

Ebury Bridge Community Futures Group – Meeting 19
13th November 2018, 6.30pm – 8.30pm
Regeneration Base, 15 – 19 Ebury Bridge Road, Ebury Bridge Estate

Members Attendance:

- Mike Smith [MS]
- Mohammed Eisa [ME]
- Stephen Rusbridge [SR]
- Tammy Dowdall [TD]
- George Panayioudou [GS]
- Sheila Martin [SM]
- Yolanda Gaston [YG]
- Charlotte Pragnell [CP] – via telephone

Apologies:

- Fiona Quick [FQ]
- Laura Buttergieg [LBu]

WCC Officers and Consultants:

- Tom McGregor [TMc] – Interim Chairperson
- David Thompson [DT]– Senior Regeneration Project Manager
- Peter Sherlock [PS] – Senior Development Manager
- Samuel Walker [SW] – Communications and Engagement Executive (Meeting notes)
- Martin Crank [MC] – Communications and Engagement Manager
- Gelina Menville [GM] – Ebury Bridge Community Engagement Team
- Louis Blair [LBI] – First Call Housing (Independent Resident Advisor)
- Tracy Nisbett [TN] – Housing Development Project Manager

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, action points and key decisions.*

1. Welcomes and introductions from Chair

TM opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and giving apologies for those not in attendance. A warm welcome was provided to new CFG member George Panayioudou [GP].

GM informed attendees that CP is joining the meeting via telephone.

2. Notes of last meeting –2nd October 2018

The notes of the previous meeting were reviewed page by page with amendments and matters arising discussed. All pages agreed as recorded.

3. Action List Review

All red and amber items were reviewed.

It was agreed that all CFG members would have their picture taken at the Away Day.

4. **Rumour Buster**

Rumour: TD – residents are still thinking demolition of all blocks will take place this month.

Fact: It was confirmed to the group that this was not the case and it is only Edgson House being taken down at this stage to reduce ASB and improve community facilities via a meanwhile use.

TM – Important that appropriate communications are provided to combat false information

MC - drop-in sessions held with Cheylesmore last week and with Wainwright House this week. A letter informing residents about the hoarding was issued a few weeks ago to all residents, outlining both pedestrian and vehicular access to the estate, once the hoarding has been installed.

DT – 20th January 2019 is the target for clarifying the phasing of estate wide demolition (8 weeks from now). This will give all residents the full picture on when work will commence at their area of the estate. In the meantime, we are asking the market (contractors/specialists etc) the best way to proceed for the entire estate.

Rumour: SM - Rumour that everyone will have to be out within two years/one phases of work.

Fact: It was confirmed that the scheme will be delivered over three phases over 6/7 years and that there is not a requirement for all resident to move at once.

Rumour: MC – Tenants have mentioned being told that will only get larger properties if they leave Westminster.

Fact: All secure tenants will use choice-based lettings to identify their new home. This will be in accordance with their assessed housing need and within the borough of Westminster.

MC - we only have control over our own stock/allocation policy unless a secure tenant chose to do a mutual exchange out of Westminster.

5. **Project Update:**

Introduction to Development Colleagues

PS – has been working on the project for 2-3 months and works within Westminster City Council's development team. PS is a chartered surveyor, previously having worked at Greenwich, Woolwich and Brent where his focus was on creating larger homes (including decant and phasing works). He has worked at Westminster City Council for 3-4 years, delivering Dudley House and new Marylebone Boys School (in Paddington Basin – all affordable homes).

Scenario 7 (S7)

PS - S7 was agreed in July 2018. We now need to identify developers and contractors whilst preserving the commitments and principles of the project set by the council in consultation with the residents. We will also ensure the design principles agreed for the estate; good design, good workmanship, right of return, addressing overcrowding issues are met.

PS focus is on delivery and gaining momentum for the project and will be working with Arup, the architects, to put together a detailed programme for each workstream (engagement, re-housing, construction etc).

ACTION: Produce project programme and timeline [PS]

PS presented the Masterplan document of S7 including a RIBA stage 2 illustration and talked through the key features – good space for public realm, landscaping, plenty of daylight/sunlight into the middle of the estate, generous spaces in between footprint of blocks. This illustration provided an indicative plan of what S7 could look like. This is the starting point for developing a detailed design with residents for RIBA stage 3.

GP – What height are the blocks?

PS – Height of blocks to vary between 20-storey downwards. We are carrying out a soft market testing/sounding exercise with architects, contractors, funders etc to gain further insight into where the height might be best distributed. It's also important that we test the 'Town planning' sensitivities around height.

GP – What sections of the estate will contractors look to purchase/where is the value/will leases be sold? PS – There will be no freehold sale of land on the estate. The council will remain the freeholder. The council will issue new leases (125 years) to some of the new apartments if choosing to sell flats on the open market.

DT – A housing preferences exercise is currently being carried with leaseholders to understand their preferences for returning to the new estate.

GP – What budget has been set aside for the project? What about funds from previous scheme. DT – WCC will request authorisation for funding to deliver the project. MC – the previously consented scheme had £90m allocated for buy-backs and development.

MS – where will the lodge be placed as is not shown on the plan. MC – We've committed to replacing the Ebury Gardening Club facility. It has not yet been designed or agreed where this will be located and will be done in conjunction with MS and residents.

PS – We want to hear from residents to understand if a big community centre is required, a series of smaller dedicated spaces may work better. It is vital to maintain the current community spirit and to do that we will heavily explore with residents the options for Community Facilities, and how they will be used as part of the RIBA stage 3 detailed design.

MS – It is important that any new community facilities are not dominated by any one part of the community and that everyone has an opportunity to get involved and use it.

SM – where is the garden going to be and accompanying unit? PS – there are no current plans. This illustration is indicative (as RIBA stage 2 illustrations are) and has been used to outline the public squares and give examples of how they could be used in large spaces. As part of the process of developing this illustration into a detailed design (RIBA stage 3), engagement will be undertaken with the community. However, until we have completed the soft market testing, we cannot confirm the exact process of achieving a detailed design because this depends on the final route to market agreed.

Edgson House hoarding and levelling works

PS – Edgson House hoarding has now started and is likely to continue for a few more weeks. A new separate planning application has been submitted for Edgson House levelling and will go to the planning committee in December. We are expected the block to be soft stripped and have all asbestos removed before Christmas. Levelling work at Edgson House is expected to start on 22nd January 2019. Tenders from contractors to carry out the Edgson House works have been received and it is anticipated that the Edgson House will be completely down by May 2019.

Indicative phasing

A discussion took place about the indicative phasing of the scheme and PS shared a map of the estate highlighting the likely phase 1. This will be tested as part of the soft market testing/soundings exercise.

PS explained Phase 1 naturally lends itself to the area of Edgson and Wellesley Houses as they are vacant, Wainwright House as it is nearly vacant (3 residents) and Hillersdon House as it is relatively vacant (15 residents).

TMc – From the lessons learnt from the previous scheme and the feedback from the market around the phasing, it is important to get the phasing right.

PS - commented that although Edgson House will be taken down in the New Year, it will be 18 months to 24 months before any works start on any new build. Edgson House is coming down as it has been vacant for some time and is attracting ASB. In the meantime this space will provide a space/facility/meanwhile use to benefit all whilst the estate wide renewal scheme goes through procurement and then planning.

PS - Phase 2 will include the railway blocks and Phase 3 likely to include Doneraile and we will test this with the market as part of the soft market testing.

GP – When will phase 2 commence? PS – Between 2 ½ to 3 years from now.

SM - Will Hillersdon be required before Edgson site is rebuilt? PS – Yes Hillersdon will be required before any new homes will be built on the Edgson site area.

DT - The three phases that have a real logic and will be put to development market for their view. Also, how to distribute a tenure balanced community across the estate (social, intermediate, market rents and sale) will be vital. It is important to know of our firm commitment to bring those secure tenants who have already been decanted off the estate, back as part of the first phase. It's right that they should be the first to return.

TD - How many from Edgson House are waiting to return? GM – There are approximately 43 households who have temporarily moved from the estate and are waiting to return.

ME – Of the 100 units rebuild in phase 1, how many bedrooms will these homes have? PS – We're committed to meeting housing need and building properties ranging from 1 beds up to 5 beds (where required).

PS – There is a strong feeling that there should be less car parking as part of any future scheme. We should be smarter about car parking on the estate and look at ways to reduce car parking especially

given the close proximity to transports links at Victoria and Sloane Square. We will of course ensure that we provide enough disabled resident spaces. SM – agrees. Car parking would only benefit those who can afford it and is likely to be private residents.

GP – will disabled spaces be re-provided? PS – Yes, all disability spaces will be re-provided, there is also a planning requirement for the number of spaces provided in any new scheme which will need to be adhered to.

GP - Where are most valuable properties? PS – The property market has changed dramatically. We will ask the market, but height is typically preferred due to vistas. We have however halved the number of 'sale units' and increased the number of market rent units. We are committed to a mixed tenure estate to ensure a good mixture of tenure across of the blocks. DT - all properties will have a valued irrespective of whether they are sold or not, and the equality of good design across the estate will help to ensure that.

6. Route to market

DT gave a presentation explaining to the group where the council had got to with the route to market discussions, following on from the information shared with the CFG at each of the last two sessions. Today we have more detail to share.

DT – Next steps will involve an Ebury soft market testing exercise, inviting London developers, funding managers, house builders and other housing professional to share their insight into the market with the council. The feedback received during this exercise will form a report that will go to Cllr Robathan during January 2019.

DT – As stated before there will be three phases and blended of tenures. Homes for Westminster council tenants, intermediate rental homes, a range of market rent homes and market sale homes, as outline in the July Cabinet Report (Scenario 7).

The two options for how the market can support the delivery of council rented homes and intermediate homes were shared with the group. Both involve a council Wholly Owned Company (WOC). In order to learn lessons from WOC that have gone before, we will visit the schemes they have delivered in London with the CFG and find out how this delivery route will help us to achieve our objectives – including the commitment to provide a range of options for all households of varying means who work and live in Westminster.

DT: Ealing and Lambeth each have had WOCs in place, CFG have visited Ealing previously.

ACTION: Organise CFG visit to other WOCs [MC]

GP - What is a WOC? DT - Is fundamentally a vehicle for raising finance for new homes that is set up, owned and controlled by the council.

GP - How much do the government pay towards the WOC? Is this a subsidy to WCC?

DT – Whilst the government has recently announced the abolishment of the HRA borrowing cap this additional headroom is not enough for Ebury. PS - The Government's 'Public Works Loans Board' has lent before at preferred rates to WOC, however the council must be prudent in any borrowing.

MC: We need residents to be involved in naming WOC. It is important that there is a sense of connection between residents and the WOC as the vehicle delivering their new homes. SM – suggested E-WOC (Ebury WOC).

ACTION: CFG members to think about a name for the WOC [ALL]

LBI - in reference to the ownership of the companies showing within the presentation who owns them? DT: These are task and finish companies, accountable to the council. WOC asks council to make this arrangement direct with WCC.

7. **CFG Away Day – 4th December**

GM: Sent out email for preferences for the away day, 4th December date has been confirmed as the best option. The group will arrive at 5.30pm at Chelsea Barracks induction room followed by meal at the Rising Sun for dinner, as a thank you to the group for their hard work and time dedicated to the CFG over the past year.

MC - Introduced the engagement activities over the next 6-12 months and shared a number of key activities that will need to be carried out. This will set how we work with residents to produce detailed designs, procure contracts and set the community expectations moving forward. At the CFG away day, CFG members will be asked to register their interest in taking a lead with one of these areas of engagement.

8. **CFG and engagement update**

Following the away day, a newsletter will be issued inviting residents to join in with the consultation events and engagement activities. Engagement plan dates:

- *December 2018:* CFG Away Day – engagement and consultation planning
- *December 2018 / January 2019:* Invitation to the estate to join various engagement activities
- *Mid - January 2019:* Announcement of renewal phasing and engagement plan
- *Spring 2019:* Commence 'delivery engagement' plan
- *Summer 2019:* Community Charter agreed with the estate

MC gave an overview of the areas of engagement that residents will be invited to get involved with:

i) Meanwhile use strategy will be starting in Jan and is likely to take 4 months to complete. We've met with the best meanwhile providers in the country, some are more commercial than others. We want real community engagement so will go with a provider who understand communities and how to support, build capacity and invest in the Ebury community.

ii) Understanding the delivery options will provide detail around what a WOC is and how residents can be involved with the naming, branding, logo, website for the WOC.

TMc- Do we all need to know this level as the concept of a wholly owned council company is very complex. DT - Not in huge detail but would be useful to show how the different tenures are funded. LB - residents will have concerns likely to be around private developers, so it would be good to clarify that this a Council owned company. TD - If we don't explain what a Council owned company is, then rumours will start.

MC - It is important for residents and the community buy-in to the concept of a WOC and feel part of it. This is why working with residents to establish areas of the WOC such as branding, name, colour scheme and logo.

iii) Detailed design engagement including getting the scheme to a RIBA Stage 3 design, including types of materials use, brickwork/external facias, community facilities, specifications for people's homes.

iv) Community Charter to refresh parameters and used to support the development of a RIBA stage 3 detailed design. PS - also important to have ready before any contractor is selected as it will need to form part of the contracts drawn up.

v) Procurement of a Contractor/builder CFG can be involved in the setting of a specification that will be used to tender the contract as well as provide feedback on potential contractors via a 'Café World' style drop-in/workshop. Residents can be involved in trips to view examples of the contractors work and to be part of the contractor interview panel.

vi) Re-procurement of an Independent Tenant and Leasehold Advisor TN explained that Communities First/First Call Housing have been the ITLA for Ebury Bridge Estate since 2013. The contract is now coming to an end and there is now a need to refresh and adapt the scope to provide an enhanced service to residents and the forthcoming needs of the project.

TN explained that First Call Housing (exiting ITLA) will remain in place for a further 6 months to allow the retendering of the contract to take place. It is hoped that they will submit a tender as part of this process. Tendering will take place using a framework contract, and the Church Street specification will be used as the basis for this. CFG members will be invited to part of the process and interviewing of potential candidates.

SM – is the existing contract only until June? TN - We will commence the re-tendering in the new year with CFG involvement although the existing contract will be extended for a further 6 months from 31st December 2018.

MC - We want the CFG to be involved with developing a bespoke scope of work, review this with residents and appoint. This will be a resident led procurement.

TMc – as with all contracts, they come to end and there has to be a process of retendering. Residents will have a big part to play in doing so, including their views and experiences of any existing contractors. SM - LB has big advantage of knowing residents.

MC - Ahead of the away day please consider leading one of the engagement areas (as a CFG member). All necessary training will be offered to CFG members and well as support to lead the area. It's key that people who want to be involved understand how big each task is.

ACTION: Consider leading one of the areas and what training you might require [ALL]

9. AOB

LBI - Questions about CPO and next steps. MC: We will pick this up in the next edition of the newsletter – to clarify any concerns.

GM - There is still a vacancy for a resident to join the CFG. An invited for interest went out with the newsletter but apart from one person we have not had any new interest. If you know of a neighbour who might be interested by unsure about what it involves please speak with them. We are currently meeting monthly as oppose to fortnightly which might help. Assistance can also be given for childcare to allow attendance if required.

TD - Will a new permanent chair be recruited? TMc - I've been recruited for a temporary period on an interim basis to support the group through this next stage of work. No recruitment advert has been issued as yet and a conversation at the appropriate time would need to take place with the group.

MC – A new ITLA could support the group in the future. It would be good to explore further at the CFG Away Day.

10. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 4th December 2018

Time: **530pm** start

Venue: Chelsea Barracks
Staff Induction Room
Ebury Bridge Road
London SW1W 8DT