

BENHILL RESIDENTS' STEERING GROUP (RSG) Meeting notes No.20

Venue: Salvation Army, Benhill Avenue, SM1 4DD

Date: Thursday 21st April 2022 **Time:** 7pm to 8.30pm

Attendees: Residents from Benhill Estate

Officers: Chelena Logan-Millainaise (LBS), Geeta Le Tissier (LBS), Paul Maddock (HTA), Jamie Doak (HTA), Phil Rankin (Savills), Ian Simpson (CF), Louis Blair (CF), Hilda Wood (SHP)

Observers: Colin Hawkins (Sutton Federation of TRAs), Cllr David Bartolucci

| 1. | Introductions and Matters Arising | Action |
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| | <p>Ian welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the key element would be a presentation and discussion with HTA as the architects leading on the Option Appraisal.</p> <p>The notes of the last meeting were accepted as an accurate record. However, in response to a query it was noted that voting in any ballot on regeneration would be restricted to secure tenants, resident leaseholders and Benhill residents on the Council's Housing Waiting List for at least 12 months.</p> | |
| 2. | HTA – Benhill Architect Team | |
| | <p>Paul introduced himself and Jamie from the HTA Team at Benhill. HTA are architects with over 50 years' experience, with a focus on community architecture and estate regeneration.</p> <p>They are already working with Sutton on Beech Tree Place since 2019 where they have completed an Option Appraisal. Paul detailed some of the experience of the team on estates which include Sutton Estate (Chelsea), Clapham Park (Lambeth), Ravensbury (Merton), Winstanley/York Rd (Wandsworth) and Aylesbury Estate (Southwark).</p> <p>These projects have ranged from refurbishment to partial and full redevelopment, depending on the condition of properties and resident feedback.</p> | |

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| 3. | Option Appraisal Surveys - HTA | |
| | <p>Paul outlined some initial site surveys that will take place over the summer:</p> <p>Topographic Survey – ground levels and building footprints Statutory Services – including electricity, water, gas, sewers Tree Survey – existing trees, canopies, root protection Ecology Assessment – wildlife and habitats incl bats Transport Consultant – parking and transport routes Structural Engineer – existing buildings incl potential loading</p> <p>All the surveys are scheduled to take place over the summer, but would not require access to residents' homes.</p> | |
| 4. | Option Appraisal Programme - HTA | |
| | <p>Paul explained HTA are at a very early stage of the programme, learning about the estate and residents' views about living on Benhill. They will be developing a consultation process within which the different options ranging can be assessed by residents and scored against key criteria.</p> <p>If partial or full redevelopment is the preferred option at the end of the consultation process, a ballot would be held in accordance with the Mayor of London's guidance.</p> <p>The programme will run over the next six months, and it will include:</p> <p>Walk & Talk Sessions Workshops – Place shaping, homes and landscape Option testing and exhibition Preferred option exhibition</p> | |
| 5. | Option Appraisal Themes and Discussion - HTA | |
| | <p>Paul added that the key themes for the Option Appraisal are:</p> <p>People & Community – existing needs and aspirations Place – location incl play and green spaces Homes – accessibility, storage & layout, private space and security Sustainability – zero carbon solutions, affordability, cycling, community gardens and energy</p> <p>Jamie led a brief discussion with the group in which residents gave the following feedback:</p> | |

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| | <p>Stairways and landings – some residents like the current layout, rather than living in blocks with enclosed stairwells and hallways. These contribute to a more sociable estate where residents know their neighbours.</p> <p>Home sizes – many existing homes are spacious with large bedrooms, any new homes should also provide similar space.</p> <p>Jennifer added that residents had produced an earlier list of ideas which she will share with HTA.</p> <p>Feedback forms were distributed to residents, any forms or content completed after the meeting can be emailed to estateregeneration@sutton.gov.uk</p> | |
| 5. | Questions and Contributions | |
| | <p>Q – Are there any RSG Officers at present ? A – We currently need a resident Chair. Recent newsletters have invited interest from residents but in the meantime meetings could continue with Ian Simpson from CF chairing.</p> <p>Q – Will leaseholders know the cost of options before making any decisions ? A – Yes, the Option Appraisal will produce estimated costs for leaseholders of all the options.</p> <p>Q – If a leaseholder passes on an equity share home, why does the loan have to be repaid by their children ? A – Details of the equity share option around succession would be confirmed closer to a ballot, if redevelopment is the preferred option.</p> <p>Q – Would there be gas boilers in any new homes ? A – No, due to government policy it will not be possible to install in new buildings, and in the longer term gas will need to be phased out for existing homes. Solutions could include radiators or underfloor heating powered by air or ground source heat pumps. Power might be supplied from Sutton’s district heating system, which will be running in the next few years, Residents noted that the existing homes are poorly insulated.</p> <p>Q – How would the extra electricity for new homes and services be provided, such as car charging? A – New electricity substations may be required, and these can be added as necessary.</p> | |

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| | <p>Q – What would happen if a ballot resulted in a No vote ? A – The scheme would not go ahead if a majority vote against it. It is possible that a revised scheme could be presented for ballot at a later stage if there was interest from residents.</p> <p>Q - How would a ballot be run ? A – An independent organisation such as Electoral Reform Services would run the ballot, with residents receiving the Council’s detailed “Offer Document” prior to voting.</p> <p>Q – How high would any new buildings be ? A – The architects will need to explore this, taking account of relevant planning guidance and visibility studies.</p> <p>Q – Why is an option appraisal being considered on Benhill ? A – The Council needs to provide more affordable homes to meet housing need within the borough. Benhill is a site where additional homes could be provided, subject to resident support.</p> <p>Q – Why can’t the new homes be elsewhere ? A – New affordable homes will have to be provided on sites across Sutton. As the Council owns the land at Benhill and there are investment needs on the estate, it is reasonable to seek residents’ views on its future in an Options Appraisal.</p> <p>Q – Is “Do Nothing” still an option ? A – Yes, this will be a costed option alongside refurbishment, infill, partial and full redevelopment.</p> | |
| 7. | Any Other Business | |
| | <p>Keith expressed his dissatisfaction with Geeta’s communication with residents. Jennifer refuted that this view was widely held on the estate.</p> <p>Paul said that an estate walkabout with residents will take place on Saturday 7th May at 10 am, starting at the Salvation Army. This will allow HTA to learn from residents about the ways that the existing buildings and land are used.</p> <p>Ian thanked everyone and closed the meeting at 8.45 pm.</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-mayors-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 Hilda Wood (SHP Housing Manager) on 020 8915 2357

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

Communities First Email: benhill@communitiesfirst.uk.com