

The Southwick Estate - Residents Working Group

Subject: Residents' Working Group

Venue: Southwick Community Centre

Date: 15th March 2023

Present:

Imogen Spencer-Dale – Cratus
Communications (ISD)

Cian Cronin – Adur District Council (CC)

Jeanette Kenyon – Adur District Council (JK)

Janet Ashby – Adur District Council (JA)

Tina Favier – Adur District Council (TF)

Rob Lantsbury – New Mill (RL)

Cllr Carson Albury (CA)

Cllr Kevin Boram (KB)

Cllr Carol O'Neal (CO)

Cllr Jim Funnell (JF)

Jemma Wood (JW)

Jasmine Johnson (JJ)

Lesley Bridle (LB)

Marilyn Foster (MF)

Dave Jenner (DJ)

Sue Wells (SW)

Other Southwick Residents

Item	Comment	Assigned to:
1	Introduction	
1.1	JK led introductions.	
2	Introduction from Director of Communities	
2.1	TF said that she has a background in health and wellbeing. She started as Director of Communities in autumn 2022 and has since taken on housing. She said she is keen to meet residents and knows there are housing challenges.	
2.2	Referral to Regulator TF said that Adur District Council has referred itself to the Social Housing Regulator who will scrutinise the Council's work. The Council is working with a committed team to do a full review of the maintenance service and state of the properties. Working on an improvement plan is the Council's immediate priority. TF said she has also written to all residents. The staff and residents were all told on the same day. TF said that resident engagement is essential for this new plan as these are their homes. The Council will be speaking to other local authorities and publishing a newsletter with important updates. RL said that the Southwick Estate is the only estate being considered for regeneration, so the referral to the Regulator is seen as more suspicious.	

	CC noted this was happening all over the country, therefore Adur Homes benefit from others having gone through the process.	
3	Questions	
3.1	SW asked if this was a tick-box for the estate to be knocked down. TF said this was unrelated to the consultation. It was because it was clear that Adur Homes as a housing provider is not meeting the standards necessary.	
3.2	<p>Balconies</p> <p>DJ asked why the balcony works are happening now, and asked whether residents would receive a rent rebate due to being unable to use their balconies.</p> <p>TF said the works are due to health and safety and this must be the absolute priority. JK added the works to the balconies were identified in the recent survey, and they had to act on the results of this. The works are planned for the summer.</p> <p>DJ said the balcony issues could be down to lack of care. TF agreed that Adur Homes had ,in some cases, not been caring for buildings properly.</p> <p>KB said that after the sad case of the child who died in Rochford due to mould in their home, the Regulator wrote to ever housing organisation to urgently review their housing stock and self-refer if necessary.</p> <p>JK, CA and TF clarified that this is happening to all housing stock across Adur District Council.</p> <p>CO mentioned she had reported the state of the balconies and communal areas for nearly two years, she thanked the team for taking action now.</p> <p>DJ mentioned that it would be efficient to have other works done while scaffolding is up. TF agreed and said it would be part of the improvement plan.</p> <p>JF mentioned balconies had been on the table for a while but had less focus during the Covid-19 pandemic. He said he had also been reporting on it.</p> <p>A resident asked for balcony final costs for leaseholders, JA said they do not know yet.</p> <p>JK reminded the group that the next leaseholder meeting is in person on 23.03.23.</p>	
3.3	RL said they need officers and care staff who care about the place, and it can feel like Southwick has been forgotten about. TF said she appreciated that and mentioned that the teams have had a lot of necessary changes. She mentioned resource challenges which frustrate the staff who are working very hard. An urgent task is to fill posts in the team, including maintenance and repairs staff. She knows the managers want to do a good job.	

	<p>She noted there is also less stock to work with than other councils, and reiterated that the team realise these are homes not just flats and need to meet health and safety standards.</p>	
3.4	<p>TF said they are looking at the process of enquiries and complaints as the process is not fit for purpose.</p> <p>SW said that calling about repairs is difficult and that the people who answer do not understand the issues, and the call centre staff need training. DJ said there are not enough staff. TF said they will work on this, and suggested ideas such as digital processes.</p> <p>SW asked about the frequency of call outs and photos and tests with no follow up. She and others have paid out themselves to fix damp and mould.</p> <p>TF agreed this is not acceptable and that damp and mould is a priority. They have hired a new surveyor but are having to prioritise the worst cases.</p> <p>JJ said contractors had visited to look at the mould and damp. She said they told her they could not use mould paint, but her neighbours were told otherwise. TF said she would speak to her separately.</p> <p>DJ mentioned the rubbish in Butts Road, and showed some images. TF will look into this.</p>	<p>TF</p> <p>TF</p>
3.5	<p>LB asked why there is both a management fee and a management charge in her service charges.</p> <p>JA said the fee refers to the necessary administration and staff support, the leaseholders contribute a percentage of those staff's salaries. The charge is a percentage for providing the service. TF said there could be more of a breakdown of charges.</p> <p>LB asked why they have separate rubbish clearing fees when they pay council tax. JA said it is for clearing fly-tipping.</p> <p>LB asked why they need to pay insurance costs as well as their own insurance. JA said residents take out their own contents insurance, and the council costs are for buildings insurance.</p>	TF/JA
4.	<p>Consultation Update and Next Steps</p> <p>ISD said that the team visited 226 flats, excluding Spring Gardens and the 14 void flats. If a resident did not answer the door a calling card was posted, with information on how to get in touch.</p>	
4.1	<p>Engagement</p> <p>ISD said that 75% of flats have been actively engaged with, and over 50% of each block has been spoken to.</p> <p>The team received 141 feedback forms, with the preferences being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 78 residents prefer option 4 (redevelopment) - 55% • 40 residents chose Option 1 (refurbishment) - 28% 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 chose option 3 (partial redevelopment) • 1 chose option 2 or 3 (refurbishment and new flats or partial redevelopment) • 21 said are unsure or say they have no opinion. <p>Overall, the majority of each block prefers redevelopment, with Watling Court being the exception where refurbishment was favoured by a small majority of residents.</p>	
4.2	<p>Feedback Summary</p> <p>Option 1 likes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain in same flat/same neighbours/community feel • Layout/size/storage/view etc. <p>Option 1 concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distrust that repairs will be done • Worry that the issues are too serious to fix <p>Option 4 likes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security • Modern • Sustainable • Accessibility • Green space <p>Option 4 concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption • Impact on local facilities and parking • Size of the flats 	
4.3	<p>Next Steps and Ballot</p> <p>JK said they're putting all the feedback and details of financial viability together for a recommendation at the end of April. The team will write to everyone.</p> <p>JK said there is potential for a resident's formal ballot but it would have to be signed off.</p> <p>CO said she had been promising residents a formal ballot.</p> <p>JK said they will be recommending this, there would also be a Landlord Offer Document containing lots of information.</p> <p>A resident said they are confused on what the resident ballot is as opposed to the consultation.</p> <p>RL said the ballot would be managed by an independent agency, taking place over three weeks via a website, phone call, or in person. All named tenants would have a vote and non-resident leaseholders usually do not.</p>	
5	<p>Previous Meeting Minutes and Matters Arising</p>	

	<p>JK suggested the repairs on noticeboards idea was positively received by the team who are now looking into implementing it.</p> <p>More copies of minutes had been brought, and TB sorted the issue of disabled access raised by a resident in the previous meeting.</p> <p>JK has asked Neil Erridge to attend the meetings which is being considered.</p> <p>JK said the next leaseholder meeting is on 23.03.23.</p>	
6.	Any Other Business	
	<p>CO asked if electric vehicle charging had been considered in any of the options. JK said electric charging points would be included in a redevelopment option.</p> <p>CC reiterated that the residents would be deciding what will happen to the estate and not the Council.</p> <p>CO asked if the consultation process will be delayed due to changes in the Council. TF said they will be working through the details.</p> <p>JK said she will work with TF to coordinate the newsletters.</p> <p>The date of the next meeting will be shared with the group.</p>	<p>JK/ISD ISD</p>
7.	Close	