

Ebury Bridge Community Futures Group – Meeting 16

23rd July 2018, 6.30pm – 8.30pm

Regeneration Base, 15 – 19 Ebury Bridge Road, Ebury Bridge Estate

MEMBERS ATTENDANCE:

- Teresa Wickham [TW] - Chairperson
- Mohammed Eisa [ME]
- Fiona Quick [FQ]
- Rachel Riley [RR]
- Charlotte Pragnell [CP]
- Sheila Martin [SM]
- Yolande Gaston [YG]
- Stephen Rusbridge [SR]

APOLOGIES:

- Tammy Dowdall [TD]
- Mike Smith [MS]
- Laura Buttigieg [LBu]

WCC OFFICERS AND CONSULTANTS:

- Jodie McCarthy-Mills [JMM] – Senior Regeneration Project Manager
- David Thompson [DT] - Senior Regeneration Project Manager
- Martin Crank [MC] – Communications and Engagement Manager
- Gelina Menville [GM] – Ebury Bridge Community Engagement Team
- Louis Blair [LBI] – First Call Housing (Independent Resident Advisor)
- Abdel Belabbes [AB] – Ebury Bridge Community Engagement Team

Notes: *This document provides a summary of the discussions which took place during the meeting including questions and respective responses that were raised during the session.*

1. Welcome and Introductions from chair

TW opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees and gave apologies for those unable to attend.

TW informed members that JMM will be leaving the Ebury Bridge Project in mid-August and introduced DT who will be succeeding the role as Senior Regeneration Manager.

TW confirmed that this was the last meeting before the CFG breaks up for summer.

2. Notes of last meeting - 20th June 2018

The notes of the last meeting were reviewed page by page and matters discussed. No amendments were requested, and the notes were approved by the group.

Matters arising:

Pg 2 – The concrete slabs have been a persistent issue, having been replaced several times but are still being cracked.

Pg 3 – FQ questioned whether the leaseholder policy was still on track? MC confirmed that he had met with Cecily Herdman [CH] and that the policy is expected to be signed off by the end of the month.

CP suggested that another Leaseholder Session be held in Autumn. **ACTION:** Request a follow-up Leaseholder meeting regarding the updated policy for all leaseholders across the estate.

P.g 4 – TW offered an apology to FQ for not understanding her request for circulation of the engagement report as requested.

3. Action List Review

Each item was reviewed in turn and updated on the Action Point List.

TW asked for an update on the production of the Ebury Bridge Engagement team's "meet the team" flyer. MC stated that the flyer had been produced but not circulated as JMM will be leaving. He assured that the flyer would be produced once responsibilities are handed over to DT. RR suggested that the flyer be put up in notice boards on the estate.

MC informed attendees that Jonathan Cowie [JC] has left City West Homes (CWH). Natasha White [NW] has produced a document detailing the status of repairs on the estate.

TW stressed that the gates near Cheylesmeore House being left open is a high priority action. SM echoed the concerns over the gate stating that it always open. TW informed that there are only four parking spaces on the estate and that an option is to lock the gate but also stated that this would be undesirable to residents. **ACTION:** CWH to resolve ongoing gate issue – now urgent.

GM stated that she has researched into artists who might be able to help paint a mural on the back wall between the sheds. SM put forward an exotic rainforest inspired design for the mural.

TW put forward concerns over the exposed meter boxes on the estate and stated that they present a health and safety issue. **ACTION:** DT to discuss with NW/CWH to deal with the exposed meter boxes.

GM updated on the issue of bin stores being left unlocked stating that all stores are now locked apart from one. The cleaners have a set of keys and will control the opening and closing of these bin stores each day.

GM provided an update regarding information the CPN. The local police have confirmed that duration of the CPN is dependent on how quickly the situation improves and will need to see a reduction in residents' complaints to support this. The police are happy to come to the estate to explain further is required. It was felt that this could be picked up by the RA if required.

TW asked the group about the visibility of the police on the estate. SM stated that there is no visible police presence on the estate. GM confirmed that monthly police surgeries dates had been provided and will start in September. The Police will be available at the Regeneration Base for residents to drop in and speak with them. **ACTION:** Police surgery dates to be advertised across the estate.

4. Regeneration Team Changes

An update was given on the Regeneration Project Team changes.

DT is now in place to take over from JMM's role as Senior Regeneration Manager. The regeneration team will be working throughout the summer. RR personally thanked JMM for her hard work and dedication to Ebury.

TW also informed attendees that the Housing Need Assessments (HNA) will be led by the rehousing team, with support from CWH and the Community Engagement Team. Updates would be provided at meetings when appropriate.

5. Project Update – Cabinet Meeting, Call-in & next steps

TW informed members that Scenario 7 had been passed by the Cabinet on 9th of July. Attendees were informed of a small protest that took place in opposition of the scenario, outside the Strand on the day of the decision.

MC & TW informed attendees of a dissertation that was written by a student regarding the regeneration of Ebury Bridge Estate that was circulated just before the cabinet meeting and was signed by 9 names. Three of the signatures were unable to be identified as residents living at Ebury Bridge.

TW explained that the decision to proceed with Scenario 7 has been called in by the cabinet, as part of Westminster's democratic process for scrutiny. The reason for doing so is currently unknown. MC expanded on the "call-in" process – if three Councillors call-in a decision made by the Cabinet, it is then put in front of a relevant scrutiny committee. The scrutiny panel will either uphold the decision or refer it back to the Cabinet for reconsideration.

TW informed the group that the scrutiny committee takes place on 30th July, and as with the Cabinet meeting, all CFG members are invited to attend.

TW expressed confidence in the consultation done by the regeneration team.

CP asked who is on the scrutiny committee? MC responded, it is a mix of Councillors from both the ruling and opposition administrations.

DT detailed his experience with the Church Street regeneration; specifically, the experience of the project being called in for scrutiny and 8 questions/challenges being put forward. The questions for the Ebury call-in are yet to be disclosed.

MC also informed members that the decision made BBC news as well as local publications such as the Westminster Extra.

TW raised a concern that a political party was using the name of the Ebury Residents Association (RA) and asked RR if she as Chairperson of the RA had given permission for this. RR confirmed that she was just as surprised as everyone else about the suggestion that the RA should replace the CFG as the Resident Group working alongside the Council for the regeneration.

RR confirmed that the RA is an apolitical group representing all views of its membership. Some of these views are of disappointment about scenario 7 and should be voiced. It has not however suggested that the RA replaces the CFG.

RR assured the group that a discussion about this issue will be had by the RA committee to ensure that the RA remains apolitical.

TW extended an offer to help get organisation help and support for the RA to assist with the production of the meeting minutes and any training that might be useful to help strengthen the work of its committee.

RR has agreed that the RA will continue the work started by TW on the CWH repairs schedule, to ensure that sufficient pressure is applied to get things in order, across the estate.

JMM stated that the next stage of the project is securing a method of delivery. RR asked whether the CFG will have access to the outline business case? JMM stated that due to the commercially sensitive nature of this document, it will not be shared, however confirmed that the CFG would be part of the procurement process and the selection of a delivery partner.

MC assured the group that the methods of procurement will be transparent and will be put forward to Cabinet as a public document in October, available for all to view.

RR enquired into the nature of consultation and when it will next take place in the process. JMM explained the next stage is for the Council to decide how to deliver scenario 7, which in turn will inform the route to market and the procurement process. Consultation on this workstream is unfeasible but certainly there will be consultation of securing a delivery partner once a route to market is confirmed.

TW stated that the council will likely partner with a developer.

FQ stressed the importance of the community charter during the consultation when securing a developer.

ACTION: MC to oversee all communications, favouring simpler language, which is to include a rewrite and circulation of the leasehold negotiations letter.

MC explained compulsory purchase order (CPO) to all in attendance. LBI added that the council will have to secure planning consent for the scheme before applying for a compulsory purchase order.

RR requested details of the current leaseholder package. MC confirmed that this is being finalised and is due to be adopted very soon.

JMM gave an approximate timeline for the next stages of the project, with TW giving an assurance of at least 2 years before any construction is to take place.

The demolition of Edgson House was discussed. LBI questioned whether tenants will be receiving any communications regarding their housing needs, to which MC assured they will.

MC & JMM assured the group that secure tenants retain their Right-to-Buy (RtB), however due to the estate being cited for renewal, the Right-to-Buy is no longer possible on the existing Ebury properties. All RtB entitlements however, remain with the secure tenants and will continue. This entitlement is not broken when rehoused temporary as the residents remains a secure tenant.

6. Review of Approval Letters to residents

A review and discussion took place concerning current and future correspondence to residents regarding the regeneration.

FQ thanked the regeneration team for issuing the statement on behalf of the CFG informing residents of the cabinet's approval of Scenario 7.

RR stated that she had been away and was only made aware of the letter when she found it on her doorstep, stating her astonishment at finding her name on a letter that she was not consulted on.

MC made it clear that he had attempted to contact all members of the group personally by phone and had called RR a number of times. CP reiterated that the CFG as a group, wanted to issue a message following the cabinet's decision and so a quick turnaround was needed.

TW explained that this was the reason she signed the statement as Chairperson of the CFG, and the CFG group members were merely listed underneath, to ensure that residents knew who that could contact about the statement if needed. This helped to deal with the urgency of communicating the cabinet's decision.

RR understood the position, and explained that there was no issue, just that she had been surprised.

MC discussed a letter to be circulated to all residents to explain that Cabinet approval and the call-in period. A letter has also been drafted in preparation of the outcome, which will be tweaked accordingly based on the decision being upheld, or decision being referred back to Cabinet.

TW reiterated confidence in the outcome of the decision.

7. Community Futures Group: Communications, strategy and programme

The strategy of the CFG was discussed, including raising the group's profile and the possibility of expanding the membership of the group, now that vacancies had become available.

GM suggested a lunch meeting or an evening event with stakeholders to further their engagement. This will not only help to facilitate communication but will also offer the opportunity for partnership working within the wider community.

Action: To arrange an engagement lunch/evening event for the CFG to let other residents know what they do and how others might be involved.

MC suggested that the CFG members profiles should be displayed, so that residents can contact members direct with their thoughts, comments and questions.

FQ made the point that the CFG should remain open to all residents and to maintain an apolitical viewpoint. A point was also made regarding using meetings to focus on topic pertaining to CFG meetings as opposed to RA responsibilities.

RR put on record congratulations to TW for getting results from the CFG. She echoed FQ's points regarding RA topics.

FQ described the function of having workstream objectives, specifically for the CFG to grow in to a self-governing body. A suggestion for the CFG becoming more proactive with its communication as well as reaching out to CFG on other estates.

FQ asked if there were websites available to allow CFG members to store and share documents. GM suggested approaching Google as a non-for-profit group, requesting free access to a shared online drive. **ACTION:** GM to look into this on behalf of the CFG.

FQ presented a pyramid diagram to the CFG, which described the tasks and workflow for the groups future. JMM questioned whether members required training and what method of approach should be taken within the next 12 months.

CP discussed her experiences joining the CFG, stating that while it was handled well generally, the onboarding approach led to a delay in joining. This experience was echoed by RR.

CP also questioned whether there were people not invited to join the group, stating that if this was the case then this is a flaw the CFG must correct.

TW asked the CFG to consider any suggestions for potential candidates, stating a responsibility for existing members to talk to potential members about the Terms of Reference and the responsibilities/expectations of individuals once they gain membership.

CP made note of the break before the next meeting presenting an opportunity for members to circulate information about the CFG. A question was put forward to determine why anyone could not join the group.

GM highlighted to form the group, recruitment was initiated by the Council to get the group established. This was before the appointment of an independent chair and was used as a way of ensuring that residents understood that the purpose of the group was to work with the Council to explore the options for regeneration and to get a balanced mix of tenures types from across the estate.

TW suggested an CFG open evening to encourage recruitment but should stick to the terms of reference on number of places available.

JMM commented that a group could become ineffective and difficult to manage should it exceed the current membership of 12.

ACTION: CFG to decide on a new recruitment/onboarding strategy.

8. Future Dates Schedule

Following a group discussion, it was decided future meetings will take place on a monthly basis and on a common day; the first Tuesday of every month was agreed. 630pm – 830pm at the Regeneration Base.

Next meeting dates:

- Tuesday 4th September
- Tuesday 2nd October
- Tuesday 6th November
- Tuesday 4th December