

Sumner Buildings

RSG: Minutes of Meeting

1. Meeting Details

Meeting	Sumner Buildings Resident Steering Group (RSG)
Date	Thursday, 16 July 2026
Time	6.30pm to 8.00pm
Location	The Bridge, Southwark Bridge Road
Attendees	4 Households (5 residents). Sophie Courtright, Sandra Brown, Selin Salieva (The City of London Corporation). Syed Momin, Daniel Newman (NewmanFrancis).
Notes/Minute takers	City of London Corporation. NewmanFrancis

2. Purpose of the Meeting

The meeting served as an introduction to the Resident Steering Group (RSG) for the proposed development at Sumner Buildings. It was established that the RSG is being formed to enable residents to have a voice on local developments and that their expert knowledge of the building and estate—is vital to informing the work of the design team? The group's core purpose is to enable resident influence over all proposed and active development areas.

Following the introduction of meeting ground rules, residents introduced themselves and shared their interests in the project. Key discussion points included:

- **Impact on Community Life:** A long-term resident of approximately twenty years highlighted concerns regarding how the development might affect daily life and relationships with future neighbours.
- **Timing of Consultation:** Residents raised a recurring concern regarding the historical tendency for formal consultations to occur after a substantial proportion of key decisions have already been finalised.

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3. Discussion Summary

3.1 Extent of Resident Influence

A colour-coded diagram was presented to distinguish scope of influence, clarifying matters open to resident feedback from those that are fixed.

- **Matters Closed to Influence:** These include the core requirement to deliver additional social housing, site ownership, technical and engineering specifications, and budget and viability considerations. These parameters are strictly governed by statutory national planning policy and regional London housing policy requirements.
- **Planning Authority Parameters:** It was clarified that the landlord is not the local planning authority. Advocacy on behalf of residents regarding fixed planning constraints remains limited by these statutory frameworks.
- **Maximising Resident Impact:** Residents were advised that documenting specific feedback clearly, and in writing where possible, provides the strongest basis for advancing and representing their concerns within the formal planning process.

3.2 Overview of the Proposed Development

It was confirmed that a formal planning application has not yet been submitted, meaning all current proposals remain fluid and subject to amendment based on further development.

The project is currently exploring design opportunities aimed at delivering direct improvements for Sumner Buildings, focusing on:

- **Landscaping and Environment:** Upgrading outdoor spaces and estate landscaping.
- **Recreation:** Enhancing play provisions and recreational facilities.
- **Accessibility and Safety:** Improving estate-wide accessibility, alongside targeted security and safety upgrades.
- **Community Infrastructure:** Delivering a brand-new, modern community facility.

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Development Capacity: An indicative baseline figure of approximately forty-five new social rent homes was provided for the existing site area.

3.3 New Community Facility

Residents requested clarification regarding the proposed community facility's specifications and intended use. The following details were confirmed:

- **Sizing and Internal Features:** The total footprint of the new building is projected to be approximately 300 square metres, with approximately 170 square metres dedicated to a multi-use Sports Hall designed to meet Sport England guidance standards. Internal plans include a dedicated kitchenette, toilets and storage space.

3.4 Landscaping, Play Space and Green Space

Conforming with previous project discussions, the following parameters regarding estate grounds and play facilities were reviewed:

- **Green Space Preservation:** It was confirmed that the existing garden, including all established trees, will be retained within the new layout.
- **Statutory Play Space Requirements:** Housing policy mandates that children's play provision is calculated based on the total number of existing and proposed flats. Assessments are underway to determine if this requirement can be met entirely on-site, or if a partial off-site contribution is required to meet statutory standards.
- **Design Philosophy:** Residents emphasised the critical importance of sports and play infrastructure. The emerging design strategy favours integrating play space naturally into the wider landscape, moving away from a traditional, single fixed playground model.
- **Access and Security:** Residents explicitly requested that the retained green space must not be utilised as a public through-route. This requirement has been formally logged for the design team's immediate consideration.

3.5 Storage and Cycle Parking

Residents raised concerns regarding the adequacy of existing storage, including bicycle storage, which is understood to be over capacity for the current number of residents. It was confirmed that the project intends to increase external cycle storage

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provision across the site, together with storage and charging provision for mobility scooters.

3.6 Access and Security

Discussion addressed the management of shared and communal spaces, including concern regarding unauthorised access into the estate outside of managed hours. Facilitators indicated that the project is considering new gated access arrangements, with controlled entry, so that residents would have greater ability to manage who enters the site, including visitors.

3.7 Building Height and Massing

The structural parameters and physical boundaries of the proposed architecture were reviewed:

- **Maximum Height Constraints:** It was confirmed that the proposed development will be capped at a maximum height of six storeys at its peak.
- **Daylight Protection and Stepping:** To safeguard daylight and sunlight access for existing properties, the building's massing is being intentionally configured with setbacks and stepped designs where it interfaces closest with current estate homes.
- **Street-Facing Elevation:** Design variations allow for potentially greater height concentration along the street-facing elements of the site, balancing structural density with the protection of adjacent residential amenity.

3.8 Transport, Parking and Accessibility

The technical assessments and design parameters for site access and estate infrastructure were outlined:

- **Access and Emergency Logistics:** A comprehensive transport review is underway regarding existing estate vehicle movements, with specific focus on safeguarding and optimising emergency service vehicle access.
- **Accessible Housing and Parking Allocation:** In compliance with statutory standards, 10% of all new residential units will be fully wheelchair accessible. A corresponding number of dedicated accessible parking bays will be integrated into the site layout to support these units.

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- **Street-Level Connectivity:** Active design options are being evaluated to establish direct street-level access routes for both the new and existing residential blocks, to provide for estate-wide integration.

3.9 New Estate Office and Operational Facilities

The spatial allocations and operational support provisions within the proposed development layout were reviewed:

- **Facilities and Storage Integration:** The design incorporates a new, modern estate office within the footprint of the new building structure. This includes dedicated, compliant replacement storage facilities for estate staff, specifically configured for gardening equipment and safe chemical storage.
- **Universal Design and Access:** To maintain full inclusivity, the design process is actively evaluating level-access and step-free entry configurations for the new estate office and all associated building entrances.

3.10 Construction Programme and Logistics

The regulatory frameworks and estimated milestones for the construction phase were outlined:

- **Logistics and Vehicle Management:** A formal construction logistics assessment is being prepared as a core component of the upcoming planning application. This assessment will define and regulate the volume of construction vehicle movements on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis, subject to formal approval by the local planning authority.
- **Target Milestones:** The current project timeline anticipates the submission of the formal planning application towards the end of the current year, with a target for on-site commencement in 2028.
- **Information Sharing:** It was agreed that comprehensive details regarding construction logistics will be presented back to the RSG as soon as the detailed assessments become available.

3.11 Existing Estate: Major Works and Repairs

Residents raised critical feedback regarding past experiences with historical major works contractors, noting specific service delivery and financial difficulties that occurred during previous programmes.

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- **Impact on Resident Confidence:** It was noted that this history has left members of the community feeling vulnerable regarding the management and execution of future works programmes.
- **Remedial Action and Prioritisation:** These concerns were acknowledged. Residents were signposted to the July 2026 newsletter directory section, informing how to address outstanding repair issues on the estate, with reported faults—such as defective door locks.

3.12 Social Housing Tenure and Allocations

It was confirmed that the new homes will be let at social rent, with the City of London Corporation acting as landlord and managing the homes directly. Nomination priority will be given first to Sumner Buildings tenants who are assessed as being in need, ahead of nominations from the City of London Corporation's waiting list more broadly.

3.13 Comparison with the Collinson Court Development

Feedback from comparable local housing initiatives was reviewed to provide consistency in resident engagement:

- **Collinson Court Precedent:** Reference was made to the recent Resident Steering Group sessions for the Collinson Court development, where similar site-specific development challenges and resident concerns were evaluated.
- **Continuous Improvement:** It was confirmed that operational insights, feedback loops, and best practices generated from Collinson Court and similar schemes are to be actively integrated to inform and improve the strategy for the Sumner Buildings RSG.

3.14 Community Character and Resident Concerns

A resident raised concerns relating to the character and social cohesion of the existing community, referencing long-standing relationships between residents and the potential effect of new residents moving into the completed development.

3.15 Communication and Engagement

A review of the communication methods utilised to date was provided, highlighting the delivery via digital and non-digital channels including newsletters, text messages, emails, direct telephone calls, and hand-delivered correspondence for residents

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lacking digital access.

The strategy for future engagement was established as follows:

- **Information Distribution Formats:** Discussions addressed options to supplement active channels with additional paper-based materials.
- **Meeting Frequency and Interim Feedback:** Resident feedback addressed the scheduling of future RSG sessions, with a proposal submitted for a monthly meeting cycle. This format was identified as allowing for the collection of intermediate resident feedback via telephone and email between formal sessions.
- **Information Sharing Protocols:** It was agreed that draft minutes of all RSG sessions will be distributed to RSG members for review prior to wider circulation among the general estate population. RSG members will receive project information ahead of the broader resident body.

4. Questions Raised by Residents

The following questions were raised during the meeting. Individual residents were not consistently identified by name or number in the source material; questions are therefore attributed to "residents" collectively, grouped by theme.

4.1 Process and Influence

- What can residents genuinely influence, and what has already been fixed through policy, budget or technical requirements?
- Given that decisions are often made before residents are consulted, how meaningful is the RSG's influence over the final proposals?

4.2 Community Facility and Recreation

- What will the proposed community facility contain, and what is its intended size and specification?
- Will existing recreational features, including the table tennis facility, be retained or replaced?
- Will the community facility be available for resident private functions, such as parties, or will its use be restricted?

4.3 Landscaping and Green Space

- Will the existing garden be retained?
- Will the green space be kept free of public through-access?
- How will children's play space requirements be met, and will this be provided on site in full?

4.4 Storage and Parking

- Will bicycle storage capacity be increased, given that existing provision is over capacity?
- Will storage and charging provision be made available for mobility scooters?
- What accessible parking provisions will be made for wheelchair-accessible homes?

4.5 Building Height and Design

- How many storeys will the new buildings comprise, and will this affect light to existing homes?

4.6 Construction and Disruption

- How many construction vehicle movements are anticipated, and how will these be managed and approved?
- When is the development expected to begin on site, and when is the planning application expected to be submitted?

4.7 Existing Estate and Repairs

- Will outstanding repairs, including faulty door locks, be prioritised ahead of, or alongside, the new development works?
- What assurance can be given regarding the management of forthcoming major works, given previous difficulties experienced by residents?

4.8 Tenure and Allocations

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- Who will act as landlord for the new homes, and will they be let at social rent?
- How will nominations to the new homes be prioritised, and will existing residents receive priority?

4.9 Communication and Meeting Arrangements

- How frequently will the RSG meet, and will this be on a monthly basis?
- Will RSG members see draft minutes before they are shared with the wider resident body?
- Can a copy of the presentation, including the influence diagram, be shared with RSG members?

5. Decisions and Outcomes

- The Sumner Buildings Resident Steering Group (RSG) is established, with the purpose of enabling resident influence over the proposed development at every practicable stage.
- No planning application has yet been submitted; current proposals, including height, layout and community facility content, remain subject to change.
- The proposed development will not exceed six storeys
- The existing garden will be retained.
- New homes will be let at social rent, with the City of London Corporation acting as landlord, and nomination priority generally given to households already within the Corporation's own housing register.
- 10% of new homes will be wheelchair accessible, with a corresponding number of accessible parking bays.
- Draft minutes of RSG meetings will be shared with RSG members ahead of circulation to the wider resident body.
- A landscape and public realm workshop are scheduled for 28 July 2026, to be followed by a further workshop on the design of new homes in September 2026, and an autumn review of emerging proposals informed by both workshops.

6. Actions

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Action: Confirm the attendee list, meeting start and end time, and location for this meeting, for accurate record-keeping.

Responsible: NewmanFrancis

Deadline: Next meeting

Action: Share a copy of the presentation used at this meeting, including the resident-influence diagram, with RSG members.

Responsible: NewmanFrancis

Deadline: As soon as practicable

Action: Provide written confirmation of the specification and intended use of the proposed community facility, including booking arrangements and whether existing recreational features will be retained or replaced.

Responsible: City of London Corporation

Deadline: Next meeting

Action: Confirm whether children's play space requirements will be met in full on site or through a partial off-site contribution.

Responsible: City of London Corporation

Deadline: Next meeting

Action: Confirm proposals for cycle and mobility scooter storage, including charging provision.

Responsible: City of London Corporation

Deadline: Next meeting

Action: Confirm that the retained green space will not be used as a public through-route, in line with resident feedback.

Responsible: City of London Corporation

Deadline: Next meeting

Action: Bring further detail on construction logistics, including anticipated vehicle movements, to the RSG once available.

Responsible: City of London Corporation

Deadline: Ahead of planning application submission

Action: Confirm the frequency and format of future RSG meetings, including consideration of a monthly schedule.

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Responsible: NewmanFrancis, in consultation with RSG members

Deadline: Next meeting

Action: Arrange one-to-one conversations with individual RSG members who requested this.

Responsible: NewmanFrancis

Deadline: Ahead of the workshop on 28 July 2026

Action: Confirm the date and content of the second design workshop, addressing the design of new homes.

Responsible: City of London Corporation and NewmanFrancis

Deadline: Before September 2026

Action: Circulate minutes of this meeting to Sumner Buildings RSG members.

Responsible: NewmanFrancis

Deadline: To be confirmed

Meeting ended: 20:00