

**Minutes of Ledbury Estate Residents Project Group Meeting
25th September 2018**

Attendance

RPG

Sue Slaughter	SS	Alex Hedge	AH
Thomas Ennis	TE	Patrick Goode	PG
Jeanette Mason	JM	Toby Bull	TB
Serife Dervish,	SD	Glenn Holmes	GH
Shelene Byer	SB	Nicole Bailey	NB

Observers

Amy Zeigler	AZ	Resident
Danielle Gregory	DG	Ledbury Action Group

LBS

Mike Tyrrell	MT	Abigail Buckingham	AB
Sharon Shadbolt	SSh		

Others

Graham Acus	GA	Hunters	Mark Baines	Hunters
Neal Purvis	NP	Open Communities – ITLA		

Apologies for Absence: RPG Members: Eileen Bassom, Val Taylor
Ferenc Morath LBS

1. Introductions and update on membership

- 1.1 NP informed attendees that the meeting would be recorded.
- 1.2 NP reported that one High Rise resident had volunteered to become a member of the RPG, Nicole Bailey.

2. Minutes of the RPG Meeting 7th August

- 2.1 With the correction of the Alex Heslop to Alex Hedge, and correction in 4.1 to read *leaseholders will be able to stay on Ledbury Estate*, the minutes of the meeting 7th August 2018 were agreed as accurate.

3. Options Appraisal (OA)

- 3.1 MT summarised the responses to the consultation on four options for the towers. Consultation had closed on 9 September, and the return was poor with only 53 responses received. The Cabinet Member for Housing had asked MT to extend the deadline to allow more residents to respond. The revised deadline was 16 September with chase up of residents who had not submitted during that week.
- 3.2 There were 107 questionnaires returned, a 47% turnout overall. The turnout among current residents was higher at 78%.

- 3.3 Section 7 of the report set out the full breakdown of returns. Option B was favoured overall and was the favoured option of all groups (existing residents, tenants in the towers, resident leaseholders, tenants who have moved from the towers and non-resident leaseholders), except resident leaseholders. The result was not changed by extending the deadline.
- 3.4 AH asked if there was a benchmark for the return of the consultation questionnaires. MT replied that there was not a benchmark, however the Cabinet Member for Housing wanted to give the opportunity for more people to respond, so the deadline was extended.
- 3.5 SD asked how the Council would fund Option B. MT replied that the Council had a manifesto commitment to sort out the same number of Council homes on Ledbury. This would have a knock on effect on other work the Council could do, but a manifesto commitment had been made.
- 3.6 TE commented that the increased number of returns gave a stronger signal to the Council of residents opinions.
- 3.7 AB circulated a summary of what will be in the Cabinet Report to the Council on 30 October, with the recommendation that Council Officers will be making to the Councillors on the Cabinet who will make the decision. Officers are recommending Option B, enhanced refurbishment with some newbuild infill, as it provides most Value for Money, with the second lowest cost, and the third most number of new homes, with 50% of those new Council Homes, and was in line with residents' views overall.
- 3.8 AB apologised for not being able to provide the full report, as constitutionally it needs to be seen by the Cabinet Member for Housing, and she was awaiting comments from the Council's Director of Finance on the financial implications. **AB hopes to circulate the full report in the week beginning 1 October.**
- 3.9 The full report will include a variety of appendices including a full cost report, including long term costs and income. The Director of Finance will analyse what money the council will need at each stage of the work to fund the proposal in full.
- 3.10 TB asked if Option B satisfies the manifesto commitment that the Council were elected on? **RPG to review manifesto commitment.** AB identified that building new Council homes and offering 50% of those to Council residents in the local area were also manifesto commitments along with the commitment to Ledbury Towers residents.
- 3.11 TB asked when the works programmed in 8 years time for the Ledbury low rise would be part of the conversation (*Post meeting note – QHIP works are programmed for 2023-25*). AB replied that the Cabinet would make a decision on the future of the towers on 30 October, and that work would need a considerable amount of planning. There could be a conversation about works to the low rise when works to the towers had begun.

- 3.12 AB suggested that Bromyard could be the first block to be refurbished as it has the least residents. Consideration could be given to residents in Bromyard who did not want to move off the estate moving temporarily to a flat in another Ledbury Tower. When Bromyard was refurbished, tenants with the right to return could see what the refurbished flats look like, and Bromyard tenants would be asked whether they want to take up their Right to Return. Any who refused, their Right to Return would end. All former towers residents would be able to look at refurbished flats. If they did not they would remain in the home they have moved to. The unoccupied flats in Bromyard would then be used as temporary accommodation for residents from other flats in the Towers to allow another tower to be empty, and refurbishment works would be done there. When the second block was complete, former residents of that block would be asked if they wanted to take up their Right to Return, and would move back if they did, or remain in their current home if they did not. The programming of this would need to be looked at in detail subject to Cabinet approval of Option B.
- 3.13 MT explained that having regular contact with former residents would mean that where residents did want to return, they could have choices on the internal fittings and finishes in the flat they would move back to, to meet their needs.
- 3.14 AB outlined the proposal that for the first block to be refurbished, the works would be done by Engie, the major works partnering contractor for this area of the borough. This would mean works could be planned and on site earlier than if other procurement (contracting) routes were used.
- 3.15 AB explained that Arup (Structural Engineers) would be the structural engineers for the works, whoever the contractors are. There would be pilot works to a few flats, using the system designed by Arup, and Arup would test the blocks when these pilot works are done. Building Control would also be very closely involved in checking the work. With the lessons learned from the pilot flats, any changes needed would be made for the works that follow to other flats. Using this approach meant the method of doing the works would be correct, approved by Arup and Building Control.
- 3.16 Once the refurbishment works is underway on the first block, there will be work to decide on the best way to procure refurbishment works to the other towers and the new build infill development. There were a variety of routes that this could be done. One issue would be the choice of design consultants. The Council are in the process of procuring a new framework contract for consultants but unlikely to be in place until 2020 so it may be better to use existing . Procurement also underway for new contractors framework but similar times.
- 3.17 Council is aware of lost revenue in empty blocks and that rules to contract could change as a result of Brexit.
- 3.18 DG asked when a pilot could begin. AB replied that when Cabinet takes a decision, the Council will begin designing what is needed.
- 3.19 TE asked whether residents with the Right to Return would move back to the flat they had vacated. MT replied that they would.

- 3.20 TE asked about letting of half of the new build Council flats to low rise Ledbury Tenants. This will be through a Local Letting Scheme that Southwark has used where they have new build Direct Delivery Council Homes. **NP to circulate a Local Letting Scheme used by LBS on another new build development to RPG members.**
- 3.21 TB asked about an outline timetable for Option B. AB replied if the existing framework contracts are used, it will start sooner. The issue that takes time is the design phase for the infill, and this would need planning permission. AB expects to do physical building associated with the building works in two years' time. Refurbishing a block normally takes around a year, and it could be quicker with empty blocks. Dealing with the unknowns takes extra time. The period between the Cabinet decision and the New Year would be spent looking at the best delivery routes and planning these at over the coming months the Council could give more accurate timescales .
- 3.22 TB was concerned about disruption during the works, and how long this would last, and that residents on the estate would live through years of works to the towers, before any works, that were badly needed, to the low rise homes. AB made clear that works to the low rise would not be included in the Cabinet Report. She assured the RPG that the works to the low rise had not been forgotten, and this would be looked at a later date.
- 3.23 SB asked if the refurbishment works to all had not been completed within the 7 year Right to Return deadline, would the Right to Return end. MT suggested it would be political problem if some residents were not given a Right to Return.
- 3.24 DG reported that LAG have requested a deputation to the Cabinet Meeting on 30 October.
- 3.25 DG asked whether the pilots would be tested over several seasons. AB explained that Arup will design the testing process, and the Council will take direction from them.
- 3.26 NB asked how low rise residents will be consulted on the works. AB explained that the Council and the contractor will work with residents across the estate, and the RPG has an ongoing role in this process.
- 3.27 MB explained that the infill development needs a lot more design work and a planning application that will take into account the impact on low rise residents.
- 3.28 GA circulated some costs for each of the Options, including variations. The costs were the works costs only. Option A £29m, Option B £54m, Option C and D range from £58m to £84m. This does not take into account any income.
- 3.29 AB explained that the Council's financial analysis included in the Cabinet Report will include future maintenance costs. This will include income from homes for sale.

- 3.30 SD asked if the costs of the Major Works team are in the current works costs. AB said they do not, but they are in the overall financial appraisal. The real costs will be clear when it has been procured. LBS admin costs are low compared to other overall costs.
- 3.31 MB explained that Hunters have to complete their report, which summarises everything the RPG has seen. This will be an appendix to the Cabinet Report. A Draft Report will issued to the Council in week with a final report in mid October.
- 3.32 The Cabinet Report will be published on the Council's website on 23 October.
- 3.33 RPG has appendices on Consultation and Stakeholder Responses. LBS to provide appendices in coming weeks.
- 3.34 DG was concerned that a pilot could fail and then the Council would hand the Towers to the Building Research Establishment (BRE). Newsnight had reported that BRE have a London block to test. LBS have made clear it is not a LBS Building.
- 3.35 **NP to circulate a copy of the BRE guide on LPS buildings to RPG members.**
- 3.36 AB made clear that LBS had taken Arup advice and that refurbishment was based on Arup advice on what would work. MB explained that an organisation like Arup would not put their professional indemnity insurance on the line by suggesting an option that they were not completely confident would work.
- 3.37 NP reported that RPG has a meeting with Cabinet Member for Housing on 3 October at 7pm to discuss the Cabinet Report.

4. Update from LBS

- 4.1 MT reported that 34 tenants and 31 leaseholders remain. 1 leaseholder has been bought out since the last meeting. There are 8 residents left in Bromyard.
- 4.2 Deep clean on low rise, is continuing. Clearing the gulleys is taking longer than expected. **SSh will talk to Paul Thomas for an update.**
- 4.3 Fire brigade have carried out more visits. There have been two in the last week. They have increased since the middle of the Inquiry.
- 4.4 MT explained that LBS could not sell homes in Churchyard Row to leaseholders. MT is meeting with New Homes Delivery team to identify new build council homes that Ledbury leaseholders could be offered.
- 4.5 PG raised concerns of residents with blocks becoming more empty. MT reported that Ledbury Team visit vulnerable residents twice weekly, and can increase this if needed.
- 4.6 SD asked how long fire wardens will be in place. MT replied they will be in place until the last resident leaves each block.

- 4.7 MT has proposed to LBS Senior Management that the Ledbury Team remain at the TRA Hall, 24 hours a day, while the Fire Wardens are in place.

5. Resident Issues

- 5.1 TB raised blocked drain next to Electricity sub station south of Commercial Way. TB to speak to AB. (*Post meeting note – this has been referred to LBS Communal Repairs*)
- 5.2 SB noted the hoardings looked good.
- 5.3 PG reported that there is still no nameplate on Skenfrith **SSh to check with PT.**

6. LBS Decisions

- 6.1 Cabinet Meeting to make a decision on the Option Appraisal on 30.10.18.
- 6.2 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report 15.10.18.
- .3 Cabinet Meeting to decide on Leaseholder Offer date not yet fixed.

7. Matters Arising from RPG Meeting 7 August

- 7.1 (3.43) Visit to Sumner Road Council New Build. SS thought they were better than Sylvan Grove and Churchyard Row. They were better designed internally, although still close together. SB liked the storage and separate kitchen and living rooms, with decent size balconies. JM was concerned that one flat had a window looking at a brick wall.
- 7.2 MT liked the brickwork in communal areas that would reduce future maintenance costs.
- 7.3 **(7.3) MT to find out how many cars are registered on the estate – Outstanding.**
- 7.4 **(7.4) MB will include comparison of space standards current and proposed in the Hunters final report.**
- 7.5 (8.2) NP had circulated details on Cabinet Member responsible for Brexit and LBS Strategy information on Brexit.

8. Any Other Business

- 8.1 SD asked if MT would continue in post from November. MT replied the proposal was he would be working flexible hours at half time, and would be available on the phone.
- 8.2 MB thanked the RPG for the work done by the RPG and how professional members had been. The RPG thanked Hunters for their work.

9. Date of next Meeting

- 9.1 Proposed dates for future meetings
- a. 9 October
 - b. 6 November
 - c. 4 December

N. Purvis 26.9.18.