

Ekin Road Liaison Group Meeting – Monday 4th March 2024 5.30pm to 6.30pm Notes

Staff Attendees:

Ben Binns (BB), Assistant Director, Development
Jim Pollard (JP), Senior Housing Development Manager
Andrew Johnson (AJ), Regeneration Manager
Molly Savino (MS), Development Officer
Tom Sizer (TS), Housing Officer Assistant
Emily Gibson (EG), JLL
Michael Griffiths (MG), JLL

Councillor Attendees:

Exec Cllr Mike Davey (Cllr MD)
Exec Cllr Gerri Bird (Cllr GB)
Exec Cllr Rachel Wade (Cllr RW)
Exec Cllr Simon Smith (Cllr SS)
Cllr Naomi Bennett (Cllr NB)
Cllr Elliot Tong (Cllr ET)
Cllr Dave Baigent (DB)

Welcome (BB):

The meeting was well attended with over 25 residents present. BB introduced staff and welcomed introductions from the attendees reminding all treat each other with respect to courtesy. All questions will be answered and attendees to ask questions in a courteous way. Resident videoing the presentation was asked by other members to stop videoing and the device was turned off.

JLL Draft Report (BB):

The JLL draft report is live on the website along with the council's response which is a separate document. The italics within the response document indicate text taken directly from the main report.

The report shows that refurbishment cannot be delivered as it does not deliver as many benefits as redevelopment.

As made clear in the report, none of the options available to the council are financially risk-free, but there is a housing crisis in the city and the council takes it's responsibility seriously to deliver the best housing outcomes. JLL recommends that the council explore alternate development of the entire estate with a development partner.

Providing a mixed tenure scheme (mix of council owned and private sale properties) will reduce financial risk to the council. The emerging design provide fewer but larger council properties to respond to the need for larger family homes.

Key Dates (BB):

- Shaping Abbey public event: Wednesday 13th March 5.45pm at Christ the Redeemer Church
- Consultation events: Saturday 16th March 10am to 1pm and Wednesday 20th March 4pm to 7pm. At Barnwell Baptist Church
- Online webinar: Monday 18th March 6pm to 7pm. Register on the website

All residents are encouraged to make appointments with Andrew Johnson either at the resident's home, in the Council offices, on the phone or online to discuss their personal circumstances confidentially.

Questions (BB):

Resident: Will the council consult on full demolition option?

Response: correct, that is what is presented as the emerging design.

Cllr MD: Note that the final decision is not made, just consulting

Resident: Will the 3 and 4 bedroom houses be for council tenants or private sale?

Response: This balance between council and private has not been decided yet, but the working assumption is 50%-50%. Other developments in the city are all affordable, some have a 50/50 mix and some are in between. Note that the proposed development at East Barnwell is 100% affordable

Resident: What is the timescale?

Response: We will hold the next Liaison Group meeting on 3rd June, followed by Housing Scrutiny Committee on 18th June and the papers for the committee will be live on the council website beforehand

We would expect to submit a planning application later on, this process could take 6 months depending on complexity of design. We would estimate a further 6 months before planning approval.

The delivery would likely be in 2 phases. But running alongside this is the timeline for relocating which we will look at between now and June and a recommendation for this will be taken to the Housing Scrutiny Committee.

Resident: Where could people move to?

Response: We would look at new developments as well as existing stock. We talk about to individuals about where they want to live. We have made the estimate that 20% would come back to the estate, but we usually find that it is less.

Resident: It looks as though this was the plan from the beginning. It seems that most flat residents want to go and some house residents want to stay. Our home is fine and several others are also fine.

Resident: In the meantime, residents are living in mouldy flats.

Cllr GB: We have to do this properly by law and we want the best for all of you. Nothing has been decided, after the consultation period we will know more.

We have built so many 1-2 bed flats around the city, we know that we need more houses for larger families.

We will set up a task force where councillors and officers look at properties with surveyors to address these issues raised.

Resident: Will tenants still get priority?

Response: If approval at committee, tenants will need to register on Homelink if not already. The emergency banding is adjusted automatically, and housing need is assessed. If you are overcrowded and in need of a house that would be reflected in application.

Resident: Workmen have been heard saying they won't be doing any work as homes will be demolished in June.

Response: Agreed to take that away

Resident: For somebody with a single occupancy, what support will be offered and how quickly would they be expected to move?

Response: We wouldn't expect an individual to move in one day. You will be informed about moving dates in advance and we can help with planning the move. Council tenants will be given 4 weeks to move between two properties.

Resident: What happens if the council can't reach negotiations with homeowners?

Response: We consider that as a risk and are talking to the homeowners individually, understanding their needs and so far that has been successful during other regeneration schemes in the city.

Resident: if a negotiation can't be reached with a homeowner, what does that mean for tenants? Do we have to wait until negotiations are complete before we can move?

Response: You will have already been given emergency banding and can move out and will not be affected by others on the estate who have not yet moved.

The council have been successful in dealing with buy backs, we are confident that resolution can be reached.

Cllr MD: We have never had to evict a resident through a compulsory purchase order.

Resident: What phasing will be recommended?

Response: If we have a phased approach, we may not be able to move everyone at same time but this is being carefully considered. No decisions have been made on this yet.

Resident: What will be the delay for phase 2 and who will be in phase 2?

Response: Clarity will be provided on that at the Housing Scrutiny Committee in June.

Resident: If people are still unhappy with full redevelopment, how will you revise your recommendation. Could you reconsider partial redevelopment?

Response: We often see design changes from consultation. The feedback could be negative/positive.

Resident: If the council take a phased approach, it would be ideal if elderly, vulnerable, disabled to be categorised first?

Response: That does often happen anyway, if everyone is on emergency banding. We would have to look at each household and their specific needs.

Resident: Given similarities on expected deficit and income between the partial and full redevelopment, why just looking at full redevelopment?

JLL Response: JLL followed a Green book process when reviewing the options. This process looks across 5 different cases, not just financial point of view. The recommendation to the council is to look at alternative development.

Resident: What does HM treasury know about people and impact on families? Within the report is only half a page on resident wellbeing.

JLL response: The survey feedback was taken into consideration which includes health and wellbeing. There is a detailed appendix which will be published with the final report.

Cllr NB: There is a statistic error on crimes within the report

Response: JLL agreed to clarify and correct.

Post meeting note from JLL: We have reviewed the calculations and the initial crime statistics detailed in the Stage 2 Report used the population of Cambridge. The crime rate using the Abbey Ward population is 25.21%. The crime rate for the Ekin Road Estate assuming 2.5 people per household on the estate is 19.34%. We will incorporate the revised statistics into the upcoming report.

Resident: 10% compensation will be given to homeowners on top of market valuation and moving costs. Will this be the same for people that have lived there longer?

Response: The amounts that are paid to homeowners are based on the land compensation act. 10% for resident homeowners is set by government. The £8,100 payment to tenants is also set by government.

And any disturbance payments are on top. For tenants, we pay £1,250 direct to the resident which is used to cover costs. For homeowners, these costs are dealt with differently, all at the end with the solicitor as part of the purchase.