

Minutes of a meeting of interested residents in setting up a Resident Steering Group for Alice Shepherd House & Oak held on 3rd December 2018 at the St Johns Community Centre

Residents Present:

Laura Tracey – Alice Shepherd House
Jane McGregor – Alice Shepherd House
Chris Davies – Alice Shepherd House
Daren Brown – Alice Shepherd House
Sulfa Begum – Alice Shepherd House
Alia Begum – Alice Shepherd House
Sharon Holmes – Oak House
Ashley Lowther – Alice Shepherd House
Jalal Ahmed – Alice Shepherd House
Salma Ahmed – Alice Shepherd House

St Johns TRA Committee Members Present:

Maggie Phillips – Chair
Jill Skeels – Vice Chairs
Jackie Campbell – Secretary
Geraldine Sawyer – Treasurer
Maureen Mallett – Committee Member

Others Present:

Mike Tyrrell – Independent Resident Adviser – 4 Estates Forum
Paul Handley – One Housing Group

Apologies:

Abdullah Bourne – Alice Shepherd House

1 Welcome & Introduction

- 1.1 MP introduced herself and asked all those present to introduce themselves.
- 1.2 MP explained that the purpose of the meeting was to advise residents what will be involved in being a member of the Resident Steering Group.
- 1.3 MP advised the Alice Shepherd House and Oak House residents that they are not alone and they will have the support of the TRA in this process.

2 What is a Resident Steering Group?

- 2.1 MT explained that a Resident Steering Group would be the main point of contact between the residents of Alice Shepherd & Oak House and One Housing Group.

2.2 MT went on to advise that the Resident Steering Group would not be making the decisions about the future of the block as the main decisions will be made through, questionnaires and ballots of all residents.

2.3 The Resident Steering Group's main role is to ensure that all options are explored, that they take on board the views of the residents and that at the time of the final ballot on the future of the blocks, all residents have the information that they require to make their decision.

3 How to appoint a Resident Steering Group

3.1 PH explained that the appointment of the members of the Resident Steering Group should be an open process.

3.2 PH went on to advise that the St Johns TRA will hold a meeting for all residents of both blocks, at which the One Housing Group Chief Executive will be present to launch the consultation and the members of the group will be elected.

3.3 At the moment 12 residents have volunteered and that would be a manageable number as not everyone will make all the meetings, therefore instead of individual elections it will likely be that the meeting will be asked to endorse those who have put themselves forward.

3.4 One Housing Group will help those who have volunteered to come up with a paragraph about themselves and circulate it to those who attend the meeting so they know who the residents are that are putting themselves forward.

4 What does a Resident Steering Group do?

4.1 MT outlined what the role of the Resident Steering Group would be in this process.

4.2 He advised that they would be directly involved with and receive information and comment on with the support of architects and consultants on the following key issues related to any works that residents may agree:

- Maximising resident engagement
- Communications with all residents affected by the works
- Balloting arrangements
- Consultation on the works
- Appointing consultants
- Options for the works

- Contents of a Resident Charter
- Specification of the works
- Progress in carrying out the works
- Quality of the works
- Resident feedback on the works.

4.1 A number of those present took the opportunity to ask MT a number of the questions in relation to their rights should a decision be made to refurbish or demolish the blocks. Amongst the questions asked were:

- What are the options for leaseholders?
- How will tenants who are overcrowded be treated?
- If there is a
- Would tenants be allowed to move to properties outside Tower Hamlets or to properties owned by other landlords?
- What compensation would tenants and leaseholders receive in the case of demolition?

4.2 MT advised that he has drafted a paper setting out these and other questions for Resident Steering Groups to ask at the appropriate time during the consultation. The questions covered the following areas:

- Rents & Other Charges
- Rehousing Options
- Removals
- Homeowners
- Like for Like
- Design
- Ballots
- Compensation
- Parking
- Management
- Right to Buy
- Pets

4.3 MT advised that it was important that residents have the responses from One Housing Group compiled in a binding residents charter so that everyone knows what has been promised before they vote on a final option.

5 Example of a Current Resident Steering Group

5.1 PH explained how a Resident Steering Group was operating in Camden. PH circulated the Terms of Reference for that Group and MT circulated a Draft Terms of Reference he had drawn up for consideration by the 4 Estates Forum for each of the areas to consider.

5.2 In response to questions, PH explained that the residents of the area concerned voted for a redevelopment of their current homes after a two year consultation.

5.3 In response to a request to meet them, PH agreed that he would ask them if they would be willing to meet the Residents Steering Group.

6 Probable next steps

6.1 PH set out the likely work plan for the Resident Steering Group for the first four months of 2019.

6.2 The work plan would include:

- Draft & agree brief for Independent Residents Advisors
- Circulate initial resident survey questions to the Resident Steering Group for feedback & amendment
- Independent Residents Advisors brief to be submitted to possible advisors for response
- Begin arranged one to one meetings with all 84 households.
- Set up and advertise a bi-weekly 'drop in surgery' for residents to access the project team
- Begin to draft initial Frequently Asked Questions document in response to incoming feedback
- Resident Steering Group and One Housing Group to assess proposals submitted by potential Independent Residents Advisors
- Potential Independent Residents Advisors to present to a panel of Resident Steering Group and representatives
- Appoint Independent Residents Advisors
- Exhibition event to feedback information from the first engagement cycle
- Independent Residents Advisors & Resident Steering Group to review suggested brief for potential architects & suggest companies to approach
- Resident Steering Group draft, confirm and sign up to terms of reference

6.3 MT advised that all three areas want him to act as the Independent Resident Adviser. This would be too onerous for one person and as an alternative he is exploring with OHG of being able to work with each Resident Steering Group as an advocate which would allow him to work on behalf of the residents and support them at each of their meeting and also any panels that appoint advisers. MT will support each of the Resident Steering Groups up until he appointment of their Independent Resident Adviser.

7 Questions and Answers

7.1 There was a discussion on what One Housing Group are prepared for the residents to decide.

7.2 MT advised that One Housing Group have made it clear that they are happy for residents to consider:

- Doing nothing
- Refurbishment of the blocks
- A mixture of new homes and refurbished homes
- Total demolitions and rebuilding of the blocks
- Partial new build

However, the funding of any works needs to stack up. That is what an options appraisal process is about. Architects and cost consultants will jointly work with the steering group to come up with such options that are both affordable and satisfy the wants of the residents concerned.

8 Meeting Close

8.1 As there was no further business, MP thanked everyone for coming. She advised once again stated that the TRA will be supporting the residents in this process. The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

9 Date of the Next Meeting

9.1 The next meeting will be on Tuesday 11th December 2018 at 7pm in the St Johns Community Centre at 7pm to formally elect the members of the Resident Steering Group and launch the consultation.