

BENHILL RESIDENT STEERING GROUP FORMATION MEETING (No.3)

Venue: Salvation Army, 45 Benhill Avenue, Sutton SM1 4DD

Date: Monday 8th October 2018 **Time:** 7.00pm - 9.00pm

Attendees: 26 residents from the following blocks: Woodville House, Hazelwood House, Clevedon House, Homedale House, Newlyn House, Chesterton House & Stancliffe House

Regen Team: Ian Sellens (LBS), Michael Hunte (LBS), Sabrina Austin (LBS)

SHP: Lara Amato (SHP Housing Manager)

Observers: Colin Hawkins (SFTRA) Beverley Brigden (SLA), Cllr David Bartolucci, Cllr Richard Clare

Apologies: Simon Pickles (LBS), Cllr Ali Mirhashem, Margaret Phillips (SLA), Pat Bridgman (Roundshaw resident): Adam Abd El Razzak

Interim chair: Simon Latham (LBS)

1.	Welcome, Introductions, Housekeeping & Aims	Action Owner
1.1	Simon Latham (SL) opened the meeting and attendees introduced themselves. A resident asked if the meeting could be recorded for his partner who couldn't attend. The request was agreed. SL said it was an open meeting for residents of Benhill.	
1.2	SL explained the structure of the meeting, allowing for the first 20 minutes for questions, followed by a presentation by Michael Hunte (MH) for 30 minutes about the Independent Tenant & Homeowner Adviser (ITHA), then an item on the structure & roles of the Resident Steering Group (RSG) and finally future communications.	

1.3	SL went through the last minutes and highlighted the small amendments to previously distributed notes.	IS/SA
1.4	A request was made to add page numbers to the notes.	
1.5	SL confirmed there would be a 30 minute period to answer questions.	
1.6	SL explained that the the property acquisition scheme was a voluntary scheme and he would like to know of any cases where leaseholders were feeling pressured to move out due to any proposed plans.	
2.	Resident Concerns Raised and Council Responses:	
2.1	<p>Qu 1. Have major works on lighting been put on hold by SHP?</p> <p>An 1. Beverley Bridgen from SLA explained the lighting rectification was on hold across the borough due to issues around tendering of the contract and SHP are currently working within the Council's procurement team on this matter. SL advised the team will check this with SHP</p> <p>Qu 2. What was the Council's expectation in regards to floor space and the overall number of homes to be provided on the new site? The resident mentioned that she has asked this question before but did not feel it was clear.</p> <p>An 2. SL explained that the we will be looking in more detail at how we can achieve similar standards as we progress. The Mayor of London (MoL) is interested in an equivalent or increased floor space, regardless of the bedsize of any new property.</p> <p>Qu 3. Concerns were raised about the lack of progress, despite rumours circulating for over 2 years. Residents want clarity about plans.</p> <p>An 3. SL explained that the process of regeneration does take time and that this must be undertaken collaboratively with residents on Benhill. Furthermore SL did not want to</p>	IS/SA

make unachievable promises. SL explained the expectation was to work together and we had to plan a process over a long period with residents. SL confirmed that existing residents would get a new property on the estate.

It was also explained that the MoL is keen to ensure that there is no loss of social housing on site and that Council need to look at the best way of delivering the highest number of affordable properties on site. In addition to this officers will work with residents to address resident concerns about floor space.

SL confirmed that Sutton's approach was to work within the guidelines set by the MoL and if funding is linked to meeting certain criteria we will need to meet them.

Clive Lynch (CL) is keen for a "community approach". CL stated 'We need to be united, not conflicting. We need to look at properties of the community not ourselves. Sutton needs to do it right'. SL advised that Sutton did not disagree with CL and wanted to do it right. There was a recognition that there was less money than in the past.

SL advised that the regeneration Lavenders Project, which had regenerated Durand & Corbet Close plus other sites across the borough, had led to an increase in social housing by about 25 and the project had relied on the cross subsidy from the sale of private homes. The Lavenders programme gives us something to learn from.

Qu 4. A question was asked about what was the Council's understanding of rented accommodation and how rent will be set.

An 4. SL explained that Sutton Council tenancies are let at social rent, which via central government legislation reduced by 1% since 2016 for 4 year period. Most Council rents vary across boroughs, for instance Croydon rents are higher than Sutton.

In 2000s the target rent system was introduced across London. Since 2010 the London Mayor introduced the new affordable rent scheme, with rents set at 80% of market rent. There are currently 2 sets of rent regimes for new social tenants.

1. London affordable rent, which increases each April
2. London living rent - higher than affordable and relates to the locality you live in.

This was followed by a brief discussion about shared ownership and the Right To Buy.

Qu 5. Why did the Council allow private properties to be developed by the riverside (referring possibly to Corbet Close)?

An 5. This site was included as part of the Lavender Housing Partnership, where many sites not just Corbet Close were regenerated. SL explained the site was developed following a petition from residents to include Corbet Close as part of the above project. The Council needs to balance how we can deliver social rented accommodation against funding restrictions.

SL also reiterated that existing Council tenants and leaseholders would remain Council tenants and leaseholders under the regeneration proposals.

Qu 6. Where is everyone going to be put when the Council does not have any money?

An 6. We want to minimise the number of households that may have to move twice and into temporary accommodation while their property is built. However if this were to happen we would look to meet the residents' preferences for their temporary move, most likely into existing council accommodation. We recognise there is limited stock for use but the importance of the temporary move will be recognised by the housing register when looking for alternative accommodation.

	<p>Qu 7. Will all residents on the estate be able to move back to the new estate?</p> <p>An 7. SL confirmed that yes, existing tenants and resident leaseholder would have the right to return to a new home on the estate.</p> <p>Qu 8. What potential numbers of affordable homes is the Council seeking to provide on site?</p> <p>An 8. SL confirmed if regeneration were to take place the aim was for the overall number of affordable homes to be in the region of 50%.</p> <p>Qu 9. A question was asked - who would the new homes go to?</p> <p>An 9. SL confirmed that any new rented homes would be let to Sutton residents on the Council's Housing Register. Sabrina Austin (SA) explained that you would have to be resident in the borough for at least 2 years to be on the Council's register.</p> <p>SL reiterated the desire of the Council to minimise the amount of moves.</p> <p>Qu 10. What type of tenures are on the site, other than secure tenancies?</p> <p>An 10. SL explained that there are also residents living in temporary accommodation with non secure tenancies, as well as private tenants of non resident leaseholders/landlords and existing residents leaseholders.</p> <p>Collin Hawkins (SFTRA) (CH) felt that it would be helpful to advise the group on the current number of existing residents / homes on the estate, compared with what might be the case if the estate were regenerated.</p>	MH
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	<p>CH advised that the options available to the Council were difficult and that this was the same across London.</p> <p>SL reiterated the importance of working collaboratively with residents throughout this process.</p>	
2.2	<p>MH clarified the Council's Offers to non resident leaseholders.</p> <p>It was explained that the leaseholder swap options (A-G), which were discussed at the previous meeting were not available to non resident leaseholders.</p> <p>MH explained that non residents leaseholders would receive the open market value of their property, plus statutory home loss at 7.5% and disturbance payments & reinvestment costs such as stamp duty, removal costs and professional fees. Housing advice and support would also be offered to private tenants of private landlords.</p> <p>MH also provided a brief overview of the Community Charter, which was described as being the Residents' Vision for Benhill, to be developed as part of the ongoing engagement process.</p>	
2.3	<p>SL offered residents 1-2-1 meetings with the Housing Regeneration Team to discuss any concerns they may have.</p>	
3	<p>Role of the Independent Tenant and Homeowner Advisor (ITHA)</p>	
3.1	<p>MH briefly explained the the role and importance of having an ITHA.</p> <p>The ITHA will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Protect the needs of residents ● Promote the wishes and desires of residents. ● Channel queries through them ● Provide expertise and specialist advice. ● Offer a meaningful service and assistance to residents <p>The MoL believes residents are key in delivering change and that a independent advisor should be made available to residents to act as an independent and impartial advocate.</p> <p>A draft specification for the ITHA has been drawn up in partnership with SLA and SFTRA and following initial market</p>	

	<p>testing meetings had been held with a number of providers in this field.</p> <p>The next stage will involve receiving feedback from residents to establish what is important to them for an ITHA. We need input from residents to produce the best specification.</p> <p>The Council is planning to set up a framework panel of around 4 ITHA providers, which residents from each potential regeneration estate could select their own Advisor from.</p> <p>Residents asked if there would be an opportunity to meet the potential ITHA's in person, as part of the selection process, and to hear any case study examples where ITHA's have successfully achieved previously, as well as obtaining actual feedback from the residents who have been through the process</p> <p>SL recommended that the draft specification be circulated to the group so feedback can be received and incorporated to reflect the requirements of Benhill residents.</p>	MH/IS
4.	Roles & Responsibilities of the Benhill RSG	
	<p>MH explained the role of the RSG Chair & Vice Chair. These roles are important to provide structure to the group, such as keeping to the agenda, encouraging an "open door policy" including other residents and stakeholders such as ward councillors and neutral observers.</p> <p>There had been a suggestion previously that the ITHA could potentially take up the role of chairing the RSG, however it was felt that it would be better for the group that a resident performed this role. A resident Chair would also be better placed to help manage the ITHA.</p> <p>MH asked for volunteers to role of group Chair and Vice Chair.</p> <p>Clive Lynch (CL) volunteered himself to become the Chair of the RSG. This was endorsed by (CH) and subsequently approved by a vote via a show of hand by the majority of the remaining members of the RSG.</p> <p>One resident asked CL opinion on leaseholders. CL stated he was passionate about social housing and residents being in a position to purchase their own home and would represent all</p>	

	<p>residents. CL said his vision would be to see approximately 50% tenanted home and 50% leasehold homes on the estate, with a minimum % of homes across the estate set aside for the provision of accessible homes.</p> <p>MH suggested that with the Chair of the RSG being a tenant then the Vice Chair should be a leaseholder to reflect the resident breakdown of the estate.</p> <p>No volunteers came forward to take up the role of Vice Chair, although residents were encouraged to reconsider and express their interest outside of the meeting by contacting one of the Housing Regeneration team members.</p> <p>SL advised that the group would need a Secretary whose role would include responding to correspondence or enquiries on behalf of the residents' steering group. Council officers would nonetheless continue to make themselves available to support the Chair, any future Vice Chair and the group, including servicing the steering group meetings.</p>	RSG Members
5.	Communication	
	<p>SA asked whether the group had any feedback to provide on the last Benhill newsletter. The general view was that the newsletter was extremely helpful.</p> <p>SA went on to explain that the team would be developing the web page over the coming weeks.</p> <p>CL reiterated the request for an interactive forum, although it was explained that this could prove challenging initially, as the Council's web site has limitations and tends mainly to provide information rather than act as a facebook style forum for conversations.</p> <p>Beverley Brigden (SLA) suggested that residents be involved in helping to design the web page.</p>	MH/SA/IS
6.	Agreed Next Steps	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council officers to record minutes of the meeting and circulate in advance of the next meeting.. 	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Date of next meeting will be Monday 29th October depending on availability. 3. Officers to circulate the draft specification for the ITHA. The next meeting will be used to ensure it reflects the specific need of Benhill residents. 4. An offer of 1-2-1 meeting to all residents, in particular residents members of the RSG, who could in turn help in fine tuning the survey questions. 5. RSG members to provide comments on Terms of Reference of the Group, contained in the handout. Leasehold members asked to give their consideration to the role of Vice Chair. 6. Council officers to provide an indication of the number of residents on the estate, including secure and non-secure tenants, private tenants and leaseholders. 	
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Summary of Actions

No	Action	Owner
1	Add page numbers to the meeting notes.	Regen Team
2	Check this with SHP why the estate lighting programme has been placed on hold.	Regen Team
3	Circulate draft ITHA specification to RSG members for RSG members to provide feedback.	Regen Team / RSG Members
4	Involve the RSG with development of the Council's Benhill Estate Regeneration website.	Regen Team
5	Consider taking up the role of RSG Vice Chair and Secretary.	RSG Members
6	Review and provide details of the number of homes, and their tenure breakdown (ie secure, non secure, homeowners etc) across the estate.	Regen Team
7	Add page numbers and a glossary to the handout document that was presented at the meeting.	Regen Team

8	Circulate useful links in relation to best practice in estate regeneration.	Regen Team
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Useful links requested at the meeting:

<p>Homes for Londoners - Mayor of London publication: Good practice Guide to Estate Regeneration. See following link: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/better-homes-for-local-people-the-mayors-good-practice-guide-to-estate-regeneration.pdf</p>
<p>Estate Regeneration National Strategy - Resident Engagement and Protection - DCLG publication. See following link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/estate-regeneration-good-practice-guide</p>
<p>Mayor London's new funding condition to require resident ballots in estate regeneration. See following link: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_cfg_section_8_resident_ballots_-_18_july_2018.pdf</p>