



Minutes of the Meeting of the
Haughton Green Resident Steering Group
held on 12th August at the Oasis Centre

Attendees

Present: Donna Healey, Don Fish, Susan Birchall, Susan Robinson, Gary Pickering, Joe Howarth, Matthew Howarth, Farrah Asfi

Chair: Donna Healey

Officers: Rachel Sumner, Regeneration Officer, Jen Smith, Engagement Lead, Sarah Walker, Head of Communications and Engagement, Alex Scapens, Communications and Engagement Specialist, Laura McBride, Senior Project Manager (Regeneration)

Apologies were received from customers Mandy McGrogen and Stephen Whitock

1. Welcome and introductions

Jen welcomed everyone and members and officers introduced themselves.

2. Resident Steering Group – Purpose and Governance

Donna, a Southey Court resident for 10 years, was appointed the group's chair. She recapped on the group's purpose, namely to:

- Give customers a meaningful voice in the regeneration programme.
- Provide opportunities for residents to influence decisions and plans.
- Offer regular access to information and updates.
- Provide direct route to share concerns, ideas and local insight.

3. Building safety

This will be a standing item on the steering group agenda as Irwell Valley Homes wants the three tower blocks to remain safe, accessible places to live throughout the decanting process. It was led by Jen who shared the following updates:

- Sprinklers will be left in empty homes.
 - Smoke alarms will be disconnected.
 - Electrical meters are being removed.
 - Water will be drained down where appropriate – this is to avoid potential issues with leaks into other homes.
 - Customers should continue to report repairs that Irwell Valley Homes is responsible for via the usual contact channels.
 - Irwell Valley colleagues are working hard to keep communal areas clear and obstruction free.
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4. Fly tipping and waste disposal

Donna led this item, in response to increasing issues at the three tower blocks. She outlined there were problems with the communal bins being overloaded with items being cleared out of homes at Southey Court. Susan said this was the same at Castleton Court.

Gary added that when the bins are emptied by Tameside Council they are not returned to the bin store and are left outside his flat window. Don added that this was also a problem at Fitzgerald Court.

Action: IVH to explore this issue with the estates team and Tameside Council to determine who is responsible for returning the bins to the store after they are emptied. This process then needs to be followed systematically rather than sporadically. It was noted that the bins were emptied that day (12th August) and the next collection is in two weeks. They are normally emptied between 7am and 8am.

The informal 'swap shop' arrangement – whereby unwanted items which might be of use or interest to other residents are left in the foyer – has in recent weeks become more prevalent. Although it began with good intentions, it is creating issues with items cluttering the communal areas.

Action: It was agreed that IVH should communicate about this and kindly ask residents not to do this moving forward.

A discussion about how to deter fly-tipping included ideas such as:

- Harder hitting publicity about the effect of leaving items in hallways and stairwells should there be a fire.
- Stronger enforcement messages highlighting that if those responsible for fly-tipping can be identified, they could be re-charged the cost of clearing the rubbish.
- Increased use of CCTV – though Jen explained the challenge of trying to pinpoint the time that waste has been left in order to watch the footage at the right point in time,
- More communications about the support available to help with clearing homes of items.
- Reminders about other services who can help – i.e. Tameside Council, charities.
- A permanent presence of skips outside all buildings – as one is taken away, another arrives.
- Blocking off an area of the foyer so that people can't access it to leave items there.
- Adding new noticeboards – either in the main entrance or on each floor.
- Using more visual posters or updates, as opposed to more lengthy written updates.
- Adding quotes from steering group members into communications encouraging customers to work together and help keep the buildings safe. Donna said she would be happy to be featured.

Members agreed that they would like to see a phased approach:

- 1) Share further information about how the regeneration team can help with clearing items and re-iterate the different support options available.
- 2) If the situation does not improve in the future, look to use harder hitting messages around the consequences of fly-tipping – both in terms of safety and fines/enforcement action against those responsible.

Action: IVH to produce some further communications about how we can support customers with clearing belongings.

5. Keeping in touch

The discussion centred on both general updates and more personal communications updating residents about their individual case or application.

Joe shared feelings of being left 'in limbo' as a result of not hearing about his specific case. Due to work commitments, it is also difficult for him to attend the drop-in sessions at the Oasis during the week. Laura agreed that this is something we need to address to ensure customers feel supported through this process, regardless of what stage they are at.

It was agreed that:

- A customer update would be shared approximately every six weeks after each Resident Steering Group.
 - If there is a particular hot topic – for example, fly-tipping this month – then a separate flyer or leaflet could be produced about this,
 - A text message should also be sent to all customers to reassure them the team is still working on their application, provide reassurance that we will be in touch when there is an update and remind people how they can get in touch / arrange a meeting if they have a question or concern.
 - A regular evening drop-in or a Saturday morning drop-in will be arranged and promoted to customers as an alternative way to seek support or ask questions of the team.
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6. Project update

Laura ran through recent developments with the regeneration and those in the pipeline. She updated that there are currently 17 empty homes, eight customers have moved and there are currently 12 pending moves.

Other updates from the regeneration team included:

- They have met with Tameside planning department to discuss the sites and the early stage proposals
- They have agreed a way forward through the planning process
- They have evaluated tenders from the consultants who will work on the design of the new properties
- They are working with telecom providers to negotiate alternative sites for their equipment
- They are working with Tameside Council on three smaller development sites in the area to be able to deliver more new homes on the estate.

AOB

Following a query from Susan about how removals are arranged, Laura confirmed we have provider - Cheshire Removals – in place and the feedback from customers so far has been very positive.

She added that there are carpet and curtain samples available to view at the Oasis Centre when customers are at that stage of moving into their new home.

Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 23rd September at 6pm at the Oasis Community Centre.