

Ebury Bridge Community Futures Group – Meeting 44

2nd March 2021, 6.30pm – 8.30pm

via Microsoft Teams

Members Attendance:

- Tom McGregor [TMc] – Chairperson
- Charlotte Pragnell [CPr]
- George Panayioudou [GP]
- Joanna Winterbottom [JW]
- Mohammed Eisa [ME]
- Cristina Pasantes [CPa]

Apologies:

- None received

Absences:

- Tammy Dowdall
- Sheila Martin

WCC Officers and Consultants:

1. David Thompson [DT] – Ebury Bridge Programme Director
2. Gelina Menville [GM] – Ebury Bridge Regeneration Manager
3. Martin Crank [MC] – Communications & Engagement Manager
4. Millie Morrissey [MM] – Project Support Officer (Meeting notes)
5. Tom Elwood [TE] – Programme Manager (Existing Estate)
6. Stephen Stretton [SS] – Programme Manager (Future Estate)
7. Louis Blair [LB] – Communities First (ITLA)
8. Judy Flight [JF] – Non-Residential Programme Manager
9. Emilia Ilevolella [EI] – Community Engagement Coordinator

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 officers.

2. CFG Standing Items

- **Action List Review:** Key actions are addressed as agenda items.
- **Key Considerations Tracker:** GM explained the three topics highlighted on the tracker will be discussed at this meeting.
- **Matters Arising:**
Right to Return Tenants of Housing Support - SS explained approximately 40% of both onsite and offsite tenants who wish to return are currently in receipt of some level of Housing Benefit. SS added this number does not include all residents on Universal Credit and work is currently ongoing to understand the number of tenants receiving UC and level

of income of households due to return. Ebury has a similar proportion of residents claiming housing benefit as the South area of Westminster, with proportion slightly higher in the North of the borough.

- **Rumour Buster:**
No issues raised.

3. Project Update

Planning Application

DT commented that the planning application, which was submitted in July of 2020 has not yet had a determination as the Planning authority have had their resources affected by Covid. 13th April 2021 has now been given as the date for the planning determination. DT reminded the group that there is a full application for first two blocks and an outline for the other seven blocks.

Early Works

DT informed the group that Bouygues (BYUK) are not expected to start on site until August/September, and therefore we want to begin early works prior. An early works contract could help make up for lost time to the programme. The early works would take place during the Summer. DT added the works will include things such as piling. GP asked where the piling work will take place. DT explained this would happen near the railway roughly where Hillersdon House was. JW asked if the number of flats in the previous presentations have been changed. DT explained the amount of homes to be built has been agreed by the GLA and the planners said they were very comfortable with the increase. There has been no changes to height or massing, all changes are of internal configuration. DT added all homes will be in line with the London living space standards. GP asked where the added homes will go. DT explained the small volume increase applies across all 9 blocks.

4. Viability Refresh

DT reiterated the commitment made to keep under review the viability of the whole scheme. DT provided a position update on the latest viability works. DT gave a refresh of the objectives set in 2017, of which the Council have been keen to protect the objectives residents set for the future Ebury. GP asked how many residents would like to return to the new Ebury. DT explained 140 residents wish to come back, made up of both tenants and leaseholders. CPr asked what kind of people are expected to take the market rent homes. DT explained the market rent tenants will not be eligible for social rent or intermediate, it will be people who wish to rent and do not have ownership in their immediate thoughts. They will earn a higher level of income which allows them to have a higher quality of accommodation. They will be 1 and 2 bed flats only. CPr asked will they be renting from WCC. DT explained WCC will always be the freeholder, however, there will be someone who funds and builds the market rent element, but the Council will have influence over level of rents and overall type of tenancies. DT explained Westminster Builds is the Council's developer. It is not a private company, it's an arm of WCC. LB commented from the planning statement it looks like there has been a drop in affordable homes and increase in market sale. LB asked what is driving that change and what may be the pressures on viability in the future. DT explained the driver of this particular element is how much WCC have to subsidise to make this happen. From 53% to 50% affordable, which is still above the GLA requirement. The GLA measures affordable homes on square footage of liveable space. GP asked what control will WCC have over the market rent block in future. DT explained the market rent element will be revisited as a future topic exploring more details of the Freeholder and leaseholder. A further viability update will be provided to the group in April.

5. Estimated Service Charges: Levels of Service

TE gave a refresh of what was discussed at the previous meeting. Two further sessions on service charges have been added in as well as the session in May to discuss this topic further. The scheme will deliver 781 homes, inclusively managed of a very high quality and standard. Some services will be fixed such as insurance, utilities, CCTV and lifts etc. There are some services that Westminster will be able to decide on the level of service. The estimated service charge budget will provide a high-quality service to all residents.

LB noted almost 50% of the budget is made up staff and management costs. JW asked if these staff members be solely dedicated to Ebury. TE confirmed that is correct and they will be based at Ebury, with Ebury as their sole focus. LB asked if there would be additional staff which aren't shown on the pie chart breakdown. GM explained all staff listed here are to run the blocks and the estate, nothing behind people's front door. GM added tenancy specific costs would be separate in addition to figures presented here. JW asked about the number of concierge staff. GM explained the concierge would operate on a shift pattern, not all will be working at any one time. GP asked if the concierge would serve all the blocks. TE explained they will be based in the management hub and serve all blocks equally. CPa asked would there be an opportunity for residents to apply for any of these positions. TE explained that may well be a possibility. GM added this is certainly something we can explore and pick up through the soft market testing. The managing agent will be appointed ahead of practical completion of Phase 1.

6. Social Value Refresh

JF presented an update to the group on the social value legacy. JF emphasised this is a legacy, not a one-off project. The legacy see's council residents and businesses on the Ebury Bridge estate working cohesively now and throughout the renewal journey.

Next steps:

- Ebury Regeneration Team to present this internally with Procurement, Economy colleagues as well as Cabinet Member
- WCC to continue to collect and analyse data about the residents who have said that intend to return, as well as those still living on Ebury to project the needs of future Ebury
- Talk with the CFG and wider community about what support/initiatives might help the integration of the future Ebury
- Talk to families who are waiting for their new homes to be built about their expectations and aspirations for the future Ebury
- Next session with CFG Autumn 2021.

7. AOB

GP asked about the cost of the build. GM explained WCC have not entered a formal contract to build but could share that information once we reach that stage. DT added approximately by August we will have construction costs prices for 1, 2 and 3 bed homes. TMC recommend this topic for discussion at a future meeting.

Action: Add 'cost of build' to the consideration's tracker for a future meeting [MM/GM]

8. Date of next CFG meeting

Tuesday 6th April 2021