

## **Ekin Road Liaison Group Meeting – Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December, 10.30am to 12pm**

### **Notes**

#### **Staff attendees:**

Fiona Bryant (FB) Director of Enterprise and Sustainable Development  
Jim Pollard (JP) Senior Housing Development Manager  
Nacer Dali (ND) Housing Officer  
Molly Savino (MS) Development Officer  
Mandy Powell Hardy (MP) Tenant Representative  
Alan Small (AS) Repairs Operations Manager

#### **Group member attendees:**

5x tenants, 1x leaseholder, 1 freeholder

#### **Welcome and Introduction (FB):**

No decisions have been made. This meeting is the second version of the same meeting which we held on Wednesday night. Having two meetings gives people more chance to attend and engage.

Staff introductions, followed by resident introductions:

#### **Principles (FB)**

There are strong views on both side, which is totally understandable, please speak one at a time, respect opinions of others. Everyone's view is valid.

When we have gone through the notes from the meetings, they will be uploaded to Ekin Road website.

Aim to finish at 12pm

#### **Term of Reference (FB)**

The Terms of Reference explain the purpose of the group and the way it will work (Copies were handed out).

We run a number of liaison groups for engaging with residents – this is not a decision-making group, we want feedback from a discussion. Report on progress and feedback.

At the Housing Scrutiny Committee, the Executive Councillor will take decisions.

#### **Background (JP)**

**Question:** What do City Council want to do? Our sewage pipes are breaking. Ekin Close are also suffering with this. If redeveloped where will vehicle access go?

**Answer:** FB - no decisions yet and the options are wide. We need to consider status, condition, available funding and the wider environment. As there is such a sense of community and desire to stay this is very complex. We want to develop options, to give benefits to most.

We appreciate that some people want something to happen quickly but it will take time to make such a big decision.

**Question:** That is different timeline to presented before?

**Answer:** FB - Thats right, we want to go into detail of each option, it may take longer to come up with best possible option.

**Question:** Several years?

**Answer:** FB - We will do this part as quickly as possible. But yes.

**Answer:** JP - We don't know what residents will say until we ask them. There needs to be a response to how people have reacted. The complexity is that there is a varied building form mixed together on Ekin Road. We may not be able to deliver what everybody wants but will do our best to benefit the majority. We will try to keep this to months rather than years.

FB: We will take a preferred decision to the Housing Scrutiny Committee. If planning is needed this will take several months before a start on site. If people need to move permanently or temporarily, we will work with individuals which can also take a long time.

JP: The Potter Raper report is on the website. The word that comes out most strongly is 'fair' and the report raises problems. The Council are concerned about level of repairs required and sustainability. The focus of concern is 6x flat blocks and bungalows. It is a problem that the blocks are scattered among houses.

The report says there is opportunity to provide new homes, there are approx. 2000 people on waiting list for housing. Land is difficult to acquire. Little for sale and is expensive. We have carried out developments on other council land – for example the former depot at Mill Road and small garage sites.

We must think when we need to spend a lot of money on an estate - is it going to be fit for purpose for a longer period? Should we keep pouring money into repairs or redevelopment?

The report is a starting point. We are aware that issues raised are not adequately covered including Damp, Mould and Condensation. Some items need to be explored more. Potter Raper haven't looked closely at what a redevelopment might look at.

The Council also commissioned a report from Feilden and Mawson – which looks at the challenge of improving sustainability across the Council's housing stock. This is based on analysis of types of dwelling – some of the types are found on Ekin Road but we need to consider the Ekin Road estate specifically. In particular, the flats at Ekin Road were not one of the types considered; these flats were constructed through a post-war pre-fabrication method known as Easy-Form.

**Question:** There is similarity to Fanshawe and Colville Road with the buildings

JP: There are the same issues, but estates are to be judged individually

FB: Driver is sustainability and energy bills

**Resident comment:** There will be ongoing spend on repairs. Maybe for decades - is it all worth it?

### **Current Picture of the Estate (AS)**

There is no hold on any repairs - every report will be inspected and actioned

There is the new Damp Condensation and Mould process which is on the website. The surveyor will be in place from Monday.

**Resident comment:** I have a massive problem with damp and cold. It costs me £6 a day on heating. I have followed all recommendations; I have invested money but still freezing cold. Floors are damp.

AS: I am working over the Christmas period. There is a dedicated team now to address these issues. Some repairs evolve to major planned works.

ND: I have carried out tenancy audits, DCM is a problem even in summer months - major issue. Construction not suitable for families that grow. Sewers are also a major problem.

**Resident comment:** Huge issue is the insulation/concrete structure.

**Question:** In the 2020 Potter Raper report, it mentions monitoring of cracks at rear of properties - was that done? Do we have results of report?

**Answer:** JP - We don't have those results. We will come back with more info on what has and hasn't been done

FB: We will also need to look at updated costings

**Question:** How often will these meetings be?

**Answer:** FB - Quarterly unless otherwise required.

**Question:** Are major works on hold?

**Answer:** FB - If we see major need for planned works when investigating, it will depend on their urgency.

**Question:** What is causing subsidence?

**Answer:** FB - we are looking at this technical detail of this. Not yet aware of reason.

**Answer:** JP - The reports reflect the carbonation of concrete which can cause movement

**Question:** Is it safe for us to be in them?

**Answer:** JP - No one who has prepared reports has indicated any immediate risk to residents

**Resident comment:** These works will lead to Ekin Road becoming a 'money pit'

**Question:** Will government funding be used for these options?

**Answer:** FB - yes for additional homes but not replacement – we will work through all that in detail

**Resident comment:** So many families desperate for housing (in Ekin Road and elsewhere). I want to move now!

**Question:** Cllr NB - I was at the flats last week. Regarding subsidence, people of upper floors who have cracks are very scared. What can we say?

**Answer:** JP - Potter Raper are not structural engineers. Millward are the Structural Engineers who have worked on this estate and they have not raised that level of concern. .

**Question:** Where would everyone move to?

**Answer:** FB - We work closely with individuals that are being moved away. Project at East Barnwell may create homes for local people. Tenants would have choice to move back. We always try to keep people close to community/job etc.

FB: Everything will be done to be least disruptive as possible. The construction would be phased, with the hope that people can move straight into new property.

Finished meeting at approx 11:30am