

**Minutes of Ledbury Estate Residents Project Group Meeting  
3<sup>th</sup> December 2019**

**Attendance**

**RPG**

Sue Slaughter	SS	Nicole Bailey	NB
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	Ferenc Morath	FM
Sharon Shadbolt	SSh	Paul Thomas	PT
Abigail Buckingham	AB		

**Others**

Charles Hingston	CH	Calford Seaden	
Jonathan Hutton	JH	Calford Seaden	
Alice Blair	ABI	Arup	
Andrew Lawrence	AL	Arup	
Neal Purvis	NP	Open Communities – ITLA	

**Observer**

Amy Ziegler           AZ

**Apologies for Absence:**

RPG Members: Alex Hedge, Val Taylor

**1. Introductions and Membership**

1.1 Those present introduced themselves.

- 2.1 TE was no longer planning to leave the towers in the near future and was welcomed as a returning member of the RPG.
- 3.1 NP reported that he had contacted RPG members who had not attended recently. GH wished to remain a member of the RPG. NP to try to contact one other RPG member.

## **2. Minutes of Previous Meetings**

- 2.1 With the amendment of only one Sharon Shadbolt at the meeting and clarification of contributions between Abigail Buckingham and Alice Blair, the minutes of the RPG Meeting of 5 November were agreed as accurate.

## **3 Update Report – Costing of Arup recommendations for Bromyard**

- 3.1 JH circulated a report from Calford Seaden. He draw RPG members attention to the Elemental Order of Cost Estimate. The report took the costs set out in the report on Option 3 in May 2018 and updated them. At 1.6 The Structural and associated Essential Works were £85m for the four towers (£380K per dwelling), plus the Heating Works of £4.2m and Broadband Installation of £235K. The cost overall is £89.7m.
- 3.2 The changes made as a result of the Arup recommendations following their investigations on Bromyard were in line 22-33 of the detailed cost breakdown in Item 2 of the report. It included the installation of a steel frame to the building. Asbestos removal costs at line 8 had been included with more information following Bromyard investigations.
- 3.3 Inflation (at 4.6%) had been added to all items previously costed, to take account of the time since the last report was produced. This was Build Cost Inflation from the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS) index.
- 3.4 On cost including overheads, contractor profit, and a small allowance for design. There is a contingency allowance of 15%.
- 3.5 The costing of the structural elements were based on Arup's drawings and a provisional programme showing the order of the works.
- 3.6 TE asked why temporary propping of the block cost £5.6m per tower? JH explained that because some parts of the building had to be removed, that the building must be supported with hydraulic props during the works. There is a prop for every square metre of floorspace.
- 3.7 CH introduced the Refurbishment Validation Report. The table at 3.1.3 showed which items had been added (demolish stairs and lifts) to the cost estimate and what had been removed (e.g. structural straps).
- 3.8 The outline programme for the works is 440 weeks, nearly 9 years. The works to Bromyard would take 188 weeks. The programme also showed outline programme for infill new build next to Bromyard which would be 64 weeks and could run concurrently with the refurbishment works.
- 3.9 The work to refurbish the other three blocks would take 252 weeks and the infill new build on Sarnsfield, Skenfrith, Peterchurch would take 150 weeks.

- 3.10 JM asked if there would be a penalty clause if a contractor took longer than this to complete works. JH replied that a detailed programme of works would be agreed with the contractor, who would have to pay penalty clauses if they delivered late. AB made clear the programme tabled was an initial programme that would be developed in more detail.
- 3.11 CH explained that the Refurbishment Validation Report compared what the size and design of the homes would be to the GLA London Plan standards for new build. The standards are advisory and give an indication of what modern design standards are. There had been a conversation with the LBS Planners who had indicated they would judge a planning application of this scale against new build standards.
- 3.12 Tables from 4.2.1 onwards compared floor areas with London Plan standards. The overall floor area of 1, 2 and 3 Bedroom homes would meet London Plan Standards. The floor area for homes on upper floors would be less than those on lower floors, due to the space taken up by the steel strengthening. MT explained that the floor space of the 1 Bedroom homes in Peterchurch and Skenfrith would be less than on the upper floors of Bromyard, where there are no 1 Bedroom homes.
- 3.13 There proposed corridor width, following works for the 2 bedroom home would be below London Plan Standards.
- 3.14 The proposed combined Living, kitchen and dining room space and width of living room standards meet London Plan standards.
- 3.15 The proposed area for a double bedroom in a 1 bedroom home, and the minimum width of a bedroom in 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom and 3 bedroom home, do not meet London Plan standards.
- 3.16 There were some discussions on whether it would be possible to change internal design to meet the London Plan requirements.
- 3.17 **CH to review Table 4.2.5 – Storage Areas.**
- 3.18 CH drew the RPG attention to the minimum height required in new homes is 2.4m. Bromyard floor to ceiling heights are now 2.4m. This would be reduced to 2.25m new increased depth of screed on the floor, and there would then need to be light fittings. Sprinklers would be wall mounted. The screed is reinforced and is one of the Arup recommendations.
- 3.19 CH confirmed to NP that Calford Seaden did not expect any significant changes to the proposals when the government include Hackitt Report recommendations in the Building Regulations.
- 3.20 AB will organize the mock up of the sizes of a flat taking into account these proposals in a void flat in one of the Ledbury towers.
- 3.21 Jacketing of the shear wall will reduce the size of all – flats, affecting the second and third bedrooms in the 2 and 3 bedroomed flats and the bathrooms and toilets in all flats..
- 3.22 CH explained that the works were complex and would need sufficient time for careful design and planning to carry out effectively. All elements of these works had been done before, but not all on the same building.

- 3.23 Engie the contractor were talking to their insurance company to see if they could get all risks insurance for this work, and if so, what that would cost. JH explained this paid for the rebuilding of the block if the block failed.
- 3.24 PG asked if the area of windows would be reduced. JH explained the openings in the walls for the windows would remain the same. There could be a small change in the profile of the window frames, but it would not have significant effect on light in the flats.
- 3.25 SB asked about costs already incurred. JH agreed that some strip out costs and asbestos removal costs for Bromyard had been incurred. The cost plan was looking at the overall costs to refurbish all four blocks.
- 3.26 TE asked if replacing and insulating the outside leaf of the external wall would mean the wall did not bow due to heating and cooling. ABI replied that it would reduce the problem with the insulation and extra weight on the building.
- 3.27 PG asked if the building would last 50 years with the works proposed. AL replied that the building's structure would be a mixture of steel and concrete, and would last 50 years.
- 3.28 PG asked if the building could develop concrete cancer as a result of opening up many parts of the concrete structure. AL replied that most buildings that develop problems are due to weathering and the concrete parts of the structure would be covered so it was very unlikely the building could develop concrete cancer.
- 3.29 PG asked how much the Council would lose in rent keeping the blocks empty for a year. MT estimated close to £1m for all four blocks.
- 3.30 JH explained the increase in time compared to previous programme was due to the scale and complexity of the work. The longer the work took the more expensive it cost in preliminaries and inflation.
- 3.31 There was a discussion about whether Peterchurch could begin before works to Bromyard were complete. This would be difficult with the proximity of Skenfrith and Sarnsfield.

#### 4 Update Report from LBS

- 4.1 MT reported that there had been no change in the number of tenants and leaseholders since the last meeting. 21 leaseholders remain and 3 are in negotiation with the Council. One is expected to complete on selling back to the Council in the coming week.
- 4.2 London Fire Brigade had visited the blocks in November and had no concerns. The training exercises with the new LFB equipment in Bromyard are scheduled for February.
- 4.3 MT is drafting a Report for the Council's Cabinet meeting on 17 December. He will provide RPG members with a draft when the report is developed. **NP to book a deputation for Ledbury RPG at Cabinet Meeting on 17 December.**
- 4.4 The recommendations of the report are likely to be; to note the Calford Seaden costing information on refurbishment of Bromyard, that Ledbury tenants have a Right to Return with no cut off date other than the end of works or

- development on the site of Ledbury Towers, and that if consultation shows interest in any demolition and newbuild option, that GLA guidance will require a ballot of residents.
- 4.5 MT noted that the previous consultation on options for the Towers had been with the residents and leaseholders of the towers, and the tenants with the Right to Return. GLA guidance on ballots is that others across the estate would be involved, including tenants, leaseholders, freeholders and those who had been on the housing register for more than 12 months. The Cabinet Paper will recommend approaching the GLA to ask for an exemption from the guidelines so the ballot electorate would be those with the biggest stake in the decision, and those who had made the decision on the preferred option, which would be residents, leaseholders and tenants with the Right to Return to the towers.
- 4.6 MT explained residents in the low rise part of Ledbury would be consulted, but the decision would be made by residents, leaseholders and tenants with the Right to Return. Open Communities would carry out the ballot of residents opinions over three weeks, and could take votes through ballot paper, postal votes and on the internet. Open Communities will doorknock to encourage residents to vote.
- 4.7 SS asked what the Cabinet Report would say on rents for new homes. MT replied that there would not be a recommendation, but that the report would ask for an analysis of the overall costs of living in new homes compared to living in the towers, taking into account rent, service charges, heating costs and Council Tax. Cabinet could then make a decision on rent levels for Tustin towers tenants moving to Tustin new build.
- 4.8 MT noted that Calford Seaden will update the costs for Options 1-4 for inflation. He asked the RPG whether they want to keep the options as they are, or whether they wanted to update any of the options? **RPG to consider options and whether they should be updated.**
- 4.9 TE asked what would happen if the Council would not fund one of the options, such as the refurbishment option. **RPG to ask Councillor Williams at the RPG meeting in January.**
- 4.10 MT asked RPG whether they wanted to consider more work with Hunters architects to review options. If the RPG wanted to work with other architects, there could be a tender process to choose another set of architects. The brief for the architects may need review in either case. **RPG to review architects brief, and consider whether to continue with Hunters or have a tender for another architect.**
- 4.11 MT suggested the RPG may want to visit other estates to get ideas on design options.
- 4.12 SS asked if the Council had made a decision on what it could afford. The new costings were very high. AB made clear the Council have not made any decision and are working through the options with RPG to reach a decision. When the Council has more information on costing of Options 1-4 this will be shared with the RPG.
- 4.13 FM explained that Councillors will want to know residents' views before making any decisions.
- 4.14 SB asked how long complete demolition and new build is likely to take. AB said a first estimate would be a year and half for demolition less than five years for newbuild, but there were many unknown factors that would have to be taken into account in planning this.

- 4.15 PG asked why the Council had not acted when the Hammersmith and Fulham report on Hartopp Point had shown the costs for refurbishment were high. FM replied that the Council wanted to work on hard facts on the buildings on Ledbury and not make assumptions based on similar buildings elsewhere.

## 5 Resident Issues

- 5.1 PG was disappointed with the Council's response to press coverage of the Ledbury Estate. He noted a report in Inside Housing of 25 October that was headlined '*Sombre Residents fear Ledbury Estate Towers face demolition*'. He asked if the Council had been in contact with the journalist and why there was no mention of the work of the RPG.  
**MT to raise this with the Head of Comms.**
- 5.2 FM noted that the Council had tried to engage with both local and national press and were frustrated by the limited interest in anything that was good news. There was a recent story about Kensington and Chelsea getting planning permission for rooftop development, where a LBS press release that works were starting had been ignored.
- 5.3 AZ asked about loose wires on Credenhill. There had been problems with Hyperoptic fitting broadband at Hoyland Close and Pencraig Way and causing damage. **NP to circulate email address of the Council Officer who liaises with Hyperoptic and Community Broadband.**

## 6 Matters Arising from the minutes of meeting 5.11.19.

- 6.1 (3.4) Map of the Option Appraisal Area was included with minutes.
- 6.2 (3.16) Councillor Williams will attend January RPG Meeting.
- 6.3 (4.21) CH had checked with specialists and installing steel strengthening should not affect the use of mobile phones in the building.
- 6.4 (6.1) 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 raise this with Cleaning Supervisor.**
- 6.5 (6.2) MT reported that home ownership would amend leaseholders' bills. They had been charged in error for fire alarm testing.
- 6.6 (7.7) **SSh to provide soil surveys when they are complete.**
- 6.7 (9.1) NP had sent Inside Housing article on Ledbury to RPG members.
- 6.8 (9.2) Membership report had been given at start of this meeting.

## 7 Any Other Business

- 7.1 RPG to Review Terms of Reference in January

Neal Purvis 5.12.19.