

BENHILL RESIDENTS' STEERING GROUP (RSG) Meeting notes (No.16)

Venue: Zoom

Date: Wednesday 2nd June **Time:** 7pm to 9pm

Attendees: Residents from Benhill Estate

Officers: Lauren Fabregas (LBS), Geeta Le Tissier (LBS), Ian Simpson (CF), Palma Black (CF), Louis Blair (CF), Hilda Wood (SHP) Christine Wytiahlowsky (SHP)

Observers: Colin Hawkins (Sutton Federation of TRAs), Bev Brigden (Sutton Leaseholders Association), Cllr David Bartolucci

Apologies: Cllr Ali Mirhashem

1.	Introductions	Action
	Michele Katana (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the agenda.	
2.	Questions and Answers	
	<p>Michele invited questions from residents:</p> <p><i>Q - Is it worthwhile considering lease extensions ?</i> A – Dependent on the time remaining on the lease, that may be suitable based on individual circumstances and the Council’s valuation process. Ian added that Communities First can advise any residents considering such options, but it may be worth awaiting the outcome of the Option Appraisal in a few months.</p> <p>Sutton Leases were granted following the Right To Buy legislation and therefore most leases on the estate would be longer than 80 years. 80 years is considered to be the legal threshold that formally impacts on valuation.</p> <p><i>Q – Why can’t we sell on the open market ?</i> <i>Residents continue to be free</i> to sell privately if they wish to, but Sutton would make an enhanced offer including home loss payment, stamp duty and disturbance costs if regeneration were to be the selected option. Ian advised anyone who is thinking of selling to contact Communities First to discuss their options.</p> <p><i>Q – How do we know the Council will keep to its regeneration programme given previous slippage ?</i> A – While the Council identified Benhill as a potential</p>	

	<p>regeneration site in 2017 along with other estates as part of the Local Plan, the actual Option Appraisal on Benhill Estate has yet to commence. The Council are working with residents to select an architect to lead the design consultation. Following selection of a preferred option, if regeneration is chosen a resident ballot would need to be scheduled. It was estimated that this might take place mid 2022.</p>	
3.	Resident Engagement post Lockdown – Event Planning	
	<p>Ian said that as Covid19 restrictions were now lowered, it would be permissible for Communities First Foundation to door-knock on the estate the following week. He added that the CFF team wanted to meet with residents to hear more about their concerns and promote their independent advice role.</p> <p>The Communities First team would be door-knocking in a Covid-secure manner and will not enter residents' homes if they are not invited to do so. A flier would be sent in advance of their visit informing residents that they may decide to exclude themselves from calls if they are shielding or don't feel comfortable receiving visitors. The CF team is also able to talk to residents by phone or WhatsApp/Zoom on request.</p> <p>Ian said the team will visit each home on up to three occasions at different times before leaving a calling card where access is not available. The Vice-Chair, Phoebe, felt it was important that Communities First introduced themselves on the estate. The Chair, Michele also offered to accompany the team and suggested that it might be possible to meet residents face-to-face in the Salvation Army. Michele added that outdoor block meetings could also be organised.</p> <p>Phoebe queried when the RSG could hold meetings on the estate again. Geeta replied that currently meetings can be held for up to 30 socially distanced residents outside only, or up to six individuals from two households indoors. On 14th June it was expected that the guidance would be reviewed with effect from 21st June, and any relaxation would be considered when planning future RSG meetings and events.</p> <p>In the meantime, the Sutton Housing Regeneration team was looking at organising an outdoor event in the summer with Communities First and SHP having a presence. Phoebe added it was important that the Council, RSG and Communities First maximised opportunities to talk to residents during the summer months.</p>	<p>CF to feedback</p> <p>LBS to progress</p>
4.	SHP & Housing Management	

	<p>The Chair introduced Christine Wytiahlowsky, the Area Housing Manager from Sutton Housing Partnership (SHP). Christine explained that SHP had recently been reorganised with an additional Area Housing Manager post and two new Housing Manager posts. There were now four areas and 16 housing management patches which represented an improvement to the local service for residents.</p> <p>Hilda Wood also introduced herself as the dedicated Housing Manager for Benhill. She added that she wanted to revive the Benhill TRA and that she would be organising publicity and initial events.</p> <p>Hilda had completed a handover process with Lewis Toop and intended to be a visible presence on the estate with regular meetings, events and walkabouts.</p> <p>Cllr Bartolucci welcomed the commitment to revive the Benhill TRA and asked about support arrangements to reduce the burden on volunteers. Christine said SHP would provide training and support to the Benhill TRA officers.</p> <p>Jennifer expressed the view that a perceived lack of support and response by SHP, with regards to estate management issues, had contributed to the demise of the TRA; and residents may lack confidence that outcomes would be different in future.</p> <p>Phoebe added that the lack of trust in SHP was demoralising for residents and could deter involvement with both a new TRA and the RSG.</p> <p>The SHP officer, Hilda Wood, expected the smaller, dedicated Benhill patch would lead to improved relationships with residents. Her colleague Christine added that her team would work with repairs and asset management staff in order to improve resident communications.</p> <p>The ITHA, Ian suggested to the meeting that they dedicate a regular slot for SHP at RSG meetings until the TRA was set up. This was agreed provided the item was time limited, and preferably based on a written report.</p> <p>Tessa warned that this might frustrate residents to attend regeneration meetings which did not discuss the intended agenda.</p> <p>Christine added that SHP needed to look at the locations of estate notice boards and make better use of them to inform and update residents.</p>	<p>CF/LBS</p> <p>SHP</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p>	

	<p>Geeta reported the Architect Selection Panel for the Option Appraisal was making good progress and hoped to make an appointment in the summer.</p> <p>The Council were preparing a progress update for all residents on items being discussed at RSG.</p> <p>Following discussion, Ian agreed to organise a Meeting with a focus on the valuation process with potential input from LBS staff.</p> <p>It was generally agreed that separate tenant and leaseholder meetings would be useful, as long as they remained open to all residents.</p>	<p>LBS</p> <p>LBS</p> <p>CF/LBS</p>
6.	Date of Next Meeting	
	<p>The next meeting was set for 30th June 2021 at 7pm.</p> <p>Post Meeting Note:</p> <p>The Zoom link follows: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84826558035</p>	

Links to helpful websites:

Mayor of London - Better Homes for Local People, Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration (February 2018)

<https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/better-homes-for-local-people-the-mayor-s-good-practice-guide-to-estate-regeneration.pdf>

GLA Capital Funding Guide, Section 8 - Mayor of London - Funding Conditions that require Resident Ballots for Estate Regeneration Projects (July 2018)

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_cfg_section_8_resident_ballots_-_18_july_2018.pdf

GLA Housing Standards - Minor Alterations to the London Plan (March 2016)

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/housing_standards_malp_for_publication_7_april_2016.pdf

HEB Report - Estate Regeneration Rehousing and Compensation Scheme (15th October 2018)

<https://modern.gov.sutton.gov.uk/ielIssueDetails.aspx?IId=40537&PlanId=0&Opt=3#A139427>

Estate Regeneration Good Practice Guide (December 2016)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/estate-regeneration-good-practice-guide>

Benhill Estate Regeneration Webpage

https://www.sutton.gov.uk/info/200502/housing_advice_and_options/1781/benhill_estate_regeneration

Sutton Link

https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/trams/sutton-link/user_uploads/sutton-link-consultation-report.pdf

Report It (Sutton Council)

https://www.sutton.gov.uk/info/200447/report_it or telephone: 020 8770 5000

Report It (Sutton Housing Partnership)

<https://www.suttonhousingpartnership.org.uk/report-it> or telephone: 020 8915 2000 or contact Lara Amota (SHP Housing Manager) on 202 8915 2181

Housing Regeneration Team Email: estateregeneration@sutton.gov.uk

Communities First (CFF) Email: benhill@communitiesfirst.uk.com