

## **Alice Shepherd and Oak House Resident Steering Group(RSG) Meeting**

**Monday 23 January 2023, 7pm**

**St John's Community Centre, Glengall Grove, E14**

### **Residents:**

Nadia Mahmood (NM) Alice Shepherd House

Ashley Lowther (AL) Alice Shepherd House

Cynthia Owusu (CO)– Alice Shepherd House

### **One Housing Group**

Leila Arefani – Regeneration Manager (LA)

Mynul Islam – Project Manager (MI)

Shaun Simpson – Regeneration Officer (SS)

Soundous Serroukh – Regeneration Officer (SSi) via zoom

Sofia Chekdouf – Regeneration Co-ordinator (SC) via zoom

### **Independent Tenant and Leaseholder Advisor:**

Ray Coyle – Open Communities (RC)

Murselin Islam – Open Communities (MI)

### **Residents Advocate:**

Mike Tyrrell – (MT)

### **1. Welcome, introductions and apologies.**

1.1 **Apologies** were received from Jane McGregor and Sharon Holmes.

### **2. Minutes of RSG meeting of 22 October 2022.**

2.1 Agreed as true record with a typo “Mahmood” to replace “Mehmood” on the attendance list.

### **3. Matters Arising.**

3.1 **(Re: 4.3)** NM have sent LA an email regarding a neighbour who had the housing needs interview and was waiting for a follow-up. **Completed.**

3.2 **(Re: 5.2)** JM requested for the newsletters deliveries are all sent together. **Completed.**

3.3 **(Re: 7.4)** LA stated that, generally, rents will be like for like and based on tenancy types. In terms of the rent for residents who may be downsizing/upsizing, the principle is if downsizing then it should go down and vis versa. OHG are looking at a formula that should be fair for everyone taking into account rent levels/tenancy types/property sizes etc.

NM asked whether it is possible to do a table to explain the rents. LA said a comparison table would not work as there are so many different tenancy types/start dates/property sizes etc. This may mean that rents will be settled on a case-by-case basis. AL said rent levels and

changes should be written down and recorded so that residents will know exactly what to expect. RC agreed and said this info will be minuted.

**3.4 (Re: 7.6)** As well as decanting costs for residents happy for OH to provide and pay for a removal company, the decanting removal cost also includes the cost of a removal company chosen by the resident - within a reasonable cost. This has been added to the Decant Guide. **Completed.**

**3.5 (Re: 7.7)** Floor coverings and other fittings and related compensation. AL said there could be many different types of internal works that a tenant may have carried out and at this stage there is no clear guideline on how this will be dealt with in the Decant Guide. It will be assessed by OHG on a case-by-case basis as it will be very difficult to cover everything within the decant guide.

MI and SS said tenancy agreements point out that permission may be needed re major internal works (moving internal walls and layout etc). MI said the Belamy/Byng document may be helpful to set up a general guideline for this issue. RC said this should be acknowledged in the Decant Guide. AL suggested that OHG ask the relevant question re home improvement compensation during the home visits. LA agreed that this could be done.

**ACTION – Home visits on the Housing Needs surveys should report back on any potential compensation claims for improvements by tenants**

**3.6 (Re: 7.12)** Can residents withdraw interest in a property before an offer is made – therefore avoiding ‘wasting’ an offer. LA and MI said this is not possible. OHG does not have its own bidding process - it is LBTHs system and the only time they may consider if there is any error/ lack of information on the Homeseekers website.

Tenants are expected to do some homework on properties before the internal viewing. Standard LBTH policy is if someone bid for a property, view it and they get offer then they cannot it refuse it just because they didn't like it and it will be counted as refusal. RC stated that tenants should check the service charge costs when bidding and that this can be in the small print so you have to search for it.

LA said that most residents in Alice Shepherd House will not need to move off the estate as they will move into the block replacing Oak House. Oak House residents will either decant temporarily or move away permanently.

**3.7 (Re: 7.14)** How long to have a parking permit before having entitlement to a space in the redevelopment? AL informed there is a reference on the Decant Guide regarding the issue.

**3.8 (Re: 7.18)** LA said OHG will only ask Oak House residents about their financial situation. Alice Shepherd House residents are not being asked that information at this early stage for them.

**3.9 (Re: 9.1)** There will be further meeting to discuss and comment on Decant Guide in the next couple of weeks.

**3.10 (Re: 11.1)** The venue has been booked for monthly RSG meetings – fourth Monday of each month. Any changes will be notified to all in advance.

#### **4. Update from One Housing**

##### **4.1 Drop-in flat at 31 Alice Shepherd House**

The flat is now void and nearly ready to be used for regen purposes. It should be ready in 2/3 weeks.

##### **4.2 Housing Needs Assessment**

LA said the work is progressing. Oak House has 7 out of 9 tenants completed. The other three are leaseholders. All assessed tenants have been registered for bidding and have been trained on how to bid online. RC to meet one of the remaining 2 tenants. Over 30 tenants have been surveyed in Alice Shepherd House with 35 remaining. This should be completed within next couple of weeks.

#### **ACTION**

##### **RC to contact tenant re housing needs survey**

NM said that as working from home has become more popular, it is important for architects to consider modern living. MT said all the recent presentations by architects at various projects mention about flexibility about internal design options - study space, home office space etc and that this should be discussed during design stages. MT said architects are also providing options such as sliding doors/walls and to accommodate residents' needs in respect of open plan living.

##### **4.3 Appointment of Joint Venture Partner**

This involves a number of stages including inviting bids from companies. This will start next month with companies submitting bids. Short listing will then take place, followed by interviews around May-July this year. RSG members will meet the companies on site visits to the estate and will also produce questions to be asked at interview. NM asked about the type of companies who might bid. LA said due to the current challenging economic/financial environment, some larger companies may bid as relatively small projects can present less of a risk.

##### **4.4 Landlord Offer Monitoring Report**

Oak House will have decant status so void properties will not need to be re-let. Alice Shepherd House will not have decant status so if someone moves then the property can be used to house people on a temporary basis – on licence. MT raised this issue in previous meetings and LA said the plan is to run the temporary housing scheme for six months on a trial basis to see how it works for the residents.

AL raised concerns about ASB by new residents and said this would not have happened if Alice Shepherd House had decant status. MI said that tenants who move out of the borough will not get priority decant status as it ensures priority only within the borough. MT said if there are ASB issues with new temporary licensees their licence can be revoked quickly as they do not have the same security of tenure that tenants enjoy.

## **5 AOB with OHG present**

**5.1 Planning and design.** AL asked about the progress with plans/design of the buildings. LA said once a JV partner is appointed (around June-July 23) consultation on design will start from September, with architects onboard. There may be a need to adjust the original design to accommodate recent challenges around house build inflation and fire risk assessments. Planning approval should be sought in around one year's time. There should be two or three design options for residents to choose from.

**5.2** AL asked why decant residents so early. LA said the decanting process takes much longer than people think and is a complicated process.

**5.3** MT said he had recently visited a project with lighting consultants to see how lighting system can work intelligently on an estate. He added that it would be beneficial to look at this at design stage.

## **6 AOB without OHG present**

**6.1** AL is not happy with decanting status that doesn't allow residents to move out of the borough with decanting priority status. MT said if OHG (or Riverside) have any available homes outside LBTH and it matches residents choice then that move can happen even it is outside the borough. All decanting residents will qualify for disturbance allowance and home loss payment.

**6.2** Given the absence of a couple of the RSG, RC suggested a meeting solely to discuss the decant guide. OHG would like to have separate decant guides for both blocks. Their reasoning is that residents in Alice Shepherd House will not have to decant for another 5 years. AL does not agree with this and believes there should be one decant guide. AL added that some residents wanted both blocks treated separately for the ballot but OHG insisted this would not happen. Now they wanted to treat them differently.

**6.3** NM informed the Landlord Offer Document had just one consultation meeting, residents did not have enough chance to go through it and make suggestions. It was a rushed process.

**6.4** The meeting agreed to meet either on 30<sup>th</sup> Jan or 6<sup>th</sup> Feb to allow other members of the group to discuss. RC will create a WhatsApp group and will notify all members about the two dates for the special meeting on Decant Guide and the venue. Meeting will start at 7pm. RC will also check on RSG members who has not been attending meeting or responding. RC will hand deliver other version of the Decant Guide to members for comment.

### **Date of next RSG meeting**

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023, 7pm.