

Ebury Bridge Community Futures Group – Meeting 35

2nd June 2020, 6.30pm – 8pm

via Microsoft Teams

Members Attendance:

- Tom McGregor [TMc] – Chairperson
- Sheila Martin [SM]
- Cristina Pasantes [CPa]
- Fiona Quick [FQ]
- Joanna Winterbottom [JW]

Apologies:

- Charlotte Pragnell [CPr]
- George Panayioudou [GP]
- Tammy Dowdall [TD]
- Mohammed Eisa [ME]

WCC Officers and Consultants:

1. David Thompson [DT] – Project Director Ebury Bridge
2. Gelina Menville [GM] – Ebury Bridge Regeneration Manager
3. Martin Crank [MC] – Communications & Engagement Manager
4. Vikki Everett [VE] – Project Manager
5. Ashton Dean [AD] – Development Delivery Manager
6. Louis Blair [LB] – Communities First (ITLA)
7. Millie Morrissey [MM] – Project Support Officer (Meeting notes)

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. Welcome

TMc welcomed all members and gave apologies for CPr and ME.

2. CFG Standing Items

Action List Review:

Item 8: TMc reminded the group of the substantial conversation at the last meeting, regarding the Terms of Reference needing a review and refresh. TMc to have meeting with WCC officers to discuss before taking forward in a branch off session with the CFG.

Matters Arising: No matters arising.

Rumour Buster:

TMc welcomed members to bring any rumours to the attention of the group. SM asked for an update regarding Mike Smith/Ebury Food Surplus' extra storage space? GM explained that a 10ft container was installed a fortnight ago, in addition to the 20ft container outside the lodge, totalling two storage facilities for the lodge. SM asked if another space will be found for MS when the lodge needs to be vacated? GM assured that another space will be found and the timeline to vacate the lodge will be established nearer to the time and a new space will be provided to allow the food bank to continue operating at its fullest capacity. GM added the Meanwhile Use Space will be explored as an option.

3. Estate Matters

Covid-19: GM updated the group of the Council's response to Covid-19. GM gave an update regarding Westminster Connects, a voluntary programme WCC have put together which has delivered lunches donated by a hotel chain. The lunches are delivered to sheltered/vulnerable residents of the borough. JW volunteered for the scheme and as a result, was able to redirect the spares to some homes/families on Ebury. GM explained that the benefit will come to an end in the new few weeks as the hotel prepares to open for business again. GM assured the group that the Resident Engagement Team will continue to check in on vulnerable residents and maintain regular contact.

SM asked if these food parcels are the ones which were advertised to residents but were being charged £17 for them, when there was not £17 worth of food in the parcels. GM explained that it is a different scheme as the lunches were donated by the hotel and given to residents free of charge. GM to investigate into the food parcel arrangement. TMc suggested that DT also speaks with Barbara Brownlee about the arrangement and running of the scheme.

JW asked the group to keep alternative food parcels/donations in mind as this scheme coming to an end.

Action: To investigate into who was coordinating the food parcels scheme and understand why they were priced at £17 [GM]

Action: Speak with Barbara Brownlee (Executive Director of GPH) about the handling of the scheme [DT]

Housing/Estate Management: GM explained that there have been car parking issues on the estate and a full report has been prepared on the subject matter which will be circulated after the meeting.

Action: Add the Parking Report to the CFG SharePoint and circulate the link [MM]

GM explained that the main gate at Cheylesmore House is being re-opened as the main vehicle access point and being controlled by a lock and key.

The temporary gate that was installed between Bucknill and Wellesley House will no longer be in use. GM added only 3 authorised households can park on the estate, and fire access and refuse will continue to have access.

GM explained plans to be added to the TMO (Traffic Management Order) are being explored, to ensure that we can enforce the no parking rule on Ebury.

CPa asked will there still be a key for people to use for deliveries such as appliances?

GM assured the group that the same deposit system for temporary access will be in operation from the Lupus Street office.

JW asked who is parking in the football pitch. GM explained that due to Covid-19 and the restrictions around public transport, we have used the football pitch for the contractors to park. All cars on the pitch have express permission. The cars that are seen around the estate are not contractors, they are unauthorised vehicles, which have notices put on them daily by the team and security and their number plates are logged. GM explained once the TMO is in place, we can ticket the cars who are not authorised to be on the estate.

SM asked if Mike Smith/Ebury Food Surplus has access for deliveries to The Lodge. GM assured that the same system is in place with the Lodge to enable deliveries.

FQ asked if the Café owner can park on the estate as she had noticed his car. GM explained that no retailers have access or permission to park on the estate.

JW explained that due to number of vehicles on the estate, there is even less space for children and those with children to use as leisure/playing space. JW asked could the playground be reopened safely. GM explained that due to the Covid-19 restrictions, the play area has been closed to comply with the government guidelines. This will be explored as lockdown eases over the coming weeks and months. GM added that the installation of a temporary playground was explored but was not viable in the short timeframe. GM explained that DT had investigated Battersea Park, which is the nearest park to the estate, and it took around 20 minutes for him to walk there. FQ also suggested that the South grounds behind Royal Hospital Chelsea were an open space that families could use.

4. Project Update

Site Works: DT presented a short-term programme of work streams, which will be uploaded to the group SharePoint site following the meeting. DT explained that the final elements of design is being finalised in preparation for the submission of the planning application in roughly 6 weeks' time.

Action: Upload the updated short-term programme to SharePoint [MM]

DT continued, there will be a clear decision on the ground source solution by the end of June. JW asked will the market testing line on the programme have to be extended further, due to the delays caused by the pandemic, resulting in the housing market being affected. DT explained that this will go on further, WCC have been and will continue to work closely with Hamptons estate agents and SAY Property Consultants to stay ahead of the curve. DT added that a viability plan, demonstrating how robust our assumptions are, has been collated so should there be a significant fall in value, we will have planned for that. Established market value before Covid-19 has been sensitivity tested in the viability plan. DT added this will continue into the market testing in July.

FQ ask is that for both the new builds and selling of current homes? DT assured it is for sales value compared against construction costs and viability of the whole scheme, this includes both new builds and the selling of current homes. DT added the whole transaction scheme

is included in the market analysis that has been given to our advisors. TMc added market rent will be less sensitive than the market sale price.

Action: Upload the updated workstreams programme [MM]

AD presented slides to the group, which explained what apparatus is used to monitor the noise, dust and vibration coming from the demolition site. AD explained where the monitors have been positioned, covering all of Phase 1 as well as 2 blocks which are not in Phase 1. AD explained what the trigger action levels are. If the amber level is reached, the method of working will be reviewed by the site manager. If the red level is reached, the site manager will get an instant notification to down tools and stop working.

AD explained if there were any complaints about noise levels, the monitoring technology would allow the team to go to the date and time of the complaint to review the levels at that specific time and where exactly on the estate it took place.

JW asked what an example of 70 decibels is. AD explained that the noise from the neighbouring train tracks average around 69 decibels. AD added the levels that are being set will never be louder than the average sound of surrounding areas.

SM asked what would happen if the red level was reached, and there was not another way to deal with it or a different method of working. AD explained that the site manager would have to find another way or work would be forced to stop working, to comply with the binding contract between themselves and Environmental Health.

CPa asked AD to confirm that the noise levels of the works will never exceed the noise levels from the trains. AD confirmed that is correct.

TMc suggested occasional update on the monitoring levels at the CFG. AD agreed.

AD showed slides of the Meanwhile Use Space and its progress to date. AD explained there have been severe delays as a result of Covid-19, as it has been difficult to work whilst obeying to the Government guidelines. AD added during the pandemic approximately 11 weeks had been lost. AD assured the group that HA Marks have done all they can to rectify and make up time.

DT explained that an application has been submitted to extend the daytime working hours of the contractors, which may require a letter from the CFG. AD added that the Government have advised Local Authorities to support contractors where possible and allow them to work longer hours within reason.

AD explained that a significant amount of time can be shaved off if continuing to work the normal hours 8am-6pm and additionally working from 6pm-9pm. The extra 3 hours in the evening will not consist of noisy, disturbing works. MC added that Cheylesmore House resident association have said that they're happy for working hours to be extended for quiet works, for fixed period.

Action: MC to collate a letter which will be signed by CFG to say that they are happy for this to happen. CFG to review letter before its signed off. [MC/CFG]

FQ raised the issue of some contractors starting work earlier than agreed, at 730am.

Action: To investigate this and ensure that no work begins until 8am [AD]

FQ informed the group that upon her return to the estate she had met the site manager and supervisor. FQ added that she'd had cause to write to DT, AD and MC regarding several ways of working that were not acceptable for contractors. All but one had been resolved but was disappointed that it took a resident to highlight these.

FQ described JF Hunt as very receptive and proactive and felt that there were good working relationships formed already.

AD updated the group that the structural demolition of Wainwright has commenced. Asbestos surveys and removal are now complete, allowing for soft stripping of furniture to go ahead. AD added that due to the method of soft stripping, over 95% of materials will be recycled from this site.

AD explained that the second of two wells that were being drilled on the estate is due to be completed at the end of June. In the meantime, a temporary access point to Bridge House including wheelchair access has been installed.

AD explained that the well has been drilled 100metres into the ground.

AD updated that there is one borehole remaining, equating 2 days' work. Once that work is complete, the borehole exercise will be finished. FQ highlighted a bore hole that had been brought to her attention by JF Hunt site manager. This is between Rye and Westbourne. This was not on the original plan and not communicated to residents. MC and AD agreed to meet weekly to review the forthcoming weeks work and arrange extra comms if necessary, to keep residents informed.

JW explained that the rubbish bins now must be taken out through a different route due to the works on the estate, which people weren't notified about. JW commented that her overall sense of the estate was that of a car park and things had slipped in terms of resident engagement and acceptable ways of working. FQ agreed. JW suggested a weekly update to understand what's to come and to notify residents of any blocks or restrictions around the estate. AD explained that no pedestrian access routes would have been blocked or compromised. If any roads are shut, Veolia are contacted and advised to plan accordingly.

Action: Site Works PowerPoint to be uploaded to the CFG SharePoint [MM]

Action: To deliver a comms bulletin of site works and updates [MC/AD]

D&B Contractor appointment: VE informed the group that the procurement process has been concluded and Bouygues UK have been awarded the contract as the D&B contractor for Phase 1.

VE explained that the contractor scored highly across the board and their bid was reviewed in depth, with focus on the contractual element.

VE added that the social value offer, their approach to partnership working and resident communication made their bid stand out. The final scores achieved reflected how all felt during various sessions.

VE explained that Bouygues and WCC are in the process of concluding their agreement, then they will be incorporated, the main works contract will begin in 6-8months time.

VE added both parties are keen to get them to come along to the next CFG in July. VE added that Bouygues have made very firm commitments and will be accountable to the CFG.

JW is there any way we can see what their commitments are? VE absolutely, they will present their commitments when they come to July's CFG.

Action: Bouygues pack to be circulated to the group (via SharePoint) [MM]

5. Proposed Ebury Tenure Mix and Two Delivery Options

DT explained over the past 2 years, the Council having been exploring a solution which would adhere to the CFG aspirations for an inclusive new Ebury. DT added that this must be supported by the Council and balanced with the need to be viable. DT reminded of the 4 options for mix: separate blocks, pepper potting, separation by floor (horizontal), and vertical separation.

These options continue to be evaluated by the Council. The CFG had a preference to the pepper potting and an aversion to the separate blocks.

DT explained that the soft market testing is in July, the 2 options which will be tested are the horizontal option – all residents go to into their block through same door, they share the same lobby, but are separated by tenure over different floors. This method would be funded solely by the Council.

The second option is like the first, with the tenures being separated horizontally, but one block, built over the footprint of bridge (Northern end of the estate) would be exclusively for Market Rent.

DT explained the market rent funders would occupy a single block in the North, other market rent would be sprinkled throughout other blocks.

FQ suggested that we regroup on this item and have a dedicated session to discuss in depth.

Action: Re-group in a separate session, solely to discuss proposed tenure mix and delivery options [ALL]

6. Journey to Vacant Possession

MC presented slides to the group. MC recapped rehousing so far to date. By 2016 many residents had been decanted as part of the previous scheme.

MC gave an overview of key milestones to date. Over 100 residents have been rehoused in properties of their choice. The support package put in place by the Council aims to make the process as painless as it possibly can be. MC explained that in July 2020 the planning application will be submitted and by December 2020 the outcome of the application will be determined. MC added if planning is granted work will start in early 2021. Constructive dialogue will always proceed with all residents and businesses to find the best solution for all parties.

Action: Journey to Vacant Possession slides to be uploaded to CFG SharePoint [MM]

MC explained that a CPO is only ever used as a last resort. In the next few weeks a decision will be loaded on to the councils forward plan, to begin the legal formalities for the CPO. CPa asked when you are planning to make the application, or have you already applied for the CPO. MC explained it is a long drawn out process, nothing will happen overnight.

The council must demonstrate that they have done everything possible to rehouse residents. The Council must give the Secretary of State a notification of intent.

LB asked if Phase 2a and 2b are the former Phase 3. MC confirmed that is correct.

MC added that the CPO is a formality and a necessity in a project of this size. A CPO is necessary to secure the interests of all properties which in turn means it can legitimately invest half a billion pounds.

JW asked if this is imminent?

MC explained that it is not as there are a couple of processes leading up to the application. The reason the application must be made to the Secretary of state, is to secure the investment in the project. It enables the Council to use public body powers to enable a CPO to be used if needed, allowing the project to proceed.

TMC asked if this is essentially seeking a power that will not need to be used. MC confirmed.

JW asked when are residents likely to be informed of this?

MC explained that the first people to be notified of this are the CFG.

FQ asked if anything will be sent out to residents prior to the next CFG.

MC confirmed a letter is being written which will go out to all residents, but the CFG can review it for comment before distribution.

Action: CFG to see the letter to review and provide input before it goes out to residents. [MC/CFG]

Action: Distribution and visibility of the Tenure Distribution document pack in readiness for the special CFG meeting on June 23rd. [MC/GM]

7. AOB

GM suggested that now the group have adjusted to the virtual CFG meetings, that we revert to two-hour meetings each month. All in agreement. Will be effective as of 7th July 2020.

8. Date of next CFG meeting

Tuesday 7th July