

## **Samuda Estate Resident Steering Group Meeting**

**Tuesday, 11 April 2023  
Club 55, Stewart Street, E14**

### **Attendance**

#### **Residents:**

Candida Ronald [CR]  
Kelly [K?]  
Terry Austin [TA]  
Michelle Debrincat (MD)  
Rebecca Debrincat (RD)  
Bidhan Sutradhar (BS)  
Toni Saint (TS)  
Jenny Fisher [JF]  
Murleen Stewart (MS)  
Francesco Strino (FS)  
Lesley Evans (LE)  
Abdul Hannan (AH)

#### **Others:**

Jessica Caruth – One Housing [JC]  
Rhys Jones – One Housing [RJ]  
Sam Murfitt – One Housing [SM]  
Mike Tyrell – Resident Advocate [MT]  
Ray Coyle, chair (Open Communities) [RC]  
Stephen Moore, minute-taker (Open Communities)

### **1. Welcome**

1.1. RC took the Chair and invited all participants to introduce themselves.

### **2. Apologies**

2.1. Apologies were received from Muhammed Miah, Melekeh, Mr Ali, Jodie Rivers

### **3. Minutes of RSG meeting of 14 March 2023**

3.1. The Minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.

### **4. Matters Arising**

4.1. There were no Matters Arising from the Minutes.

### **5. Update from OH and questions from RSG**

**Update on engagement activities**

- 5.1. TA said he was looking for the marquee on Saturday but didn't see it. JC said it was too windy in the two locations they tried; they couldn't put it up outside Nisa Local for health and safety reasons, then they tried outside the community hall. They found another location they were happy with, but that was two hours later, outside Dagmar Court. TA asked if the hall could be booked for it next time? JC said they were quite visible to the residents outside Dagmar Court.
- 5.2 JC gave a presentation to update residents. She said OH have engaged 23 per cent of households across the four blocks. In the first year they will create a vision document in order to understand the ambitions and concerns of residents. This first round of consultation is about raising awareness and explaining what regeneration might mean, what the stages of a regeneration project are, and the length of time it might take.
- 5.3 Through March public events took place including drop-in coffee mornings, a virtual presentation and an estate walkabout. These took place at different times of day, different days of the week and online. Information was collected on the things residents liked about the estate as well as things they would like to see improved.

#### **ACTION**

**OHG to send the slides to RSG members so they can peruse it at their leisure.**

- 5.4 JC said they have recorded everyone who contributed to the events and that 23% of properties had engaged RC added that it's easy to work out the percentage of households engaged because they know how many households there are, but they won't know the percentage of residents as you would need to know how many residents live on the estate.
- 5.5 TA said he thought 23% was a decent figure. RC agreed and said the aim now is to engage with the other 77%. JC said there were no attendees at the Castalia Square drop-ins although there had been six people at the February sessions.
- 5.6 K? said she works in Nisa and would be happy to tell residents about it. RC said OH hasn't yet had the opportunity of reinforcing the message and getting it out there more regularly and consistently. TA suggested a regular newsletter is distributed to residents to get the messages across.
- 5.7 JC said the 16 March lunch event saw 14 households attend. The Monday coffee morning had four engagements and there were two households at the evening online meeting. There were 16 attendees on the estate walkabout on Wednesday 22 March, five at an event at 3.30pm on the same day, and 50 at Saturday's event held 11am-2pm - the marquee worked really well. MT said door-knocking, talking to people on the street, and the visible marquee location, all helped. RC said the important thing is there is information on events that can be used for the next round of consultation. JF wanted information on the number of people from the other five blocks who attended. JC said no-one from the five blocks came to the exhibition.
- 5.8 JC said they would like to get 75% engagement by the end of the three phases of consultation. They have reviewed the exhibition boards and made a couple of tweaks and created a booklet from it.
- 5.9 K? asked if the posters were the ones that referred to 'knocking down' the blocks? This concerned her as these are our homes they are talking about and she put it

straight in the recycling. RC said that information had also gone out from the TRA and it could have been this information KX is referring to.

- 5.10 JC said OH's posters were promoting the engagement events to start a conversation about regeneration; she doesn't remember anything about knocking blocks down on the posters.
- 5.11 JF said if there are any lessons to learn, they did request that any information should come to the RSG before it goes out to the wider community. She is confident the RSG could pick up issues before they arise.
- 5.12 JC said newsletter came to the RSG for comment, as did the exhibition boards. The promotional banner was put outside, on the way into the estate from Nisa. JF said we need to think about how to get the message out to all nine blocks.
- 5.13 RC suggested placing a solid board banner on the bridge linking Dagmar and Talia House, so that it cannot be missed by people entering or leaving the estate. It needs to be big, covering the entire side of the bridge.
- 5.14 TA said lots more information is needed on the Future Samuda website. JC said everything they publish is on the website. The registration button has now also been moved to the homepage; once registered, a user can ask a question and engage with the map. They are tracking web visits to see how many people are using it.
- 5.15 JF said the manager at Nisa pointed out that a new shop should be incorporated into the first phase of any redevelopment so there is continuity. She added that people are not that motivated by regeneration and that they are quite happy with where they live, but are unhappy with the state of their homes. We need to look at whether 'regeneration' is a word that chimes with the residents as it might not excite them. RC said the words we use are important and they need to click with people to get them to engage.
- 5.16 CR said JC talks about 'our project' and 'our boards' but what she is really talking about is their homes and their lives, and thinks there is a gap in the centre of all this where residents should be. Residents are being presented with a fait accompli and not even given a chance to feed into it. There is a disconnect and we don't have a common language. For residents it's about bricks and mortar and how they live their lives.
- 5.17 JF said last month OH were talking about all the things they have discussed with people at the consultation events, but they are at a really early stage and can't give people any details. This consultation event was basically saying 'We have got a regeneration project but we don't know yet what's going to happen'. Now we have got the additional problem of persuading the people who have attended these events to come back to future events. JC said it is a challenge keeping people engaged throughout but that OH needs to take the time to explain to people what's going on.

## **Next steps**

- 5.18 RJ said 155 households (52%) have still to engage. New leaflets have been sent out to all residents – showing the boards condensed into a booklet, with tweaks to simplify the language. OH has learned from previous experience to share information before it goes out. – if residents on the RSG need longer to comment, they can look at that going forward.
- 5.19 RJ said they will be following up with the ‘Getting to know you’ surveys. For those who have asked to be emailed, they will do that. The leaflet will also be translated into Bengali. The survey will be followed up with door-knocking across the four blocks. The Kelson House lobby area will be used for face-to-face meetings, catching people coming and going. This will be followed up with phone calls, and they will chase up people who have not replied to their emails. After that, they will be door-knocking the final few who have still not responded.
- 5.20 JF said the RSG did ask OH to turn the boards into a leaflet, but the boards went far further and planted ideas in people’s heads. RJ said the outcomes they are looking to achieve is creating a level of understanding from residents after they have had the opportunity to look at the boards and the booklet. Feedback is that some things have slipped through the cracks, and what do we need to do to improve that? They would ask what would encourage residents to attend events – is it food, or the opportunity to speak to consultants or the people from OH? They also want to establish a WhatsApp group and encourage website registration as part of the door-knocking. They don’t want to go ahead with leading questions but they are still very interested in the likes and dislikes people have about their homes, and the blocks in the wider estate.
- 5.21 KX asked how much money OH has, and what normally happens financially in these situations? RJ said that answer comes a long way down the line and that he has also had this conversation with the TRA. MT said OH will part finance it with the sale of new homes and that government funding will amount to around 20% unlike the 80% they once contributed.
- 5.22 TA said there is a lot of misunderstanding in the community and that people need to understand what is going on. RC said information needs to go out on a monthly basis, even if it’s repeating itself, because it gets through to more and more people each time. KX asked for confirmation whether surveys have been done on the river wall - RJ said none to date.
- 5.23 MT said the timeline is now 2023-2032. RC said that this is the kind of information which could go out on a monthly basis and could also be put in the Nisa shop so that resident can pick it up.
- 5.24 In terms of the number of homes the estate might have, Paul Handley said residents might have to accept a four-fold increase, but couldn’t see it being more than that. There are now 317 homes in the four blocks.
- 5.25 JF said OH didn’t consult the RSG before putting the last questionnaire out. If OH doesn’t consult the RSG first, then she is not giving OH the answers. OH also needs a wholesale approach to consult with hard-to-reach residents. She has two proposals: (1) Bring all leaflets and questionnaires to the RSG first; (2) She doesn’t think the RSG can let OH out alone knocking on doors. RC said he agreed that

everything should go through the RSG. The problem is that between now and June there is only one more RSG meeting.

- 5.26 JF asked what are the next questionnaires asking? JC said they are resending the information from the boards which will be slightly easier to read and understand, saying the project has launched with questions like 'Have you heard about the project?', 'Would you like to join the WhatsApp group?', 'What are your ambitions for the future of the estate?'
- 5.27 MT said following the 23% of households engaged so far, OH is trying to get to 75 per cent engagement and are putting the leaflet based on the boards through people's letterboxes, without envelopes, so that residents are clear about what the information is. Going forward there will be a monthly update newsletter reminding residents of the timeline and what's happening next. JC said that by the time of the next newsletter they will have finished this round of the consultation and can an update on it.
- 5.28 RC said we shouldn't get hung up on the 75% figure, just for the sake of it. The quality and clarity of the information going out is the key. JC said they need to ask questions that prompt answers they can use and feed back to the architects. CR said OH wants to use residents as fodder and that it doesn't feel like a process that is driven by residents. Where do the decisions come from, because it is not from us. Residents don't talk very much in these meetings and this is not a forum where the residents' voice is heard.
- 5.29 RC said that RSGs in general tend to be a hard core of residents who discuss the issues on a monthly basis. It is great to see some new faces this month and the key is to retain their involvement and input. He added that apathy plays a part in regeneration but people will get involved if the discussions relate to peoples' lives and aspirations. JF asked RC to withdraw this and put the apathy down to the last 15-16 years of people trying to put their views forward and being constantly ignored. RC said he would not withdraw it and said he is aware of the lack of trust between residents and OH but that there is a high level of apathy on every regeneration project he has been involved in. It is one of the reasons why people do not want to join project steering groups.
- 5.30 LE said we have no trust in OH; we were at a meeting last week where residents from Alice Shepherd House were saying 'Don't listen to a word they say'. KX said she doesn't want their park taken away, nor the trees that have been here 60 years. The rest of the people want the estate to be torn down because they think they will get a new home.
- 5.31 JF asked why OH is doing the door-knocking? Why don't residents do it? JF asked RC why he wasn't recommending that the residents do the consultation? RC said he is very happy to do that if that's what the residents of the RSG want to do. TA said it is very difficult to find the people to do that. There has always been a small number of people who care enough about the estate to come to residents meetings. He is more concerned about getting information out to the wider community so they can make informed decisions.

5.32 JC said that over the next month they will be finishing off this round of engagement and will look at what has been said. The RSG meeting in early May is absolutely key and they will be talking about how they will get that information out.

5.33 CR asked when OH's deadline was for feedback on the new leaflet? Can RJ outline what the differences are between the boards and the leaflet? RJ said the main changes are the order of the boards and the methods of communication – OH's contact information is at the end rather than the front. The deadline for feedback is midnight on Sunday.

5.34 JC said June/July will see the second round of consultation on creating a vision, asking residents to tell them what they would like to see. TA said we need to clarify what the choices are for people; at the moment we don't know what they are. We need as much information out there as possible to avoid silly questions about whether there are homes being knocked down in the next two years. RC said getting more information out there is the challenge. There is no information yet on the June/July dates.

5.35 JF said every conversation with residents will have to start with, 'You are entitled to have an independent resident advisor with you during this discussion'. RC agreed. JF asked if, by the end of July, we will be able to take a view on whether we have got enough information to make a decision? The architects are such a key part of this operation and she doesn't understand why they aren't part of the conversation. RC said he agreed and that they should be present at the next meeting.

## **6. Any Other Business with OH present**

6.1 JF said that as the project progresses they will have to talk about how OH manage housing services throughout the process

## **7. Any Other Business without OH present**

7.1. JF asked whether OH had information about the tenure of the households they have engaged so far? If private tenants or absentee landlords are responding, they may not be keen, and she is not sure the RSG would be keen on them participating.

## **8. Date of next meeting**

8.1 The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 9th May 2023.