

Ebury Bridge Community Futures Group – Meeting 37

4th August 2020, 6.30pm – 8.00pm

via Microsoft Teams

Members Attendance:

- Tom McGregor [TMc] – Chairperson
- George Panayioudou [GP]
- Joanna Winterbottom [JW]
- Cristina Pasantes [CPa]

Apologies:

- Fiona Quick [FQ]
- Sheila Martin [SM]
- Charlotte Pragnell [CPr]
- Tammy Dowdall [TD]
- Mohammed Eisa [ME]
- David Thompson [DT] – Project Director Ebury Bridge

WCC Officers and Consultants:

1. Gelina Menville [GM] – Ebury Bridge Regeneration Manager
2. Martin Crank [MC] – Communications & Engagement Manager
3. Stephen Stretton [SS] – Programme Manager
4. Louis Blair [LB] – Communities First (ITLA)
5. Millie Morrissey [MM] – Project Support Officer (Meeting notes)
6. Judy Flight [JF] – Non-Residential Project Manager

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 FQ and CPr. JF introduced herself to the group as the Project Manager for non-residential uses.

2. CFG Standing Items

Action List Review:

Item 5: JW asked where the site works, and updates can be found. MC explained that the monthly newsletter includes a construction and works update but for exceptions a letter will be posted through residents' doors, if bins are diverted etc. JW reiterated restrictions to access points need to be communicated to residents in advance of works taking place. MC informed the group that the removal of demolition waste to be recycled is happening within the next week or so. MC added that the Wellesley House walkway will be temporarily suspended. JW asked if the temporary traffic lights are connected related to the works on

the estate. MC explained the works are to do with the power network, but not under the Council's contract. MC offered to get more information regarding the UKPN works and circulated to the group. JW asked what the major demolition work means in terms of affecting residents, will there be access closures and large vehicles to be aware of. MC explained that the process of removing the rubble is carefully management and it only goes through the site entrance.

Action: Ensure there are informative comms regularly going to residents regarding all site works, access point restrictions and disruptive work [MC]

Item 5 (Pending List): TMc highlighted that the review of the Terms of Reference is an important action and will be picked up at the appropriate time in the near future.

Matters Arising:

Non-regeneration Points & The CFG

CPa updated the group on the status of the Ebury Bridge RA. CPa reached out to the old RA members to conduct an interest check on reviving the group. CPa planned to meet former members to have a follow-on conversation this week and will be able to update by the end of the week.

Action: SS and CPa to catch up offline.

SS reiterated that he is available to raise any estate issues with away from the meeting. GP explained there has been confusion as some WCC staff numbers have changed.

Action: Create and circulate an up to date crib sheet of officer's new contact numbers [MM]

Rumour Buster:

Nothing to raise.

3. Project Update

Planning Application:

GM updated the application has been submitted and is now live on the portal. Two comments have been received so far; one objection and one neutral comment. GM explained the application can be accessed easily through the Ebury Bridge website or through the WCC planning portal. GM welcomed all to comment if they wish to do so. LB asked is there a target date for committee. MC explained a response is expected and committee date is estimated to be this year. MC explained a 16-week turnaround has been agreed with the planning team. MC added the application was submitted on 11th July and there is 6-week window for the public to make comments which are formally reported on the portal. Comments made after the 6-week period must be made in writing to the planning department itself. TMc asked what publicity the planning application has had. MC explained Arup have sent information to leaseholders, there had been a statutory notice from The Council and a leaflet paired with a booklet which explained the key statistics, was posted through letterboxes a week or so ago.

Ground Investigations:

GM confirmed Concept work to test the ground conditions has now completed. Project Dewatering test wells exercise will continue until the end of the month. PDW will begin the connection between to two wells. GM added that JF Hunt hard demolition has started on Wellesley and Dalton and will soon be starting on Hillersdon.

GP asked how the wells are looking. GM explained they're looking good, but full details won't be known until the wells are connected. CPA asked will that include any more groundwork. GM explained there will be no more groundwork, but a pipe will be installed to connect the two, which won't be a trip hazard can walk and push buggies over it etc.

Phase 2 Tenure Mix:

GM presented an overview of the Phase 2 tenure mix. The overview showed: 170 social rent, 37 intermediate affordable rent, 5 intermediate ownership, 186 market rent and 134 market sale properties. GM explained this is within the outline section of the planning application. GP asked are these the homes by the railway. GM explained these are anywhere but the two blocks by the railway as those are in detail and this is in outline. LB asked is the approximate split of properties overall in two parts of Phase 2 known. GM explained there are 3 blocks in phase 2a and further 4 blocks in phase 2b, there are more homes in 2b. GP asked how The Council will calculate rent and subsequently how will those who are on housing benefit, claim their benefit. GM explained social rent will still be calculated using the same formula it does currently. Those on benefit would be expected to claim in the same way. JW asked if social rent will go up and is it calculated on size. GM explained an increase is expected however the rent will still be at social level in accordance with that formula. LB commented on the impressive level of detail in the planning application. LB asked what the average size of the flats are. MC explained there are a variety of different 2 bed sizes depending on where they sit in the block. MC offered to provide a definitive answer by the next meeting. MC added the needs of the estate and the borough will need to be looked at again, that will have an impact on the bedroom sizes and flat sizes. GM added a comparison exercise was done early in the year and Phase 1 could be isolated to give us an average if that would be helpful to people.

Action: Provide definitive average flat sizes [MC/GM]

Soft Market Testing:

MC explained Soft Market Testing is part of a process to ensure The Council is getting the best value for the money spent on this scheme. MC added phases 2a and 2b contain a section for market rent product and WCC want to test with the market if there is interest for a company to share cost and subsequently risk. MC openly invited CFG member to take part in this process. MC explained the testing will involve speaking to 8 separate investor partners, in 2-hour long meetings that will take place over a two-week period. MC explained a volunteering CFG member would not be required to attend all 8, they can attend 1 or 2 if that is preferable. CFG members should register their interest with GM or MM. GM asked members to get in contact in the next week or so if interested. GP asked why The Council are wanting to bring in more investors. MC explained that the cost of the renewal currently stands at approximately £350m and if there is potential for a partner investor who The Council like and they like The Council, some of the cost could be shared and some of the risk could be mitigated.

Re-opening of the Office:

GM updated that the Covid-19 risk assessment for the Regeneration Base has been completed. The Team are putting in place protocols and recommendations and the office is expected to re-open in late August. GM explained that officers based at the office will be from the communications team and the regeneration team along with Leasehold Negotiator Anton. A member of the relocations team will also be based with at the office one day a week, they will have a fixed day each week and that will be communicated when confirmed. GM added the office will reopen on an appointment only basis. To comply with the risk assessment, every visitor must have an appointment before coming into the office. GM explained that all meetings will take place in the Studio with two staff members and two members of the public able to meet safely, maintaining a distance while complying with regulations. LB asked can you replicate that online for people who don't feel comfortable coming in to meet in person. GM assured that is definitely possible; WhatsApp video calls, teams' virtual meetings as well as phone calls will all be offered to residents to see what they feel most comfortable with.

4. Non-residential Uses Update

Existing Retailers:

JF updated on progress with existing retailers and non-residential units on Ebury Bridge Road. There are currently 10 active units on the estate, with 5 long standing businesses. JF explained focus is mostly on those businesses to receive support and have their options considered. JF added there are 5 fixed term business on the estate, who will also have their options explained to them along with advice. All businesses will be accompanied in looking at future strategies. JF added that some temporary options such as moving off and returning to the newly built units and moving off on a permanent basis to relocate, are being explored. JF informed that the Retail Revival Group have been appointed to provide specific support to the 5 long standing business for 6 months.

Ebury Edge:

JF updated on expressions of interest in Ebury Edge. Expression shown so far: Community Café (17), Retail Units (70), Workspaces (34) & Community Hall (22).

JF explained more expression of interest is expected post lockdown. Site visits can now take place allowing those interested to view the site in full and therefore go on to make applications. JF explained a wide range and variety of business have expressed interest and applied for a space.

JF expanded on safety measures that will be imposed post Covid-19: Outdoor café tables will be used by its customers only as indoor spaces will be reduced from 40 to around 20 in order to maintain social distancing, there will be Covid-19 signage in the courtyard and surrounding area and finally each retailer will be responsible for opening and operating in a Covid-19 safe manner.

New Non-residential Use Provision:

JF explained there are currently proposals for there to be retail spaces on Ebury Bridge Road. The Community Hall and Workspaces will be in the Northern Gateway and the potential Gym, nursery and other retail unit will be in the Southern Gateway.

GP asked are Chelsea Barracks set to complete at the same time as Ebury Bridge. GM scheduled to meet with them next week so will provide an update.

Action: Update the group on Chelsea Barracks timescales [GM]

5. Social Value Principles

JF explained the CFG should be updated quarterly on progress but can be more regularly if desired. LB asked is the only communal space the management hub, in Phase 1. GM confirmed; however, the Meanwhile Space is expected to still be in use at that point also. JF explained the contractor has made a promise to provide a range of employment and skills, promote the use of local small and medium enterprises to procure materials and identify ways to tackle fuel and food poverty alongside homelessness and supporting ex-offenders. JF welcomed members to get in contact with any queries or problems. JF number will be included on the contact sheet

Action: Slides to be uploaded to the CFG SharePoint site [MM]

JF presented social value timescales, updated after Covid-19. JF explained the importance of feedback and monitoring. JW asked is the monitoring for Phase 1 or the whole project. JF confirmed it is for the whole project, an action plan will be collated, and progress will be reviewed regularly. MC added to ensure WCC get the most out of the contractor, an action plan will be assembled to monitor direction in accordance with the social value implications as promised. TMC added WCC will have big interest in seeing that they receive these promises as well as monitoring on behalf of the CFG and residents.

6. AOB

JW asked if anyone else has received notice of the planning application for 46-58 Ebury Bridge Road. GM to investigate further into this.

7. Date of next CFG meeting

Tuesday 1st September 2020