

**Minutes of Ledbury Estate Residents Project Group Meeting  
7<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

**Attendance**

**RPG**

Sue Slaughter	SS		
Patrick Goode	PG	Eileen Basson	EB
Jeanette Mason	JM	Toby Bull	TB
Shelene Byer	SB	Glenn Holmes	GH
Danielle Gregory	DG	Thomas Ennis	TE

**LBS**

Mike Tyrrell	MT	Abigail Buckingham	AB
Sharon Shadbolt	SSh	Paul Thomas	PT
Councillor Kieron Williams	KW		

**Others**

Charles Hingston	CH	Calford Seaden	
Jonathan Hutton	JH	Calford Seaden	
Neal Purvis	NP	Open Communities – ITLA	
Ian Simpson	IS	Open Communities - ITLA	

**Observer**

**Apologies for Absence:**

RPG Members: Val Taylor

LBS: Ferenc Morath

**1. Introductions and Membership**

1.1 Those present introduced themselves.

2.1 NP reported that Val Taylor had been in touch and had given her apologies for that evening's meeting and wanted to remain a member of the RPG.

**2. Minutes of Previous Meetings**

2.1 The minutes of the RPG Meeting of 3 December were agreed as accurate.

**3 Update Report – Cabinet Meeting 17.12.19.**

3.1 The draft minutes of the LBS Cabinet Meeting were circulated in the pack of papers. SB had delivered a deputation on behalf of the RPG. Councillor Kieron Williams was in attendance at the RPG Meeting.

**Update Report – Clarification on issues from Bromyard Costing Report**

3.2 CH had checked the table on storage areas, and it was in line with the London Plan which sets minimum standards for storage in new homes.

**Update Report – Costings for New Build Options**

3.3 JH had produced a report that had been circulated with the papers for the meeting on the update in costing the Infill and New Build homes in the

- Options that had been part of the September 2018 Option Appraisal. JH explained that each of the options that include refurbishment (Option A – C) had been updated to take account of the works proposed by Arup for Bromyard, including demolition and rebuild of the stairs and lifts, the strengthening works to the foundations, walls and floors throughout the block, and steel strengthening to the upper floors. There was also an uplift for inflation based on building costs from September 2018 to December 2019.
- 3.4 The costs for options that include Infill and New Build Homes (Options B-D) had been updated to take an increase for building inflation costs, and where there is demolition in the option, for more detailed estimates of demolition costs. JH confirmed that the site boundaries had not changed since the Hunters Report.
- 3.5 In the refurbishment options bins will have to be accommodated in the footprint of the common parts of the refurbished blocks.
- 3.6 Appendix A of the Report included 7 sub options for Option C (Refurbishment, Infill and New Build) and Option D (Demolition and New Build). Appendix A had a September 2018 Total Cost column, a Revised Cost Estimate column, produced by Hunters in September 2018, and a current Total Cost column, that takes account of changed specification of works and inflation for Refurbishment and update demolition costs and inflation for Refurbishment and New Build.
- 3.7 TE asked why the Current Total Cost for Option B had risen to £111m? JH replied that £89m was the current cost for refurbishment and £22m was for the Infill Homes. There was no change in design for Infill and New Build since 2018.
- 3.8 CH responded to MT to explain there had been 3 quotes asked for, on demolition costs. They ranged from £3m to £5.5m. The most recent, and highest quote, had provided the most detail on the process of demolition, which included putting in support in the blocks as each panel was removed and lowered to the ground, to reduce the chance of progressive collapse during the demolition of the block. JH confirmed that the demolition costs include the cost of removing the foundations, not just demolishing to ground level.
- 3.9 TE queried the cost of new Infill homes at £271K each. JH confirmed this was the build cost. The New Build options included the costs of demolishing blocks and their cost per home was higher.
- 3.10 CH noted that the time the works takes has an effect on the overall costs. The longer the works take, the more they cost, as there are on costs for builders staff and storage onsite throughout that time. NP raised concerns about the length of the programme in the report at 5<sup>1/2</sup> years and 8 years for refurbishment and infill. For residents this would mean a long period of disruption and many years before residents with the Right to Return could take up that right.
- 3.11 There was a discussion about what delays could affect works programme. Getting Planning and Building Control approval, and works by the utilities were the most common delays. MT asked if there was a New Build option, that demolition could begin during the Design Stage. AB suggested that if blocks became empty through decant, they could be demolished earlier than shown in the current programme.

- 3.12 **CH agreed to review the proposed programme to see if it could be shortened.** Reducing the overall programme time would also reduce overall costs. New Build programme had been produced on the basis of current national programme times in the BCIS (Building Cost Information Service).
- 3.13 PG asked if towers could be moved to a different location if there was demolition and new build. JH replied there would need to be discussion with Planners, and the sunlighting and daylighting affect, and right to light, would be important considerations.
- 3.14 GH asked how far from the blocks the current foundations protruded. CH replied that the Arup investigations at Bromyard showed them as not protruding far from the wall of the block.
- 3.15 Paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 refer to Option D as the option chosen following consultation in 2018. This should be Option B.
- 3.16 NP noted that the New Build Costs were based on the London Housing Plan standards (previously London Housing Design Guide). New Build Council homes in Southwark would be built to LBS New Council Homes Standards. These are higher than London Housing Plan standards. **CH and JH to consider this in future versions of the Options Report.**
- 3.17 JH confirmed that the contingency allowance for refurbishment was 15%, which was higher than the contingency allowance for Infill and New Build.
- 3.18 TE asked about the works proposed by Arup that included changing the location and height of doorways in the crosswalls, and whether this would compromise the structure. CH confirmed that in putting together the programme and costs, Arup had confirmed that the change in the door openings could be carried out and was structurally sound, by filling the unused door space with a column in the wall. The involvement of Building Control would be at the detailed design stage.
- 3.19 AB explained that the Council were asking Engie to build two mock ups in Sarnsfield of what the changes proposed in the Arup report would mean for the internal layout of the flats. The Council would authorize Engie to begin work within a week. RPG members and other residents could then look what Arup works would mean. This would mean residents could understand what difference the Arup works would make to the space residents would have inside their homes, below the 7<sup>th</sup> floor and on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor and above, where more structural steel strengthening would be needed following the works.
- 3.20 TE asked KW whether the Council would fund Option B, which had previously been chosen by residents and the Council, with the new updated costs showing it would cost £383K per dwelling.
- 3.21 KW outlined the Council's position that they would not go ahead with an option if it was not supported by residents. The Council would go with the residents' view and was happy to fund Option B on the current figures.
- 3.22 PG asked whether Councillors would make a decision to spend around 10% of their housing budget on less than 1% of their housing stock. The facts had changed and where the first Arup Report had estimated costs at around £40m, the costs had now increased to around £90m. The costed options showed a range of costs from £446K to £291K per dwelling. The Council needed to be clear now which options it would be willing to fund and which it would not, taking into account the best use of public money.

- 3.23 KW replied that the Council would fund Option B at £383K per dwelling, but Option A at £446K per dwelling, would not be good use of Council funds. He conceded the total cost is high, but it is similar to the costs of building new Council homes. The Council wanted best value and to take account of the residents' wishes.
- 3.24 SB noted the infill and New Build options also provided some income to the Council.
- 3.25 KW gave his personal opinion, on the basis of agreed Council policy and internal discussions that Option A was not fundable but that residents should be consulted on all other options as they were fundable.
- 3.26 JM asked for assurance that not an inch of the Ledbury Estate would be sold to private developers. KW confirmed that none of the land was for sale. No freehold land would be sold. New homes would be for Council Homes at Council Rent, with replacement homes for leaseholders and in some options, some leasehold homes for sale to help pay for the work. The Council's commitment was that there would be a minimum of 204 Council Homes for Council Rents when the works were complete on the estate. MT noted there are currently 20 leaseholds in the towers.
- 3.27 Residents asked if the costs presented were likely to change significantly in the future. JH outlined the surveys and fees were included in the estimates, and it took account of a 8 or 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> year programme. Large changes were unlikely.
- 3.28 **NP to send RPG members copy of the final report from Hunters from 2018.**
- 3.29 CH and JH left the meeting at this point.

### **Update Report – Option Appraisal and Consultation with Residents**

- 3.30 MT proposed tabling a report on consultation steps and an outline timetable at the February RPG Meeting. The consultation would follow a similar process to the previous consultation. Residents would need information on the implications of each Option. Option D would need to be reviewed and the Council wanted to work with architects and the RPG to develop this. There had been an Offer from the Council to Tenants and Leaseholders in March 2018 and this would need to be updated in the light of new information. Residents would need to understand what each option would mean for them, to understand the proposals to be able to come to an informed decision on the options.
- 3.31 TE suggested the information provided in the 2018 consultation for Option C and Option D was too complicated. The information for residents should be straightforward, before adding in new layers of complexity. He suggested that detailed design would only be needed on Options C and D if they were chosen by the consultation process.
- 3.32 MT agreed that work with the architect needed to establish the principles, with enough detail for residents to choose an option, and then if Option C or D was chosen, that more detailed design work would follow.
- 3.33 GH suggested a poor Option D was less likely to get resident support than a strong Option D, so there needed to be enough detail for residents to choose. Option D could also take account of current and future housing needs for returning residents and those living on the estate. NP suggested

visits to recent LBS New Council Housing could help residents understand the standard new Council Homes in Southwark are built to.

- 3.34 TB supported the idea of setting out principles and that the consultation should give residents an idea of what is realistic. This was an opportunity to get more people involved in the process as work in coming months would have a long term effect.
- 3.35 MT confirmed the Offer Document will set out not just what the options are, but the implication of different options for residents, including the terms and conditions of tenancies and leases, rents and communal facilities.
- 3.36 KW suggested improved images compared to those used in the 2018 consultation. He wants to see high quality council homes that will become a flagship for the borough.
- 3.37 JM was concerned that former residents of the Towers would have more influence in the vote than residents living on the estate who would live through the disruption of the works. NP outlined former tenants of the Towers have the Right to Return and had a strong interest in the decision made.
- 3.38 **MT to bring a paper outlining steps in the consultation process to the February RPG Meeting.**
- 3.39 **MT to meet with RPG to develop joint brief for architects for Option Appraisal.**

### Update Report – Next Steps

- 3.40 AB explained that Hunters had originally been chosen in 2018, as architects to carry out Option Appraisal, in a tender process with Council and RPG members to carry out Option Appraisal on a brief developed by the Council and RPG. To carry out the next stage of work, the brief for the architects will need to be updated to set out what is needed. Following the Option Appraisal work, the RPG had asked the Council to retain Hunters. At present Hunters were retained on a contract through Calford Seaden. The Council is currently updating its framework contracts with architects and this process will take several months.
- 3.41 DG suggested it was important to consult residents on selection of architects and the architect's brief.
- 3.42 TB suggested the newsletter, and other methods, should be used to publicise the new opportunity for involvement more widely with residents. GH supported the idea of the Council and Open Communities working to generate more involvement from residents in the process.
- 3.43 There was a discussion about procurement options and how long it would take to choose new architects depending on the amount of work involved.
- 3.44 RPG members were clear that the consultation material needed should be better quality than 2018 to help residents understand the options and impact on residents.
- 3.45 KW suggested the Council wanted to use the best architects, and for detailed design the RPG should look at what different architects could offer.
- 3.46 DG reported that Ledbury Action Group had asked residents on their facebook page if they thought residents should be involved in choosing architects. The great majority of those responding had agreed. Some concerns were raised about who was able to respond through facebook.

- 3.47 RPG voted on whether to continue working with Hunters through the Option Appraisal process or whether to choose architects through a tender process. 6 supported working with Hunters, with 2 supporting a tender process and 1 abstention. **Hunters are chosen as the architects for the Option Appraisal.**
- 3.48 RPG made clear that when a draft brief for Hunters has been developed, there should be wider consultation with residents on the contents.

#### 4 **Update Report from LBS**

- 4.1 MT tabled a report updating the RPG on changes in the last month. One leasehold home has been bought by the Council. One tenant has accepted an offer and is expected to move next week.
- 4.2 The London Fire Brigade will be doing an exercise in Bromyard on 16 January. They are working with LBS Comms to inform local residents before the exercise. More will follow in coming months.

#### 5 **Resident Issues**

- 5.1 There were no resident issues.

#### 6 **Review of RPG Terms of Reference**

- 6.1 There was a discussion on the RPG Terms of Reference with proposed amendments circulated..
- 6.2 Proposed change, insert after Clause 11; *Membership of the RPG should reflect the tenure of the Ledbury Towers.*
- 6.3 DG proposed an amendment to add *that leaseholders should not outnumber tenants on the RPG.*
- 6.4 There were 2 in favour of the amendment, with 4 against and 3 abstentions. The amendment was not accepted.
- 6.5 There were no votes in favour and no votes against, with 9 abstentions for the proposed change. The proposed change was not accepted.
- 6.6 Proposed change, insert after Clause 11, *Any RPG member who does not attend RPG meetings for 6 months, will have their membership reviewed by the RPG.*
- 6.7 There were 6 in favour of the proposed change, with 0 against and 3 abstentions. The proposed change was accepted.
- 6.8 **NP to update RPG Terms of Reference and Circulate to RPG members.**

#### 7 **Matters Arising from the minutes of meeting 3.12.19.**

- 7.1 (3.17) CH had reviewed table 4.2.5n on storage and it was in line with the London Plan.
- 7.2 (4.3) RPG had attended Cabinet Meeting on 17.12.19 and delivered a deputation.
- 7.3 (4.8) Work with architects will consider updating options.
- 7.4 (4.9) KW was attending this meeting.
- 7.5 (4.10) Decision had been made on architects for Option Appraisal.

7.6(5.1) MT had raised Inside Housing article with LBS Head of Comms. LBS had not been asked for a comment on the story.

7.7(5.3) Email address of Council Officer dealing with Hyperoptic had been circulated.

7.8(7.4) PT had inspected the damage in Pencraig Way from dust caused by Hyperoptic drilling. EB had tried to clean it, but it would not come off. **PT to chase the Cleaning Supervisor.**

7.9(7.7) SSh had provided surveys to NP. **NP to review and provide to RPG members.**

## **8 Any Other Business**

8.1 PG thanked the Council for the resources to provide the local Ledbury housing team and support for residents through Open Communities and for the service provided.

Neal Purvis 8.1.20.