

Ebury Bridge Community Futures Group – Meeting 4

5th December 2017, 6pm – 8pm

Ebury Youth Club, Edgson House Basement, Ebury Bridge Estate

MEMBERS ATTENDANCE:

- Fiona Quick [FQ]
- Mohammed Eisa [ME]
- Rachel Riley [RR]
- Rhoda Torres [RT]
- Shaista Miah [SM]
- Stephen Rusbridge [SR]
- Tammy Dowdall [TD]
- Waleed Shaath [WS]

APOLOGIES:

- Carly Taplin [CT]
- Kari Haslam [KH]
- Mike Smith [MS]

WCC OFFICERS:

- Tom McGregor [TM] – Director of Housing and Regeneration – Temp Chair
- Martin Crank [MC] – Ebury Bridge Community Engagement Team
- Sophie Camburn [SC] – Arup Consultancy Director
- Jo McCafferty [JM] – Levitt Bernstein (Architects)
- Richard Hyams [RH] – AStudio (Architects)
- Chris Le May [CLM] – Ebury Bridge Community Engagement Team
- Michaela Packer [MP] – Arup Consultancy Engagement Team
- Louis Blair [LB] – First Call Housing (Independent Resident Advisor)

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.*

Welcome and Introduction

TM opened the meeting by welcoming everybody. Attendees provided introductions including the members of the design team from Arup, Levitt Bernstein and A Studio.

Review meeting notes from 15 November 2017

Following a review of each page by exception, the following amendments were agreed:

On page 5 it was SR who made the comment relating to the lighting on the estate and not TD.

The CFG agreed the remainder of the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. A copy of the minutes will be posted on the project website.

Project/Engagement Update

MC outlined the progress of the engagement so far. The listening period came to an end in October and in total over 135 structured conversations were held with Ebury Bridge Households. Over 100 residents also attended specific focus groups. The feedback from this engagement has been collated and will form a large part of the newsletter which is going out today. Over 80 residents attended initial design engagement drop-ins and the CFG have had their first meeting with the design team.

SC gave an update on the soft market testing which is likely to take place early in the new year. Part of the reason the last scheme failed related to lack of engagement with the market during the design development prior to taking a recommended scheme to planning. As part of the viability assessments for this scheme potential contractors will be approached to ascertain the level of interest from a construction company. Feedback from the soft market testing could then be incorporated in the design development of a preferred option.

FQ Discussed the pace of the design engagement process. It's important that the design engagement runs at the right pace to allow as much contribution from the wider estate as possible.

RR Outlined that the programme of engagement around design is accelerated and external third parties have expressed that this would usually be undertaken over a longer period.

MC Explained that WCC had made a commitment to residents at the public meeting in June to progress the renewal proposals as quickly as possible as there had already been a significant delay in the project to date and many residents, including those that had been temporarily located off site had requested that WCC expedite the process as much as possible.

TM If the programme needs to be extended to allow for further engagement then that is something that could be explored.

LB The fuller the engagement process the less risk there is involved.

SC Dialogue will reflect resident feedback, there is no fixed deadline but the design team will progress the design development in a productive way.

Project Update/Engagement Timeline

SC introduced the design activity that would be carried out over the next few days with the whole estate. This would involve drawing up a list of preferences for features that could be included in design features. This would predominantly focus on homes and open spaces and features that estate residents appreciate about the Ebury Bridge estate.

JM presented a summary of the key themes that came through from initial discussions. These themes included;

- Importance of natural light and the benefit of dual aspect that residents experience
- The different types of balconies that could be incorporated in to designs
- Storage and what types of storage solutions residents need or already have
- Parking and issues around deliveries – how can this be improved
- Archways and Doorways (residents appreciate the features of Ebury Bridge arched doorways)
- Security, safety and lighting
- Ventilation
- Red bricks & grey bricks are synonymous with the Ebury Bridge estate
- Equality around the quality of both affordable and private housing
- Kitchen design – open plan or separate
- Amenity / open space on ground or upper levels
- Retail and community spaces – existing, what is missing and what is needed, independent shops and multi-use spaces / facilities.

JM provided examples of different arrangements of the key themes – shops, community spaces and civic amenities– aimed at provoking discussion

TM it has been raised that community spaces should meet the needs of more than one age group.

FQ Important that examples of existing features of the estate are also presented at these sessions.

RR This should be the starting point for a working brief.

JM Issues with existing buildings will also be used to inform refurbishment options.

Viability discussion

SC introduced the criteria for which potential option will be measured against. These are our baseline assumptions against the criteria which has been formed using both the objectives set out by Westminster City Council and what would make any potential scheme attractive to a developer.

Viability

- Financial viability (modelled at a min 15% return) – this is less than most schemes where developers expect at least 20-25% depending on the size and complexity of the scheme. WCC are de-risking the scheme as they own the land and are securing planning permission. No loss to Westminster City Council – Although Westminster are making a significant investment in to the project it is important that any scheme does not impose a significant loss to the council. WCC are not looking for profit but would like to provide more new housing
- There will be a right to return for all WCC secure tenants on a social rent
- A key sensitivity to the financial model includes build/construction cost inflation. This is a market force WCC have no control over.

Desirability

- Addressing housing needs – We know there are families both at Ebury and elsewhere who's housing does not meet their needs. This an opportunity to build new housing that will provide homes for life
- Provides increase in affordable housing – There is a huge housing shortage in London and the renewal project presents an opportunity to provide new affordable homes. If a replacement option is chosen all current affordable housing will be replaced and 35% of any additional homes will be affordable. Overall 50% of all home on the estate will be affordable local authority housing.
- Quality of green open space – Any proposal would need to significantly improve the quality of green open space
- Improving quality of built form – Although not great terminology this relates to the look and feel of any new development. Any new scheme would have to improve the layout of the estate and be a place that people want to live
- How easy it is to build out. The site is compact and the impact of construction on residents' daily life and health & safety must be considered. The controls put in place to manage construction could increase construction time / cost.

- If a refurbishment option is chosen residents will need to **move out** of their properties for the work to be undertaken. WCC will aim to minimise this disruption but will need to consider the effect on vulnerable residents.

Deliverability

- Deliverability (phasing & disruption) – This means that any scheme needs to be physically possible to deliver without huge extra costs and / or significant disruption to the residents on the estate
- Impact on surrounding developments – Any new development would need to complement to the surrounding developments in the area
- Planning Policy Risk: Impact on Conservation Area – Any new proposal should not negatively impact on the conservation area across the road
- Planning Policy Risk: Density and massing impact on townscape and views, etc – Proposals should meet the guidance set out in the draft London plan around density

SC we have so far scored three high level potential options against this matrix. They are the complete refurbishment of existing buildings, the partial demolition and refurbishment (as detailed by the previously consented scheme) and a hybrid scheme (which involved the same demolition as the consented scheme) that also included greater density to enable it to be financially viable. So far none of these options meet the requirements set out in the viability assessment. The Hybrid scheme would not meet the density requirements set out in the London Plan and the other two schemes would see losses to the council.

RR are all the criteria weighted the same?

SC at this point they are all weighted equally but this may change as external pressures such as the cost of materials fluctuate.

SR as these options are not viable does it mean that the estate is going to be demolished can you just tell us this?

TM/MC all options are still on the table but it is highly likely that demolition will need to take place in order for the scheme to attract a developer. If a refurbishment scheme is chosen, statutory requirements will mean that leaseholders will be required to contribute to the works.

RR the criteria has been developed by council staff/contractors, is there room for this to be added to/amended?

TM The existing criteria must remain but we can review any suggestions. Any new criteria must meet the ambitions of both residents and the council.

At this point the design team were excused from the rest of the meeting.

Business Engagement

MC we are looking to appoint the owner of Ebury Trading to the group. We had anticipated Salman from ideal café had wanted to join the group but he has since said he cannot commit the time. An informal discussion will be held with Mark from Ebury Trading with the intention to invite him to represent businesses on the CFG in the new year.

Wider Resident Engagement

TM we intend to continue engaging with the wider estate through drop-ins and exhibitions in the new year. We are planning to visit other regeneration estate and this offer will be extended to the whole estate. These visits should happen mid-January.

RAID log with items added

CLM presented the initial RAID log for discussion that had been instigated at the request of the CFG. It is the intention that the RAID log be held and updated by the CFG at their meetings. Responsibility for the RAID will sit with the full time Independent Chairperson on their appointment.

Following a discussion about business involvement in the consultation and engagement process the CFG requested CLM to update the Log accordingly.

CLM the RAID log will be updated to reflect the discussion and circulated to the group. **Update on permanent Chairperson appointment**

MC updated the group that there had been four applications for the Independent Chair position. The group were asked for volunteers to take part in the shortlisting/interviews. RR and FQ have put themselves forward to part in the process with interviews taking place Monday 18th and Tuesday 19th – pending availability of applicants

Dates of upcoming meetings / events

1.	Community Futures Group Christmas party for the whole estate	Wed 20th Dec 17: 6pm – 8pm
2.	CFG meeting 5	Wed 10th Jan 18: 6pm – 8pm
3.	Open invitation visits to other renewed estates	Sat 20th Jan 18:
4.	CFG meeting 6	Wed 24th Jan 2018: 6pm – 8pm