

**Notes of the Grange Farm Steering Group Meeting held on**

**Thursday 25th June 2020**

**SG Members:** Bill Beardon (chaired the meeting), Erica Fontaine, Fiona Allen, Kandiah Thayaparan, Shaz Mohammed, Rekha Mehta, Varsha Patel, Shivakuru Selvathurai, Duad Amin (unfortunately had a poor WiFi signal) and Ranjan Narayanasamy.

**HFTRA**: Paddy Lynne.

**Harrow Council**: Alison Pegg and Cllr Dan Anderson.

**ITA**: Raj Kumar and John Harvey.

1. **Apologies**

Ken Woods, Amita Jagai-Kempster, Sharon Reid, Shamim Manji, Ali Noormohammed, Denis Barker, Anthea Watkins, Magali Peyrefitte, Zainab Malik and Cllr Sarah Butterworth.

1. **Good News Stories & Community Development Update**
2. The Steering Group would like to pass on their thanks for the invaluable free food parcel service provided for over 14 weeks by the Harrow Masonic Centre & Salvation Army, which would be ending on 17th July. A notice will be provided in the food parcels and also highlighted on the WhatsApp group.
3. Christ Church Roxeth will start the “Fit and Fed” scheme during the school summer holidays.
4. Rachel, MyYard has approached the “Bridge” group to provide weekly food bags and toiletries and will also organise the distribution.
5. MyYard will be working with an artist to develop the next phase of the hoardings and has received details of the Steering Groups vision, which will be incorporated into the designs.
6. Tim Dalton, Harrow Boys school has secured 50 free WIFI vouchers for families with children. The council will distribute these. Anthea will provide an update in August regarding finding out if BT can provide a booster for the community hall WIFI. Alison explained if more vouchers were needed the council can look into this.
7. The Grange Farm newsletter has been sent out. If anyone has not received a copy by Monday, to please let Raj know and he will get more copies from Anthea.
8. **Notes of meetings held on 21st May, 18th June and 23rd June were all agreed**
9. **Higgins Update** Alison reported that the contractors will start the main demolition works on Phase 1 in the week commencing 14 July 2020.
10. **Vision Statement**

John explained the vision had been agreed and now required consultation with the wider community and stakeholders. This will include an article in the newsletter (to be discussed with Anthea), promotion at the fun day event and public meetings after lockdown has ended.

The most important step is to develop an Action Plan in partnership with stakeholders and the council.

1. **Draft Allocations Procedure Phase 1**

In discussing the questions raised on the draft paper on the Allocations Procedure, Alison provided the following helpful answers:

1. On the issue of whether or not any **priority should be given to “front line or key workers**” the point was made that there was no agreed definition of which type of workers were covered by the term.  It was agreed that the criteria for awarding priority for allocating tenancies at Grange Farm should continue to be based on housing need and not on the occupation of the applicant.
2. **On Right to Buy (RTB) discounts** Alison confirmed that in relation to the new housing to be built at Grange Farm all secure tenants would have the legal RTB although she and the council were not keen on seeing newly provided social housing being sold off.

The maximum discount available to any secure tenant exercising the RTB would be 70% or £112,300 whichever was the lower. However, this would be subject to what is known as the “cost-floor” which is a rule applied under the legislation that no council can sell a council dwelling for less than it cost to build.  So new build dwellings such as those to be provided at Grange Farm might costs for example about £300,000 each to build, which means that amount of discount available to potential buyers under the RTB would be limited. The actual build cost will not be known until the final works have been completed.

1. On future **rent levels** the council estimated that rents for the new 2 bedroom flats being built at Grange Farm would be about £111.17 per week (excluding service charges) which compared to about £88-£95 for the existing 2 bedroom flats (excluding service charges).  These rent estimates had been provided to the SG some while ago and Alison undertook to include them in the revised paper on Allocations Procedure she was drawing up. Once completed with the agreed revisions (for example by including explicit reference to decants who have moved off the estate and wish to come back), the Procedure will be sent to the SG. Alison commented that if the future rents were at these estimated levels then they would still be covered by Universal Credit for those tenants who qualified.
2. Ranjan asked about the level of service charges and Alison explained that this will be discussed closer to the handover stage of the new homes when actual costs will be known, for example for lift servicing and depreciations.
3. Ranjan asked about shared ownership options and Alison explained that this is not available on the social housing homes. Where there are shared ownership homes, that the Right to Buy discounts are not available.

1. Alison explained no further **needs assessment** will be undertaken as information is already recorded on the housing system when residents circumstances have changed. It was important for residents to keep the council informed of any changes.

Closer to the actual allocations date to individual homes, Salome will meet with every tenant to consider their choices.

1. The SG confirmed are happy with the procedure and priority criteria for the letting of the duplex homes.
2. Alison explained that the council has a clear criteria for allocating separate bedrooms to opposite sex children over the age of 10.

1. **YouTube Channel**

The SG thanked Shaz for setting up the channel. Shaz will provide the link to the channel on the WhatsApp group chat and welcomed any films to be sent to him. Raj confirmed that Magali had sent this morning the link to the film she made to be included on the site.

1. **Date of next meeting 30th July 7pm Zoom**
2. **AOB** a)Cllr Dan Anderson encouraged the SG to nominate people for the Harrow Heroes Awards. John will send an email to Dan about this.
3. Ranjan enquired to when meetings could take place in the Community Hall again. Alison confirmed that the advice was that it is still not safe to do so under Covid-19 guidance.
4. Shivakuru promoted a 274 page book of home remedies, which he produced over a three month period.