

Ekin Road Liaison Group Meeting – Tuesday 4th September 5.30pm to 6.30pm

Notes

Staff Attendees:

Ben Binns (BB), Interim Assistant Director, Development
Jim Pollard (JP), Senior Housing Development Manager
Molly Savino (MS), Development Officer
Nacer Dali (ND), Housing Officer
Dave Prinsep (DP), Assistant Director, Place Group

Councillor Attendees:

Cllr Naomi Bennett (Cllr NB)
Cllr Elliot Tong (Cllr ET)

Welcome (BB):

The meeting was well attended with around 20 residents present.
BB introduced staff and welcomed introductions from the attendees.

Options Appraisal Update (JP):

JP delivered a presentation and explained that the Stage 1 JLL Report is now available online (from 5.30 September 4th 2023) and will be submitted alongside the Housing Scrutiny Committee (HSC) Report on 19th September 2023 with a recommendation for approval to proceed with a shortlist of three options. JP reminded residents that they are able to speak at the committee or submit a statement if they wish.

The JLL Stage 1 report used RAG (red, amber, green) ratings against each of the seven options. It was explained that JLL recommended that option 2 (retrofit) option 6 (redevelopment with houses to the south and east retained) and option 7 (full redevelopment) are proposed to be reviewed in stage 2 with the aim of producing a June 24 HSC report.

The JLL Stage 1 Report also recommended that Option 2 becomes the 'base' option and the other two options scored the highest in the RAG rating.

JP referred to the Ekin Road map, pointing out that Ekin Close is not to be included within the options but the impact to those properties will be considered.

Next Steps (JP):

Reassurance was given that further consultation will be conducted and confidential one to one meetings have been offered to those that wish to speak about their individual circumstances or concerns with officers. This opportunity is important as many are reluctant to discuss their situation in public and some do not have the confidence that others have to speak at public meetings.

Following the HSC, taking place on Tuesday 19th September, one of the first steps will be to conduct a further survey of all residents to gain an understanding of their viewpoints at this stage. This will be completed by the end of the November and following comments made, the Council will endeavour to ensure that everyone receives the survey.

A more detailed analysis will be undertaken of options 2, 6 and 7 in order to establish the preferred option for the estate. The outcome of this work will be communicated with

residents and there will be further consultation before a final report is submitted to the Council's Housing Scrutiny Committee in June 2024.

Individual appointments - the open drop-in sessions will be replaced with sessions offering confidential appointments. The first of these will take place on Thursday 21st September between 10am and 1pm at The Abbey People Hub, Barnwell Road. Further sessions will be on the following dates and times:

- Thursday 5th October 1pm to 4pm
- Tuesday 24th October 4pm to 7pm
- Tuesday 14th November 10am to 1pm

If these dates are not suitable, then we will seek to offer residents another appointment at a mutually agreeable time either in person, at their home or by telephone.

Liaison Group Meetings - the next Liaison Group meetings are scheduled to take place on the following dates. Details of these meetings will be communicated with all residents in due course:

- Tuesday 5th December 2023
- Monday 4th March 2024
- Monday 3rd June 2024

BB added that the JLL Stage 1 report is now live on the Ekin Road website. The HSC report will be published on the City Council website on 7th September.

Questions (BB):

Resident: When will the buildings be taken down? 'We all know it will happen'

Response: No decisions have been made at this point. We expect Council to take a decision in June 2024. After that, if there is a decision to redevelop anything, planning will then be required. HSC approval is a separate decision to planning.

Resident: The bungalows have not been spoken about

Response: Option 2 retains the bungalows.

Resident: Concern raised about a flat resident that has had mould on their walls for 6 years. They added that the people in the flats are not being heard. The process is stringing everyone along and you are not telling us the truth.

Response: We urge residents to contact us with these types of concerns. The Council's Mould and Condensation process was set up in December 2022 to deal with these issues. We have not stopped essential maintenance works.

Resident: Will you consider the people living in Ekin Road or just look at the land available when making decisions.

Response: It was confirmed that there are various aspects to health and wellbeing when considering the future of the estate and these are a very important part of this review.

Resident: What is the percentage of private/social housing on the new development?

Response: Policy sets out that minimum of 40% affordable housing will be delivered.

Resident: Does that mean there will be less affordable housing than there is currently?

Response: No, we always look to increase the council rented property on any redevelopment schemes.

Resident: Will the homes be cramped into small spaces?

Response: There is always careful consideration on the layout of new developments with the inclusion of open spaces. New homes meet Nationally Described Space Standards, which are often bigger than older properties.

Resident: Will East Barnwell development offer affordable houses?

Response: East Barnwell will likely have a majority of council rented homes. There is a suggestion that the houses within the scheme could be sold on the open market, this is under review.

Resident: How can we trust the houses on Ekin Road will be affordable if the estate is developed?

Response: We are looking across the stock and how we might be able to provide larger council rented homes. There is a pressure on cost and land available, but this will continue to be reviewed.

Resident: What is the impact on a single person living in a 3 bed home.

Response: The Council looks at individual circumstances, there is guidance on 'under-occupying' within the decant policy which indicates in principle a maximum of one additional bedroom, but it was emphasised that it is important for individual tenants to come forward and discuss their concerns.

Resident: How can you rehouse people seeing as there are 9 tenants in Fanshawe Road that the Council can't find homes for.

Response: That figure is not correct and we will confirm the correct figure. The Council consider other close by developments that are being delivered at the same time as decanting, to ensure there are homes for people to move to.

Post meeting note: This statement is incorrect, at the time of this meeting all tenants at Fanshawe Road had been successfully relocated to properties of their choosing.

Concerns were raised about tenants who move to properties on the estate and may need to move again.

Post meeting note: New tenants are being advised about the options appraisal process ahead of signing up to new tenancies at Ekin Road

Resident: What happened to the plans presented in June 2022?

Response: The Council decided to share something to engage. We heard that some people want this to happen. We have since paused to look through the options.

Resident: The Council haven't thought enough about the people that own their own properties. There is a concern that people being evicted from houses will struggle to afford a new similar property.

Response: Reassurance was given that in the instance of redevelopment, the Council has excellent track record of supporting homeowners with the move and purchase process. The council has not had to evict anyone through a Compulsory Purchase Order to date.

One resident indicated that the Council will need to use CPO powers to evict some residents on the estate. They raised concern that the Council did not release the instruction to Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL) despite being asked to and that residents were not consulted during the shortlisting process.

Resident: Why should we trust the Council?

Response: We have done a lot of work with individuals on the estate outside of the Liaison Group Meetings. We must listen to everybody across the estate. The instruction for JLL is published on the Ekin Road website. The amount of information being shared on the website

is extremely high compared to other similar projects, the Council are exercising a high level of transparency. We agree that we must earn your trust.

Resident: It was suggested by a resident that the summer 2022 survey showed that the residents did not want redevelopment.

Response: The meeting was reminded that some three quarter of responses supported redevelopment and although some criticisms have been made of the survey the Council considers that this does indicate substantial support for redevelopment. We recognise that there are differing opinions though. The final survey report can be found [here](#) and shows that 63 responses were received from 58 households (out of 122) and 77.5% strongly agreed or agreed in favour of redevelopment.

In response to a further question, it was confirmed that there will be a further survey.

Resident: Further concerns were raised about the mental wellbeing of young people on the estate and the risk of young people having to move schools if they are decanted.

Response: BB responded that should redevelopment go ahead, we would look to meet individually, we have a very good track record of placing people in new council homes in areas they want to be including being close to their preferred school. Emergency banding would entitle tenants to bid for homes in Cambridge (or other districts if required)

The Council's Regeneration policy can be found [here](#).