

Ebury Bridge Community Futures Group – Meeting 20

16th January 2019, 6.30pm – 8.30pm
Regeneration Base, 15 – 19 Ebury Bridge Road, Ebury Bridge Estate

Members Attendance:

- Charlotte Pragnell [CP]
- Fiona Quick [FQ]
- George Panayioudou [GP]
- Mohammed Eisa [ME]
- Stephen Rusbridge [SR]
- Tammy Dowdall [TD]

Apologies:

- Laura Buttigieg [LBu]
- Mike Smith [MS]
- Sheila Martin [SM]
- Yolanda Gaston [YG]

WCC Officers and Consultants:

- Tom McGregor [TMC] – Interim Chairperson (*second half only*)
- Gelina Menville [GM] – Ebury Bridge Community Engagement Team
- Ian Simpson [IS] – First Call Housing (Independent Resident Advisor)
- John Wilmore [JW] – Housing Development Project Manager
- Martin Crank [MC] – Communications and Engagement Manager
- Samuel Walker [SW] – Communications and Engagement Executive (Meeting notes)
- Emily Berwyn [EB] – Meanwhile Spaces CIC
- Jan Kettein [JK] – Jan Kettein Architects

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.*

Meanwhile Space Workshop/facilitated discussion

MC explained the meeting was being split into two. The first half would facilitate a discussion about the Meanwhile Use (1 hour) and the second half of the meeting will deal with the agenda items. TMC will join for the second half.

The group introduced themselves for the benefit of JK and EB. JK is an architect working with Meanwhile Space, engaging with communities to understand how best the priorities of the community could be designed into a meanwhile facility for the community. EB introduced herself explaining that Meanwhile Space is an organisation that works with communities undergoing renewal to curate and run their meanwhile facilities.

MC explained that the planning application for the removal of Edgson House has been approved and had granted a number of uses from a temporary facility. The meanwhile space must re-provide for the community space/centre, but there is also the opportunity to work with the community to make this space flexible and more exciting. Space is likely to be available for up to 4 years, so would be good to create something that the Ebury Bridge Community will be proud of and actively use.

TD: Do we have a deadline to confirm the phasing of the renewal. GM – We expect to receive confirmation the phasing is acceptable on 5th Feb. After which it will be made public.

MC: Whilst the meanwhile space can provide opportunity space for new businesses there is also an opportunity to link with vacant shops to get involved in enterprise.

FQ: When does Edgson start to come down? GM confirmed that the contract had been awarded, formalities were taking place and it is likely to start on site during the second week of February, with a targeted completion, end of Aug.

EB introduced her organisation Meanwhile Space, and the work they do in the creation of the meanwhile facilities. The idea is to explore all options available, looking for people's ideas and passions, and matching it to what the community needs. What would you never expect to see in Ebury Bridge? Do you like the idea of visitors coming into the area or would you like to keep it just for the current Ebury Bridge Community.

EB explained that whilst some commercial partners working in meanwhile facilities might be keen to see 'brands' but may not work best for the community and so it is often about looking within the community first, to see what passions and skills are there, and then build an offer on that. E.g. Balloon artists, bakers, coffee makers – depends on who likes doing what.

GP: What kind of budget? MC explained the budget was based around the portacabin, which was to provide a meeting room as discussed at the CFG Away Day. Although a tender was issued before Christmas for suppliers of the portacabin, there was no interest received back. This however, now gives the opportunity to create something with more flexibility.

FQ: It is difficult to definitively say what we want, without knowing, what's available? What's best practice? What are our choices? EB explained that whilst commercial partners might be keen to see 'brands' but may not work best for the community and so it is often about looking within the community first, to see what passions and skills are there, and then build an offer on that. E.g. Balloon artists, bakers, coffee makers – depends on who likes doing what.

GP: Health and safety concerns? EB explained that all H&S matters are managed through Meanwhile Space. People come to us with what they want to do, and we work with them to ensure that it is done in a way that is safe to them and to the public.

CP: Why no longer a portacabin? Should we be concerned about the lack of interest from the market? MC explained that the portacabin was tendered separately to landscaping and so it gives us opportunity for make same provision.

JK added that they work with several temporary solutions, and there could be a number of reasons why there was no interest (size, confined space, timescales, availability to delivered etc.) but we should focus on the same opportunities being available to the community and finesse what it is the community wants, and how best a structure can delivered this. Great opportunities for small enterprises and ideas. It should therefore be a big, versatile space.

IS: Reiterated that it comes back to the initial question of whether residents want this facility to focus on the current or wider community. CP responded that with the decanting of parts of the estate, this reduces the number of people, but there are still a good number of people around. FQ added that there is a huge pool of people available through local groups and this could be part of the estate growth and potential to attract future residents.

It was agreed that the meanwhile facilities should attract visitors to the estate [ALL].

MC: Any temporary meanwhile use could be used to test and inform what the community would like to achieve through permanent provisions. The consultation feedback so far and stated the need for a café - somewhere between the current offer on the Grosvenor Waterside parade and the Ebury

Bridge Road parade. JK suggested that it could be commercially, or community run and would depend on the interest from the community. Discussion to be had, around the use of space to ensure that it provides for the needs of all. A selection of businesses to attract people to the Ebury meanwhile use, set up by members of the community, would be recommended.

TD: What is happening with our empty shops? GM informed the group of the that the Council following the retail open day to offer the existing retail users, as well as wider interest, the opportunity to take on retail space along Ebury Bridge Road. The Council has received a fair bit of interest and is in discussions about all but 2 units.

FQ: Wouldn't CFG get a say in what the shops will be? MC explained the obligation of public body to get best value return on assets. The retail spaces are relatively good value for the area and will receive an interest from a variety of people. However, the Council have a retail strategy and would like to bring the shop units back into use on set lease durations. There may be future opportunities to have one or two units linked into the meanwhile use strategy, which will offer a different value, but we cannot plan this until we start to understand the community and what it needs.

Ideas suggested by CFG – space for farmers market, Café for all aspects of the community, soft play area, space to help expand the offer of the Pimlico Toy Library, reading room or local library provisions, space for homework club, adult playground, sensory garden.

JW: What provision are missing currently? FQ responded, coffee shop/bakers that's affordable and inclusive.

EB: Young person provision? TD said that there are many green-fingered residents within the community, so to continue and expand on the community garden
JK stated that including spaces for external visitors is a great idea and will help to build a versatile space/café, but what would you really not expect to see in Ebury? CP responded events like SouthWestFest, something with open air cinema? TD added that there is a stigma around the estate with the community being closed off, needs to be open and inviting.

FQ felt that a meanwhile use space with could house a big screen to watch sporting events in Summer and a Christmas village in Winter we work well to meet the various needs and interest of the community. EB a space for outdoor events always is well received.

TD: Space for young people specifically e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Award.

CP – replace missing playground? GM said that a temporary provision for playground will be provided.

JK confirmed that there is approx. 1000sqm of space available for use.

MC reminded the group that resident interest is still required for the meanwhile use task and finish group advertised in newsletter, from design to governance and operation. If you are interested please let us know, if you have any interest in joining the 'Meanwhile task and finish' group.

ACTION: Register interest in joining the meanwhile task and finish group [ALL]

EB informed the CFG of where to find details of their current projects are available on www.meanwhilespace.com, and this includes start-ups, events and community activities

GP: do outsiders come-in to bring expertise? EB responded sometimes but depends on what the proposition is and what expertise may already be available for within the community. Mix of internal interests and external support.

FQ: is this marketed? EB confirmed that they would speak with their existing networks. However, these tend to be local community groups and not corporate organisations. It also depends on what you want and what people are looking to do.

GP: who manages it? JK explained that WCC will project managed with Meanwhile Space and will tender the contract for construction. We have done self-builds too. Once open, Meanwhile Space would manage it against contracted conditions and with regular reviews. EB assured the group that the who set is closely controlled and monitored and that residents can be involved in this.

SR asked the meanwhile use team about previous projects and examples to be provided at future meetings.

JK summarised and said that it was a great outline of needs and helps the team to think about other options that could be open to achieving what has been discussed. It would be good to go away and think about any unique offer/examples you have seen (in the UK and other cities) as these are good starting points to explore, discuss and take favourable features from. Remarkable and aspirational options should be looked at as examples too, to help creating a really exciting space for Ebury.

1. Welcome and introductions

TMC called the discussion on Meanwhile Use to a close to allow the second half of the meeting to begin.

2. Update on meeting notes approval process

GM explained that as the last time the CFG met was at the Away Evening, there are no formal notes from the last meeting to review.

However, moving forward, we would like to introduce a 5 working day turnaround of meeting notes from the actual meeting taking place to publishing the notes on the website. Aim to get minutes out by Friday, get feedback by Monday leaving a final day to get amendments made and the document published to the website. *[based on the CFG taking place on its regular Tuesday slot]*.

| Day 0 | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|-------|
| Meeting takes place | Minutes drafted | Minutes issued to CFG for approval | CFG comments back | Amendments made/notes published | |

FQ: What happens for matters arising? GM explained that the any matters arising can be added to the agenda for the next meeting. FQ: Can we add agenda points for the next meeting? GM said that once the notes are approved, and in advance of the next meeting, a call for agenda items will be made from CFG members.

TMC suggested that it would be helpful to have a formal structure of future agenda items/key themes. MC confirmed that this will be developed, once the phasing and route to market items have been confirmed and published to the community, as these will dictate the next steps.

3. Rumour Buster

TMC This is a standing idea on the agenda where CFG member are asked to raise any rumours or issues connected to mis-information.

Rumour: TD - Someone claiming to be from CityWest without identification, wanting to visit the property to complete a tenancy check, despite the Housing Needs Assessment being completed and having received all bidding information. GP has a similar issue expect they had made contact to do a Tenancy check/home inspection. Appointment booked, but nobody arrived. Later had an operative arrive saying that a gas safety test was needed.

GM explained that the HNA was meant to be joint visit with CWH officer, however some visits were missed by CWH officers and perhaps this is why they are making contact.

TD: No calling card left, aggressive conduct, excessive force when knocking the door, no identification, bullying attitude.

TMC stated that Joe Joseph, Director of Housing Management at CWH, should be contacted to review this practice urgently.

ACTION: Make Joe aware of the problems raised by CFG members [GM]

TMC explained to the group the current situation with the CWH contract coming back under the control of the WCC and shared with the group that he was responsible for overseeing this transition. A brief overview as to why the ALMO was set up in the first place and how CWH will be governed from April 1st, 2019.

Rumour: FQ is the minimum requirement for single flat of 50sqm or 538sq ft, only applicable to council tenants not leaseholders.

GM confirmed that the space standard used will be consistent across all tenures. We have a list of minimum space standards prescribed in the Mayor of London's 'London Plan' and this will be circulated to the CFG via email for information.

ACTION: Circulate mayors space standards [GM]

FQ suggested including this information within the newsletter circulation.

ACTION: MC to include in newsletter when appropriate.

TD: Are new regeneration flats bigger or smaller? IS responded in his experience across London when compared to new builds 5 years ago, recent designs have been bigger.

Rumour: FQ the first new block to be built (new Hillersdon) will not be mixed tenure?
MC explained that the current thinking for this block is to 100 units. 50 for social rent, 50 for intermediate rent. The social rents will be primarily Ebury returns. However, the mix of bedroom sizes will need to be considered as we know that best practice would not be to build a new block full of one bed flats. We need to speak to those households who are waiting to return from Edgson House about their current housing need. TMC clarified that the other 50 homes for intermediate rent will be allocated from the council's intermediate waiting list.

FQ: so, this block is only providing social and intermediate rents? MC confirmed this is the current expected tenure mix.

CP raised a concern about having to sell now in an uncertain/volatile market and having to sell up before it is absolutely necessary. GM explained, as we have previously spoken about the aim of the soft market testing was to identify and test the phasing/sequencing/timings of the renewal programme.

There might be other opportunities for leaseholders to secure another property in home ownership via the leasehold policy. Individual conversations are taking place between Westminster Community Homes and resident leaseholders on their rehousing option. MC added that we will write to all residents on phasing, as soon as it is confirmed. This will help residents understand the timescales involved, helping to ensure that they are able to make informed decisions.

CP suggested that in a forthcoming newsletter, an article addressing concerns around Brexit could be considered.

4. Project Update:

We have engaged with the market as early as possible for this scheme. The recent Soft Market Testing (SMT) event showed an early indication of phasing and types of property given a challenging housing market. Significant interest from the market - 63 attendees from 40 organisations. 20 individual one to one sessions held, following the main SMT event.

MC gave some feedback and the overarching key messages taken away for the SMT exercise including:

- Current market conditions may prove challenging and a general preference to remain flexibility over time on the units for sale and rent.
- Ladder of opportunity should be further explored with market rent incorporated with discounted market rents.
- Separate phase 1 design and overall masterplan, allowing flexibility for change.
- Traditional construction agreement preferred for phase 1.

TMC added a lot of developers are slowing down their building processes as a result of the current sales market. MC added the impact of this could be mitigated by providing more homes for rent, which could later be sold, if required.

TD: Who would own the flats for sale? MC stated they would be private leasehold properties with WCC as the freeholder.

TD: What about the WOC? TMC confirmed that the WOC is still being setup and phase 1 could be developed using the WOC. MC added intermediate rent homes could be provided through WOC, and some market sale properties could be incorporated. The CFG will be involved in developing phase 1.

GP: Would the different blocks be run by different organisations/managing agents? MC it is likely that the Council would want to procure a full management solution across all blocks.

TD: Will phase 2 include tallest tower? MC stated it is currently unknown where the height will be located.

IS: Will phase 2 be joint venture? MC confirmed that the council are not exploring a traditional joint venture involving a land deal

GP: How much will it cost in full? MC stated it could cost within the region of £500 million – once everything is agreed on and decided. A report has to be put together for sign off by the Cabinet Member/Councillors.

FQ gave an overview of her experience of the SMT day as she attended as a CFG member. Pledges were reconfirmed to all interested parties' clarification that there will be an option to maintain the

same leasehold arrangement as is currently in place was provided by BB (the question previously raised by GP at the away day).

FQ felt that it was important for leaseholders to remain with WCC direct for control of service and maintenance. There was talk of options to procure future management separately, as well as it being stressed to all that this was not a get rich quick scheme.

5. Independent Tenant Leasehold Advisor (ITLA) Tender Appraisal

IS is asked to leave the room for this item.

Document passed around for ITLA contract. Communities First here for 7 years, option for further 6 months (done) now retendered. Training available for public sector procurement to help outline the brief. More definitive things to discuss, e.g. how to get into your new home. CFG group to score responses and then moderate/shortlist them depending on result. Ask for volunteers, happy to work around people. Much can be done at home. Meanwhile use T&F will be big time commitment. FQ expressed an interest in joining the task and finish group. Other interests to be raised via email after consideration of the document shared.

GP unable to volunteer but would like to liaise with those involved to share his experience around housing advice and his frustration at previous instances of being unable answer.

6. Project Update Sessions for residents

GM informed that CFG that we are getting closer to being in a position to share the phasing and anticipated dates by which residents will need to have moved by. A personalised letter will go out to all residents on the estate, giving them the information and inviting them to a small group presentation to receive a project update and be able to ask tenure specific questions. We will bring the content of presentation to the next CFG ahead of the sessions taking place.

7. Any Other Business (AOB)

TMc announced that he will be leaving WCC in April and wanted to let the CFG know, to allow enough time to find a replacement Chair.

MC suggested that this role could be included in the brief for the new ITLA contract, if this is something the group agreed. CP stated that she felt that the group needed to source another permanent independent chair, and it should not be a resident or an officer of the Council.

ACTION: Begin the independent Chair recruitment process [MC]

8. Next meeting

Date of next meeting: **Wednesday 13th February 2019***

**Reverting to the first Tuesday of the month, from March onwards*