

Ebury Bridge Community Futures Group – Meeting 21

13th February 2019, 6.30pm – 8.30pm

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

Members Attendance:

- Charlotte Pragnell [CP] by telephone
- Fiona Quick [FQ]
- George Panayioudou [GS]
- Mohammed Eisa [ME]
- Laura Buttigieg [LBu]
- Sheila Martin [SM]

Apologies:

- Mike Smith [MS]
- Yolande Gaston [YG]
- Tammy Dowdall [TD]
- Stephen Rusbridge [SR]

WCC Officers and Consultants:

- Tom McGregor [TMc] – Interim Chairperson
- David Thompson [DT] – Ebury Bridge Project Director
- Barbara Brownlee [BB] – Executive Director for Growth, Planning and Housing
- Ashton Dean [AD] – Demolition Project Manager
- Paul Choat [PC] – Head of Construction
- Gelina Menville [GM] – Ebury Bridge Community Engagement Team
- Louis Blair [LB] – First Call Housing (Independent Resident Advisor)
- John Wilman [JW] – Housing Development Project Manager
- Martin Crank [MC] – Communications and Engagement 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. **Actions from the last meeting/Matters arising**

As other attendees arrived TMc introduced the meeting and commenced the review of the Action List from the previous meeting. This was reviewed by exception;

Action: CFG pictures to be taken by the next meeting [MC]

Action: Meter box covers, resolution to this issue close (other contractors being sought) [DT]

Action: CWH, Apologies from Edith Brannigan for this issue (only Bucknill House affected) [GM]

Action: Community Charter development to re-commence [MC]

Action: Space standards and Chair recruitment on the agenda [MC]

2. **Welcome and introductions**

TMc welcomed attendees to the meeting and asked each member to provide an introduction.

3. **Independent Chair of the Ebury Bridge Community Futures Group – recruitment**

TMc left the room whilst this discussion took place.

BB - I was invited to talk to the group about the independent Chair position. The group started with Tom as the interim Chair ahead of an external recruitment process taking place. The recruitment process appointed Teresa Wickham (who most of you should know) to the role who has since departed the group. Tom has since stepped back in to the breach as interim Chair.

Tom has in some way or another always delivered housing. He is passionate about Ebury Bridge and wants the best for the residents and the estate. If asked by the group, Tom could be prepared to continue in his role – if this was something the CFG wanted.

BB – external recruitment has not previously brought about large numbers of applicants. There are pros and cons of external recruitment i.e. people looking for non-executive roles, applicants may not have significant housing experience.

Members were asked for their thoughts on Chair recruitment options and the possibility of appointing Tom permanently to the role:

- FQ – The strength of Teresa was her passion and independence.
- SM – Although Tom currently works for the council he is honest and I like his approach to chairing the group.
- GP – I joined the group after Teresa had left, however having experienced an independent facilitator when working with the Resident Association, I much prefer Tom's approach – he is much more open minded.
- LB – From the ITLA perspective, Tom has been a fair and consistent Chair. He will also be independent from the council in April/June.
- ME – Teresa did very well but I think Tom is doing a great job and should continue.
- FQ – We do need consistency and Tom will provide that.

BB – From the comments of the group it is clear we have a view that Tom should continue in the role. Maybe we can talk to Tom about the length of term he would be prepared to Chair the group.

TMc was welcomed back in to the room.

BB – There has been some very kind words said about you by members of the group. The group would very much like you to consider taking on the Chairperson role on a permanent basis.

TMc – It would be a privilege. Thank you.

Decision: Tom McGregor appointed as permanent CFG Chair for an initial two-year period.

Action: Produce paperwork to confirm Tom as permanent chair [GM]

4. Rumour Buster

- GP – Mis-communication within internal teams, has resulted in an incorrect housing needs assessment result. Medical requirements have not yet been considered or assessed.
Action: Raise the issue of GP medical assessment with the rehousing team [MC/GM]
- LB – There is slight confusion over when people need to move.
DT – We are imminently (end Feb/early March) about to provide clarity to residents about the phasing of the scheme. This will include the phasing proposals and the VP (vacant possession) dates (when people will need to move from their homes). We will write to each household personally with all the information.
GM – We are also holding specific sessions for tenants, leaseholders, temporary accommodation tenants, tenants of leaseholders and business owners at the end of March.
- SM – There are ongoing issues with the access gates. No-one is locking the gates.
GM – Only four residents have been issued keys. We regularly lock the gate when it has been left open, we also ask the contractors to do the same.

SM – As the estate becomes less full it's becoming more daunting walking to your house. People in cars who may be up to no good. The Hillersdon House door is also still broken.

ACTION: Raise with CWH a lock change for the gate and raise a repair for the Hillersdon door [GM]

ACTION: Raise wider issue of estate security and parking enforcement on the estate with CWH to taken action [GM]

BB – Should a housing management officer be present at the CFG to discuss issues like this?

GM – All housing management related issues had previously been handed over to the Residents' Association for oversight and management, and this is the more appropriate channel. If RA no longer active, CFG could provide a light touch approach to help with some of these issues.

FQ – As long as this does not detract from the regeneration discussion, this is something we could explore - the CFG could adopt a light touch approach to housing management but it is absolutely not in place of the role of a RA

ACTION: Confirm if the RA is still active on the estate [GM]

5. **Project Team Update:**

• **Emerging Phasing and Tenure Mix**

VE – Gave a presentation outlining the anticipated phasing of the regeneration scheme including the new first phase. The expanded first phase will produce 216 new homes, the first new public square and will safely allow for site access and access to the meanwhile use facilities.

VE – Outlined the anticipated VP (vacant possession) dates for each block across the estate.

DT – The new blocks will include all tenure types - and this includes market sales and sales via an equity loan for existing resident leaseholders. This is as a direct response to detailed discussion previously had at the CFG.

LB - The emerging first phase will significantly increase the numbers of residents who can move once into their new homes.

GM – The two new blocks will provide some but not all of the new social homes. The new blocks built on Ebury Bridge road will therefore also include social housing.

CP – When will the new blocks be ready for people to move in to?

VE – The phase 1 blocks are scheduled to be ready by 2023, the residents of Hillersdon and Dalton will move temporarily for 3 years (pending project approval by the cabinet member).

FQ – In relation to the new blocks, is there a possibility that the tenure type could change if they are unsold?

BB – We would never leave blocks empty and would look at other solutions such as market rental.

LB – Does the number of affordable homes in phase 1 include shared equity products for returning resident leaseholders?

DT – Phase 1 is proposed to include a mix of shared equity, as well as outright sale homes. There is also the possibility that the Council's Wholly Owned Company (WOC) could build and sell these homes for the council, further exploration is required.

ME – Would there be separate doors for different tenure types?

BB – WCC have made a firm commitment that blocks won't have what are known as 'poor doors'.

GP – There was also a rumour about the freehold of Doneraile house being sold off in the same way as Cheylesmore.

BB – This is another rumour. WCC is not selling the freehold of any of our blocks.

VE – The enlarged phase 1 will provide greater flexibility for the rest of the project.

VE – Provided the anticipated heights of each of the new blocks (all will be in line with the new city plan document – 16 floors or less).

GP – After the first phase, how many more homes will be delivered?

TMc – The scheme will provide 750 in total, so another circa 550 will be delivered in phase 2.

VE – Provided illustrations to show how delivery can be achieved including the sequencing of works on blocks.

BB – This is fantastic work and shows real momentum.

- **Edgson House - Enabling work**

AD – Introduced the enabling project. Syd Bishop demolition have been appointed to carry out the work at Edgson House. They have been on site for one week so far and have commenced the scaffolding erection. The scaffolding will take 6 weeks to complete.

AD – The gutting of the building has been completed and the lift has been removed.

PC – Outlined how the demolition will be undertaken. The demolition will be carried out sensitively, with a full polythene wrap on the outside of the scaffolding. This will prevent debris escaping the site. The contractors have signed up to Westminster's code of construction practice and are certified considerate contractors and will only be carrying out work during agreed hours.

PC – We will work closely with the contractors to minimise disruption as much as is physically possible. There will however be noise and dust due to the nature of the project.

PC – Work will involve craning mini diggers on to the roof of Edgson House and working floor by floor. There is potential that the project could speed up if we are able to remove much of the cavity wall insulation. This will allow us to bring the block down from the 6th floor rather than the 5th.

CP – Was there asbestos in the building?

PC – All asbestos has been removed under very strict conditions. This work is now complete.

NOTE: Meet the contractor event on 27th February at the Regeneration Base, 430pm – 730pm.

DT/AD – It is important that residents know what the tolerances are – such as working hours etc.

SM – Will all buildings be demolished in the same way?

AD/PC – No, phases will be different. Particularly those blocks along the railway line as Network Rail will want to protect the railway.

6. **Task and Finish Group updates:**

- **Meanwhile Use**

JW – gave a presentation on where we had got to with Emily and Jan. He read of the specification of works and encouraged residents to get involved with the task and finish group, and ready create something unique and exciting for the community of Ebury.

- **Independent Tenant Leasehold Advisor (ITLA) Tender Appraisal**

LB – left the room for this item.

MC – Introduced the section around the retendering of the ITLA contract. Communities First have held the contract for the past seven years. There is now a requirement to re-tender the contract following the six-month extension that we have enacted.

MC – A member of the Ebury Bridge project team, Pamela Jackson, is working on the re-procurement of the contract and has recruited one resident to assist. A specification for the tender is in production and will come to the CFG for additions/approval

DT – The process can be delivered with the involvement of a small number of residents at the bid appraisal stage.

ACTION: Invite Pamela Jackson to attend the next meeting to present the outline specification for the ITLA contract [GM]

- **Re-housing strategy/local lettings**

GM – presented the re-housing work stream and the involvement opportunities. We are looking for tenants and leaseholders to assist with the development/shaping of rehousing options including local lettings. This is an important area of work where the involvement and input of residents is vital.

GM – The emerging phasing plan will need careful discussion with residents of each block and the right level of support and communications provided.

GM – Have discussed with MC about the production of offer documents and this is a project that residents can play a key role in.

7. CFG Newsletter articles

MC – CFG members have previously produced articles that have been included in the Ebury Bridge newsletter. We're looking for suggestions from the group on potential articles:

- MC – An article focusing on George as a new group member would be interesting. BB – possibly Tom and George in conversation.
- DT – Article in relation to the historic requirements/commitments discussed between Charlotte and Richard such as dual aspect, split level/duplex properties and private outdoor spaces (balconies).
- GP – The methodology around the demolition would also be interesting to residents (possibility of including a live stream).

ACTION: Include the articles suggested above in future issues of the newsletter [MC]

8. Any Other Business (AOB)

LB – A handout of the final comments provided by Communities First in response to the tenant rehousing policy were shared with the group.

FQ – Publicise the leasehold offer (such as the funding of surveys).

ACTION: Once phasing has been confirmed to produce offer leaflets for residents [MC/GM]

9. Date of next meeting:

Tuesday 5th March 2019