

Ebury Bridge Community Futures Group – Meeting 45

6th April 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]
- Tammy Dowdall [TD]

Apologies:

- Cristina Pasantes [CPa]

Absences:

- Sheila Martin

WCC Officers and Consultants:

1. David Thompson [DT] – Ebury Bridge Programme Director
2. Gelina Menville [GM] – Ebury Bridge Regeneration Manager
3. Greg Ward [GW] – Director of Regeneration & Economic Development
4. Martin Crank [MC] – Communications & Engagement Manager
5. Millie Morrissey [MM] – Project Support Officer (Meeting notes)
6. Stephen Stretton [SS] – Programme Manager (Future Estate)
7. Louis Blair [LB] – Communities First (ITLA)

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. GW introduced himself to the CFG. Apologies from CPa. TMc announced FQ departure from the CFG. DT recognised her contribution and highlighted her hard work with the group. WCC and The CFG will formally thank Fiona for her role in the CFG.

Action: WCC Officers will draft a formal thank you for FQ on behalf of the Chair [GM/MC]

2. CFG Standing Items

- **Action List Review:** Key actions are addressed as agenda items.
- **Matters Arising:** No matters raised.
- **Rumour Buster:** No issues raised.

3. Project Update

Planning

DT confirmed that the planning application goes to committee on Tuesday 20th April and the team will arrange for CFG members to receive a link to watch the committee meeting live.

Viability

DT reported that the project viability has improved since the last CFG meeting. The external valuer CBRE has increased market sale values following the receipt of details of horizontal floor layouts for all 9 blocks.

GP asked why the Market Rent block has been introduced. DT explained following extensive market testing with funders, developers and managers, there was a clear preference for a single Market Rent block to meet the needs and the degree of turnover of the market renters. This feedback leading from a move from Block 5 to Block 9 in accommodating Market Rent households has been brought back to the CFG previously.

GP asked who will collect the rent from this single block. DT explained WCC will appoint a manager and they will collect the rent. DT added there are over 170 Market Rent homes some of these will be Discounted Market Rent', creating a ladder from social rent up to market rent.

LB asked for clarification of the number of social rent homes on the new estate. DT stated there is a clear commitment to rehouse the 198 existing residents as well as 41 social homes in addition. DT added there has been a shift in the number of social homes but an increase in other alternative affordable homes. Overall affordability remains as the original commitments, but the types of home have changed slightly. TMc reiterated the Council's continuing commitment to 50% affordability.

TD asked what the implications would be if old Ebury residents decide they want to return but have not stated that previously. GM explained those who have continually and consistently opted not to move back will not have the option to change their mind.

- **Action: Circulate the link to the live Planning Committee ahead of the 20th April [MM]**
- **Action: Once completed, make all fact sheet presentations from this meeting available to the CFG [MM]**

Construction

DT identified that WCC want BYUK to begin early works in July and the main works in September/October. BYUK and WCC are in the process of finalising a cost for the build.

Management

DT confirmed that the preparation of the specification for the future manager of all 781 homes has begun, on the basis that there is a single manager covering all tenures on the estate. This is in keeping consistent with the original Ebury commitments.

Phasing/New Playground Proposal

SS updated the group that Block 8 will be infringing on to the existing playground area. SS is looking at moving the playground to the sports pitch and expanding the playground. The proposal is that the sports pitch is moved to one side of the current pitch and new pitch lines are drawn.

SS presented an illustration of how the proposal would look.

SS added all existing equipment would be moved to the remaining half of sports pitch. This will also create a new seating area to the north of the new playground, in a currently disused area. SS explained the current target date for completion is 28th May 2021.

TD asked if this will be temporary or permanent. SS confirmed it will be in place until 2024.

Social Value

DT explained that traditional social value doesn't work for Ebury and therefore doesn't allow the maximum benefits to be reaped. The focus of the social value strategy at Ebury will be to accumulate cash which can be accessed after the building work has completed, benefitting the residents and Ebury community for years to come.

The contractor building the 555 Phase 2 homes 2023-2028 will be required to identify a social value contribution, this can be benefits in kind or cash. The Ebury Team is exploring a cash contribution being significant in Phase 2 so that in 2028/29 and beyond, a whole range of support can be given to the residents of the New Ebury.

CPr asked if the social value fund could be used to lower the service charges for residents of the new Ebury. DT explained this could be an indirect possibility if the SV money was used to fund for some of the staff/employees on the estate who support relevant SV activity. Social value is primarily for the economic and social benefit of the new community.

TD asked about the possibility of employing Ebury residents to work on the estate as a means of reducing the service charge for staffing. DT confirmed this is a possibility.

4. Local Lettings Plan (LLP) for Phase 1

MC explained when new properties are built, there needs to be a formal method of allocating the new homes to people. The Council have a Housing Allocations Policy, but in addition WCC intend to produce a Local Lettings Plan specifically for Ebury Bridge. MC added pending planning consent, the team will begin to consult and have conversations with existing and offsite Ebury residents to agree the principals of who should be priority to get a new home on Ebury. MC presented the Tollgate House priorities as an example, this outlined 4 priority groups.

GP asked when this process is likely to begin. MC explained the initial discussion taking place with the CFG will be followed by an article in the April newsletter to inform the wider group of residents both on and off site waiting to return.

There will be an Ebury Local Lettings Plan (LLP) drafted and then circulated for consultation in May. The draft will be brought to the CFG meeting in May before the wider consultation starts. The aim is for the local lettings plan to be finalised and published by the end of June 2021.

TMc asked what work has been done on the number of overcrowded homes and what is the likely impact on the number of units on the estate. MC explained work was done initially to tackle the problem of overcrowded homes and therefore resulted in more family accommodation being proposed in the new Ebury, including a range of 3, 4 and 5 bedroom homes.

LB added a lot of temporary accommodation families have lived on the estate for years, so if they could be considered in the LLP for Ebury that would be really positive for them as they are also part of the Ebury Bridge Community and have settled and made local connections.

5. Leaseholder Journey Update

MC presented the Leaseholder Journey (A guide to property negotiations) created in partnership with CPr and JW. This document will be applicable to every any resident leaseholder in Westminster who is going through an estate renewal process.

JW raised issues with the timeliness of payments made from WCC. TMc suggested WCC look at alternative, faster ways of making payments and releasing funds to avoid complications when flats are sold.

LB emphasised that support is identified for vulnerable clients ahead of time to make the process more seamless. LB suggested a leaseholder forum (virtually) to discuss issues and share ideas and solutions and avoid leaseholders feeling isolated and overwhelmed by the decisions they will need to make. CPr suggested sending a survey/questionnaire to leaseholders who have sold up and moved off site to get feedback from those to use as a way of improving the overall process going forward.

Action: Circulate the guide to the CFG for review and comment [MM/CFG]

Action: Consider a virtual platform to launch the document to resident leaseholders [MC]

6. AOB

DT announced he will be leaving Ebury at the end of the month and introduced GM as the new Ebury Bridge Programme Director as of May 2021. TMc thanked David for his commitment to the Ebury residents and the project to get it to where it is to date. CFG members agreed and thanked David for his strong leadership to drive their new neighbourhood forward. CFG members stated that it was sad that DT would be leaving, but that they were pleased that GM would be continuing with the project and in the role as Programme Director.

7. Date of next CFG meeting

Tuesday 4th May 2021