John O’Gaunt (JOG) is a vacant, two-storey brick building in the Gaunt shopping precinct, acquired by the Council in 2022 to support the Gleadless Valley Regeneration Programme goals. Since purchase it has fallen into serious disrepair, suffering vandalism, decay and, most recently, an arson attack on 7 November 2023 that caused extensive smoke and water damage. Assessments by engineers and insurers have confirmed that refurbishment would require significant investment with no confirmed future use, and ongoing safety and reputational risks for the Council. To remove liabilities, address public safety concerns, and prepare the site for future development, demolition is recommended.
- 1.2 Why demolition is necessary: Demolishing the JOG removes a deteriorating hazard, addresses public safety concerns and clears the site for future redevelopment under the Gleadless Valley Regeneration.
- 1.3 Purpose of the engagement plan: The purpose of this engagement plan is to ensure that residents, local businesses, and stakeholders are informed, listened to, and involved in the proposed demolition of the John O’Gaunt (JOG) building and in considering some realistic options for the site’s use after demolition.

This plan outlines how the Council will:

- Share clear and timely information about the reasons for demolition and next steps.
- Provide opportunities for local people to ask questions, raise concerns, and influence how the demolition is managed and communicated
- Present four temporary options for the site while the longer terms plans for the site are being explored.
- Reassure the community that their views will be considered, especially around safety, disruption, and future use of the site.
- Build trust by demonstrating openness and transparency in decision-making, while maintaining clear lines of accountability.

This engagement plan supports the wider regeneration work in Gleadless Valley by showing that the Council is committed to working *with* the community throughout every stage of the process.

- 1.3 Overview of the project: The demolition of the John O’Gaunt building is a pivotal early step in regenerating the Gaunt precinct. Left vacant and damaged by fire, the building now:

- Presents safety risks
- Attracts anti-social behaviour
- Detracts from the look and confidence of the area

The demolition will:

- Remove a dangerous, deteriorating structure
- Improve the visual environment and sense of safety for residents and businesses
- Clear the site for future redevelopment in line with the Gleadless Valley Regeneration Programme

Short-term community concerns may include:

- Disruption from demolition works (noise, dust, traffic)
- Uncertainty about the site's future use
- Worry that community views won't shape what comes next

How this engagement plan will help:

- Provide accurate, timely information about demolition timing and process
- Invite views on four realistic options for the site's use after demolition (youth space, green space, playground or garden)
- Offer clear, accessible routes for questions and feedback
- Report back on community input using a "You Said, We Did / We Couldn't Because" format

2. Objectives of Engagement

2.1 Ensuring local residents are informed about the proposal

The engagement process will ensure that residents have clear, timely, and accessible information about the proposed demolition of the John O'Gaunt building. This includes the reasons behind the proposal, the current condition of the building, the timeline for decision-making, and what the demolition process would involve. Multiple communication channels will be used to reach as many people as possible, including printed materials, social media, drop-in sessions, and community events.

2.2 Engaging on the future of the space

Alongside demolition, this engagement process will explore what could happen on the site in the short term ('meanwhile use') and encourage residents and other stakeholders to get involved in the longer term planning for the area (which will be subject to separate engagement activities over the coming months). Residents will be asked to give feedback on four clear 'meanwhile' options for the space after demolition:

- A supervised, community-managed youth space (the suggested option)
- A small unsupervised toddler playground
- Leaving the site as grassed open space
- A community garden or nature area

Objectives include:

- Understand community preferences for short-term (meanwhile) use of the space
- Present residents with four realistic options for the site's use and gather feedback on preferences
- Gather suggestions for temporary uses before redevelopment begins
- Ensure residents understand the benefits, challenges, and timescales of each option
- Test support for the preferred youth space proposal while remaining open to alternative ideas
- Raise awareness of residents and other stakeholders of the process underway to develop longer term plans for the local area and how they can get involved.
- Reassure residents that the longer term plans will provide improved community facilities compared to the current situation and the proposed meanwhile uses.

2.3 Exploring wider community priorities

The engagement will also invite residents to reflect on the wider role of community space in Gleadless Valley. This includes:

- Capturing and honouring the history and emotional connection people have to the John O’Gaunt site
- Exploring community appetite for reusing or developing nearby spaces, including the Gleadless Valley Methodist Church as future community or service hubs

2.4 Gathering feedback and addressing concerns from the community:

Residents and stakeholders will be given opportunities to share their views, questions, and concerns about the proposed demolition. Feedback will be gathered through both formal and informal methods such as surveys, comment boxes, face-to-face conversations, and online engagement tools. The aim is to understand community priorities, hear any worries around safety, disruption or future use, and to respond to these openly and respectfully

2.5 Ensuring transparency and fostering trust in the process:

Transparency is central to this engagement process. The Council will be clear about the reasons for the proposal, the options considered, and how decisions are being made. Regular updates will be shared, including summaries of what people have said and how their views are being considered. This open approach is designed to build trust between residents and the Council, especially in light of wider regeneration plans in Gleadless Valley

2.6 Providing opportunities for residents to shape the outcome:

While the structural issues and safety risks may mean demolition is the only viable option, there are still areas where local voices can and should shape the outcomes. This includes how the demolition is managed, how disruption is minimised, what temporary uses of the cleared site might be considered, and how future plans for the area are developed. Residents will be invited to contribute ideas and priorities, ensuring that the next steps reflect the needs and aspirations of the community. Planning has confirmed that a meanwhile use of 3–5 years is possible. All proposals are intended as temporary solutions while longer-term regeneration plans are developed.

3. Key Stakeholders and Target Audience

3.1 Table of stakeholders and interest

Stakeholder Group	Who this includes	Role / Interest
Local Residents	Households surrounding Gaunt precinct (within 100 to 250M radius)	Directly affected by the demolition; concerns around safety, noise, disruption, future plans
Local Businesses	Shops, services, and businesses in the precinct	Impact on footfall, safety, and future development opportunities
VCF Organisations	Gleadless Valley Foodbank, Regather, Heeley Trust,	Support residents, provide insight into community needs, trusted engagement channels
Ward Councillors	Local elected representatives and leader/s	Represent resident concerns, support with communications
Council Departments	Housing, Planning, Central Communications Parks and Countryside	Deliver the project, manage communications, and lead on planning
Emergency Services	Police, Fire Service	Safety implications, site monitoring, risk management

3.2 Identification of target audience for engagement (those within 100-250m radius)

INSERT ADDRESSES of residents

List of specific business and organisations with addresses

4. Engagement Methods and Tools

Method	Description	How this supports engagement on meanwhile use and community space
Drop-in Sessions	Informal sessions held at Gleadless Valley Foodbank where residents can ask questions, give feedback on the options, share concerns, and speak directly with staff.	Used to present visual boards and gather feedback on four proposed options for the site. Staff can also ask about views on local community space, including the Methodist Church.
Online Consultation Platform	Digital space (e.g. 'Have Your Say' site & Facebook page) for residents to view proposals and submit feedback at their convenience.	Will feature simple breakdowns of each option and space to comment or rank preferences. Will include questions about future use of nearby facilities like the Methodist Church.
Direct Outreach	Letters and emails sent to residents and businesses within the target area to inform them and encourage participation.	Letters will include clear descriptions of site options and a way to respond. Residents will be signposted to online platforms or events to share further feedback.
Site Visits & Information Boards	Physical signage and display boards placed around the John O'Gaunt site and precinct to explain the proposal and signpost how to get involved.	Boards will include visuals and costs for each proposed option, with a QR code or link to vote/give feedback. Can also share historical facts or invite memories about the site.
Collaboration with Local Partners	Work with organisations such as the GV Foodbank (189 Project), Heeley Trust and Council services to promote engagement and gather feedback.	Trusted partners will lead conversations around what's possible, support targeted outreach, and feed in insight on community appetite for shared spaces like the Methodist Church.

5. Communication Channels

5.1 How information will be disseminated:

Information will be shared through direct letters to residents, the Council's 'Have Your Say' platform, the Gleadless Valley Facebook page, and partner networks such as Heeley Trust and the Foodbank. A press release will also be issued to support wider awareness

5.2 Frequency and timing of updates:

Updates will be issued at key stages, such as before demolition begins, when plans progress, or when there is a clear community concern to respond to. Communications will be timed to give residents reasonable notice and clear next step

5.3 Methods for residents to submit feedback:

Residents will be able to provide feedback via short online surveys (hosted on 'Have Your Say'), paper surveys where needed, and one-to-one conversations with trusted local partners. Contact details for submitting comments in writing or by phone will also be included in letters.

6. Timeline of Engagement Activities

6.1 Table of activities **DATES TO BE INSERTED/CONFIRMED INTO TABLE**

Week	Activities	Purpose
Week 1-2	- Launch communications: leaflets, social media, posters, door-knocking - Open online and paper feedback channels - Hold a drop-in session/event at GV foodbank	Raise awareness, start gathering feedback on options, offer face-to-face engagement
Week 3-4	- Continue collecting responses - Promote through VCF partners (e.g., Heeley Trust, GV Foodbank) - Share reminder posts to encourage more participation. Post feedback on Have your say platform and Facebook so others can see	Maintain momentum and reach a wider, more diverse audience
Week 5-6 (optional)	- Fill engagement gaps (e.g. Low-response from residents in identified area) - Final push via Facebook and Have your say platform. Close feedback period and begin analysis	Maximise participation and ensure inclusive input

Post-engagement	- Share findings with stakeholders and Regen Board - Produce a “You said, we heard” summary for residents	Demonstrate transparency and build trust for future engagement
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7. Key Messages and Information to be Shared

7.1 Details of the proposed demolition and any potential developments:

Messages through social media and letters to residents and stakeholders in the affected area will be contacted with confirmed dates and information of who to contact if they need any further information. The messages and correspondence will also detail potential impacts on local community, traffic, services, etc.

- The John O’Gaunt building is due to be demolished, this is to ensure safety and support future improvements in the area.
- Demolition is planned to start on **DATE** and will last approximately **XXXX**
- Local residents and stakeholders will be kept informed before, during, and after the demolition.
- All works will follow health and safety regulations and best practice.
- Some disruption is expected (noise, dust, road access), and we will do our best to minimise this.
- For any concerns, questions or further information please contact: enquireleadlessvalley@sheffield.gov.uk alternatively you can call us on 0114 273 6369
- The long-term use of the site has not yet been decided, there will be opportunities for residents to share ideas and help shape what comes next. Long term proposals for the site will include improve community facilities.
- The suggested proposal for the short term use of the John O’Gaunt site is a community-managed youth space, co-developed with the GV Youth Hub and Happy Saplings. It would offer supervised play and learning activities, including forest school-style outdoor areas and space for early years and afterschool sessions. This option supports ongoing work with local partners and fits the longer-term regeneration vision. However, no decision has been made, and your views on **all four options** are welcome: (i) A youth space, (ii) toddler playground, (iii) grassed open space or (iv) community garden/nature area.
- Planning has confirmed that a meanwhile use of 3–5 years is possible. All proposals are intended as temporary solutions while longer-term regeneration plans are developed.
- Community feedback will be shared with the Gleadless Valley Regeneration Board, who will consider what residents have said before deciding next steps.
- This is your neighbourhood, we want to work together with you throughout this process

8. Feedback and Response Mechanisms

8.1 Methods for collecting feedback from residents:

Feedback will be gathered through face-to-face conversations, drop-in sessions, short surveys (online and paper), and feedback forms at resident events.

8.2 Plans for addressing concerns and issues raised:

While the decision to demolish the John O'Gaunt building is confirmed feedback from the community will shape the outcome of the site in the short and long term. The Council will also review feedback to identify concerns around timing, safety and disruption. Where possible, we will take action to minimise negative impacts and ensure residents feel heard and supported.

8.3 How feedback will be shared back with the community:

We will use a clear 'You Said, We Did / We Couldn't Because' approach, and provide updates by writing directly to affected residents and through the Council's 'Have Your Say' platform

9. Monitoring and Reporting

9.1 How engagement progress will be tracked:

Engagement activities will be logged by GV foodbank, Heeley Trust and Council staff, including dates, locations, number of residents spoken to, key themes raised and preferred options. Attendance and response rates from surveys or communications will also be monitored and tracked.

9.2 Methods for evaluating the success of engagement efforts:

Success will be measured by the level of resident participation, the diversity of voices heard, and how well feedback has helped shape the approach to delivery, such as timing, communication, minimising disruption, and addressing community concerns. While the planning outcome (e.g. demolition) is fixed, resident input will still inform how the process is managed, communicated and decide options for the site in the short term. Qualitative insights and case studies may also be used to assess impact.

9.3 Reporting and sharing outcomes with the community:

Outcomes will be shared with residents via direct letters, the Council's 'Have Your Say' platform, and community noticeboards where appropriate.

10. Risk Management and Contingencies

Risk/Challenge	Description	Contingency Plan
Resident apathy or disengagement	Low interest or participation due to lack of trust or perceived lack of influence	Use trusted local partners (e.g. Heeley Trust and GV Foodbank) for outreach, keep messaging clear and honest about what is and isn't changeable, and follow up with written updates to build trust over time.
Perceived bias toward the suggested option	Residents may feel the Council has already decided on the youth space and that engagement is not genuine.	Clearly communicate that all four options are being explored. Present them equally in all materials, with realistic pros and cons. Gather structured feedback and be transparent in reporting how it influenced the outcome.
Divided opinion or conflict over preferred use	Residents may have strongly opposing views about how the space should be used, leading to tension or mistrust.	Facilitate respectful dialogue through drop-ins and partner-led conversations. Acknowledge all views in public reporting
Long-term disappointment if preferred option is not funded or sustainable (long term option differs from short term)	If the youth space is most popular but can't be delivered long-term, trust in the Council/regeneration programme may erode.	Set expectations early about the temporary nature and funding limits. Involve partners in business planning and communicate the need for further funding for long-term delivery.
Misinformation or rumours	False or misleading information spreading within the community	Respond quickly with factual updates via letters, trusted contacts, and the 'Have Your Say' platform. Use a consistent message across all channels.
Anger or distress about demolition	Some residents may feel upset or unheard about the decision to demolish the JOG	Acknowledge concerns sensitively, offer one-to-one conversations, and explain the reasons clearly while reinforcing how feedback is still shaping the process.
Digital exclusion	Some residents may not access online surveys or platforms	Provide paper surveys, offer phone contact options, and use in-person or partner-led outreach where possible.
Low feedback return rate	Limited responses to surveys or requests for input	Keep questions short and targeted, offer simple ways to respond (e.g. return slips, drop boxes), and follow up through trusted community networks.

SCC reputation risk	Residents may feel decisions are being imposed or that engagement is tokenistic	Be transparent about which decisions are fixed and which are open. Share feedback honestly using ‘You Said, We Did / We Couldn’t Because’ to show accountability. Work through local partners to build trust and credibility.
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11. Conclusion

11.1 We are committed to ensuring residents are kept informed and have opportunities to influence how the demolition and future development of the John O’Gaunt building site is managed. While the decision to demolish has already been made, resident feedback will play a key role in shaping how we minimise disruption and what will go on the site in the short and medium term.

Engagement will be delivered in partnership with trusted local organisations, using accessible and honest communication. We will listen carefully to all feedback and respond through a clear ‘You Said, We Did / We Couldn’t Because’ approach.

We will also complete an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) as part of our commitment to inclusive and responsible decision-making.

We encourage residents to stay involved and share their views throughout the project, so we can continue to build trust, respond to concerns, and deliver positive outcomes for the community.