

## **Ekin Road Liaison Group Meeting – Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024 5.30pm to 6.30pm**

### **Staff Attendees:**

Ben Binns (BB), Interim Assistant Director, Development  
Jim Pollard (JP), Senior Housing Development Manager  
Andrew Johnson (AJ), Regeneration Manager  
Molly Savino (MS), Development Officer  
Sam Acklam (TS), Housing Officer

### **Councillor Attendees:**

Exec Cllr Mike Davey (Cllr MD)  
Exec Cllr Gerri Bird (Cllr GB)  
Exec Cllr Rachel Wade (Cllr RW)  
Cllr Naomi Bennett (Cllr NB)  
Cllr Elliot Tong (Cllr ET)  
Cllr Dave Baigent (Cllr DB)  
Cllr Tim Griffin (Cllr TG)

### **Welcome (BB):**

The meeting was well attended with over 25 residents present.  
BB introduced staff and welcomed all.

First 10 minutes of the discussion took place outside, until the church hall was opened – printed copies of the presentation were handed out.

The final JLL report was posted onto the website and is also available at the Abbey People Hub and the Library on Barnwell Road.

The new resident engagement timeline was shared which sets out the upcoming quarterly liaison group meetings, webinars, design workshop and a target planning application in January 2025.

The recent consultation concluded on 3 May 2024. All feedback is set out within the report which is available on the website.

The council have listened and a proposal will be taken to Housing Scrutiny Committee on 18 June 2024 to retain 14 houses to the south of Ekin Road. This plan prioritises the delivery of larger, family homes. With East Barnwell, redevelopment in the area would achieve 184 new council homes, which is 76 more than there is now.

## **What would this mean for residents? (AJ)**

The Housing Scrutiny Committee recommendations include giving emergency banding to all tenants immediately following 18 June. This may take some time to filter through the system, please be patient and contact us if you have any concerns.

The process for tenants consists of bidding on suitable properties that are advertised on HomeLink weekly. Residents are encouraged to only bid on properties that they are interested in. We will be contacting every household again to provide support through this process.

Homeowners will be supported through this decant process. Meetings are available to talk through personal circumstances and ask questions.

Concerns have been raised that some repairs might not take place or are on hold. We will provide further information to provide clarity on this, including contact details to use.

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: What exactly does emergency banding mean?

Response: There are bands A to D that applicants on Home Link, in addition there is an emergency band that is awarded to residents effected by redevelopment schemes that has the highest priority.

Resident: What if you don't take the properties you are offered?

Response: You can plan as many bids as you like, we encourage you to only bid on properties that are suitable for your household and you are interested in.

Resident: Some residents in Ekin Road do not speak English as their first language, is translation available?

Response: The council has a translation service and we will be happy to translate material if required.

Resident: Is this plan the final plan?

Response: It will still need to go through a preplanning process, some details may change.

Resident: How will you engage with residents? We haven't spoken to anyone at our door.

Response: We have a timeline of resident engagement activities planned. We have knocked on every door on the estate at different times of the day and where there was no response, a letter was posted. We are happy to book a meeting with households on request – please get in touch with Andrew.

Resident: Can you put the regeneration policy on the website?

Response: This was agreed and will be arranged

Resident: Do you have a list of people that haven't contacted the council back?

Response: We have been engaging in a number of different ways. We do have a list of households that we haven't heard back from.

Resident: Why have you reached households that don't live in Ekin Road for the recent survey?

Response: Prior to planning application, we often go out to the wider community for feedback. The results set out within the final report reflect the location of the responses and are clearly split between households from Ekin Road, 1 mile distance, 3 mile distance and beyond.

Resident: Why are you no longer considering full redevelopment?

Response: We have reviewed options balancing the financial viability, planning constraints and the feedback from the residents which has led to the current proposal to retain 14 houses.

Resident: The retained houses may have concerns about the foundations with construction taking place close by

Response: This will be looked into whilst plans progress.

Resident: Last week we looked at HomeLink and there was only 2 properties available. What available homes will there be for all Ekin tenants?

Response: There are often weeks with a few properties available and some weeks with more. Many are flats and some houses do become available, however they tend to be in high demand. You will have emergency banding so will have priority.

We have new builds becoming available later this year and next (list shared on the presentation slides). We appreciate that new build are not for everybody, but we are happy to arrange open days to show tenants new developments in the city.

Resident: Can we view a home before saying yes?

Response: Yes, you will never be asked to say yes without seeing it first.

Resident: Will the red line boundary on the latest plan expand or retract throughout the pre-planning process? Which happened with Fanshawe.

Response: The plan submitted within the recommendation to the Housing Scrutiny Committee excludes the southern 14 houses from the red-line plan. There has already been extensive review of the inclusion of all semi-detached houses throughout the options appraisal process. Please note that red line boundaries typically do not change during the pre-planning process.

Fanshawe was different as the red line boundary removed properties that were not going to be refurbished by the Cambridge Investment Partnership.

Resident: What financial support is there for residents?

Response: For tenants, the first payment is the smaller amount which helps with removals and general moving costs £1,250. This is paid before you move and you don't need to provide proof of what this will be used for. Once you have moved into your new home, a larger compensation payment of £8,100 is paid. This amount is set by the government. Any housing related debts or rent arrears will be deducted from this amount.

Resident: Some people can't pay to recarpet or redecorate, what help will they get?

Response: We understand everyone's household needs will be different. Financial support will be available on a case-by-case basis.

Resident: What is the schedule for homeowners?

Response: Firstly a red book valuation is arranged by an independent surveyor. If you don't accept this, another valuation can be arranged. Once purchase price is agreed, the sale can proceed. Homeowners will be paid a compensation payment (10% of market value for resident owners, 7.5% for non-resident owners/landlords).

Extra costs and fees including SDLT will be covered, again this is dealt with on a case-by-case basis. This process can begin immediately following Housing Scrutiny Committee decision.

Resident: Will details on phasing be made available in the committee report?

Response: No, this detail will follow.

Cllr GB: Once we are through the committee on the 18<sup>th</sup>, this will help with certainty. Anyone that hasn't had contacted with the team, please speak to Andrew Johnson. We would like to arrange a tour to a new development which will provide reassurance to some.

Cllr RW: Were contact details posted through the doors of those that weren't in during door knocking?

Response: Yes, letters were posted. Those that have not seen letters encouraged to leave contact details with Molly Savino.

Cllr ET: How many new properties will be available? What is the timescale for people moving?

Response: Detail was provided on the new homes available nearby and the timescale for residents.

Cllr NB: Please speak to officers at the Abbey People big Lunch on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June. We have heard from residents that are interested in moving to SCDC. There are some new developments near by and both councils will share nomination rights. Hopefully more information will be available soon about Marleigh and Springstead.

Special thanks to the new Housing Officer for the area, Sam Acklam for joining the meeting. Who joined the council recently and is looking forward to meeting residents over the coming weeks.