

Central Hill Residents Panel Meeting
Tuesday 10th January 2017, 7pm to 9pm
Lunham Road Day Centre

Attendance

Residents: Nicola, Karen, Victor, Clifford, Jonathan (Chair)

LB Lambeth: Fiona Cliffe, Julian Hart, Cllr Matthew Bennett

PPCR: Ron Houston, Helen Redd (minutes)

Purpose of meeting: Review information being presented to Cabinet in February 2017

1.	1.1 Jonathan welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced its purpose.
2.	<p>Feasibility and financial information - Airey Miller</p> <p>2.1 Julian took residents through the financial scenarios and recent changes made to these. Primarily this was the Tenant homeloss payments have been revised from £5,3k to £5,8k in line with the statutory requirements, He reiterated that homeloss payments are 10% of purchase price for resident leaseholders and 7.5% for non-residents leaseholders.</p> <p>2.2 Clifford asked why the homeloss was set at 10% when the regeneration scheme in Heathrow was giving residents 25%. Julian stated that it could be due to the nature of the scheme and special arrangements made however the sum set by Lambeth was based on statutory amounts that other landlords also adhere to.</p> <p>2.3 Nicola stated that she had put forward a Freedom of Information (Fol) request for all of the non-redacted documentation related to finances for the Central Hill regeneration and said that by law, residents could have the information requested.</p> <p>2.4 Julian stated that some of the financial information was commercially sensitive and was not in the public realm so as not to give an unfair advantage to building companies bidding for contracts before the tender process begins. He explained that LBL had already gone through the Information Commission that had advised that LBL did not have to release this information. Therefore it will not be released. Nicola disagreed with this and said that she would continue with the Fol request to release this information.</p> <p>2.5 Karen reiterated that residents want to work in partnership but she did not think this was being demonstrated by LBL.</p> <p>2.6 Jonathan suggested that they could not agree on this point so there was no reason to continue requesting the information at the meeting.</p> <p>2.7 Victor raised a number of questions about the Leaseholder and Freeholder financial information. He asked why the number of homeowners had changed from 109 to 80. Residents further asked how the 80% return figure was worked out.</p>

2.8 Julian said that the number of resident leaseholders predicted not to remain was 80%. This figure was based upon his own working assumptions and experience of other regeneration schemes.

2.9 Karen stated that after working with residents for 2 years, she was surprised that LBL were still working on assumptions rather than real numbers. Victor added that LBL needed to talk to residents and not assume. Fiona said that assumptions showing only 20% of resident leaseholders remaining was presented to the REP.

2.10 Victor asked how LBL had calculated the percentages of people predicted to return to the estate. Julian said that LBL had used the number of households of known resident leaseholders taken from LBL record and that there were approximately 100 resident leaseholders, of which 80 (80%) would be remaining.

2.11 One resident stated that LBL had assumed that mortgages can be transported therefore this sum within the financial document is not real money. Jonathan clarified that 80% of leaseholders who remain on the estate will not be paying the full value of buying their new properties and therefore LBL will carry the debt.

2.12 Julian agreed and said that the valuations are paper transactions. The more leaseholders who return to the estate into the replacement homes, the less income LBL will gain back as properties could otherwise be sold.

2.13 Jonathan asked about the 60% requirement for leaseholders (non-rent option) within the key guarantees. Julian stated that the 60% figure will be removed from the key guarantees. He clarified that all resident leaseholders who want to move into one of the new properties will only be expected to transfer the value of their property and home loss payment into the new home.- this would mean porting their mortgage. There will be no requirement to purchase 60% of a new property.

2.14 Jonathan, residents and PPCR asked for further clarifications relating to who will be expected to pay rent as this was no longer clear. Julian said that only households where LBL would have to take over the mortgage (option D in the key guarantees) would be expected to pay a charge that would cover these costs.

2.15 Clifford and Karen were unhappy about how properties were being valued by LBL (using its current property calculator) as the values were out of date. They were also concerned with values being lower than open market and that they could be forced to sell to LBL at the price offered. Karen asked what would happen if she refused to sell because the price offered by LBL was not agreeable. Julian said that residents had the opportunity to get their own independent valuation done and that the calculator valuations will be refreshed to reflect current house prices.

2.16 Jonathan said that this point (flexibility) needed to be clearly reflected within the key guarantees need and Nicola suggested removing the figure 60% completely if it is no longer relevant.

2.17 Helen asked if the key guarantees would come back to the REP to view before going to cabinet. Julian said no as they had been through a consultation process and the questions raised by residents across Lambeth about the key guarantees were being worked through by LBL. This had reflected the changes to them and they are no longer open to consultation. He further stated that the changes would be appended to the current key guarantees and presented to the Cabinet at the February meeting. A decision on the key guarantees will be taken before the Cabinet makes its decision about the Central Hill regeneration but both will be made at the same meeting.

	<p>2.18 Jonathan said that the REP had been unhappy about the enhanced key guarantees going out to residents before being seen by the REP. Fiona replied that this was not the case as they were presented to the REP in September. She clarified that it was 'The Future of Central Hill Estate' booklet was seen by the REP but members had not being given time to consider it before distribution.</p> <p>2.19 Jonathan stated that the Key Guarantees booklet was also not seen before it was sent to residents and it was the format in which they were being presented that was not reviewed.</p> <p>2.20 Julian said that the key guarantees were going through final changes and residents can comment on them through the usual process once they are released with the Cabinet papers.</p> <p>Actions: None</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Early buybacks</p> <p>3.1 Jonathan explained that this item was on the agenda because of the change made by LBL.</p> <p>3.2 Julian said that funds had been allocated to buy back leaseholders homes for the first 6 months of the scheme. Once a decision is made LBL will write to all leaseholders on the estate to get an indication of who will be bought back. This will give LBL an understanding of the scale of the buyback and then they can start programming them in. He said that part of this process would be to prioritise emergency situations first.</p> <p>3.3 Julian further stated that funding for the other buybacks would be made in a business case to LBL and once agreed this will allow unlimited buybacks for all Central Hill homeowners. He said his team were working on the business case and that this will have to go through the borough's process.</p> <p>3.4 Ron said that he thought there would be a lot of competing demands and asked how LBL would prioritise between these. Julian said that residents will need to go through a process and this will determine how buybacks will be prioritised, however, those in emergency situations will be first to be considered. He stated that outlining/detailing priorities based on either health or other issues had in his experience of other regeneration schemes, not worked well, so decisions will be made on a case by case basis.</p> <p>3.5 Nicola stated that this was a change to the messages previously given to residents whereby they were told that once the Cabinet made its decision go ahead, any leaseholder could have their property brought back without question. She added that there had been a document previously released that outlined how much money had been allocated for early buybacks on each estate. She said it was essential to know how much money was to be made available. Nicola added that residents should not be made to go through an application process to sell their properties if LBL has promised to buy them.</p> <p>3.6 Julian reiterated that there were sufficient funds available for the first 6 months of the project and when the business case is completed and agreed, then buybacks would be unlimited.</p> <p>3.7 Jonathan asked Julian to provide a clear assurance to residents that after the first 6 months buybacks would be unlimited.</p> <p>3.8 Victor stated that the REP had asked for these to be included within the original set of guarantees, and now they had been given no reason for them not being included. He asked what guarantees the LBL can provide to ensure the business case was guaranteed. Julian said that the business case will be agreed and it just needed to go through the LBL process.</p>

3.9 Karen explained that residents believed LBL when they said they would buy back properties once a decision has been made. She further explained that resident's responses to the LBL survey carried out by TCC may have been influenced by this offer which has now changed.

3.10 Fiona confirmed that the early buybacks were not part of the TCC survey or consultation and no responses to this were in the 300 surveys returned.

3.11 Karen stated that in her opinion the surveys completed were invalid. This was on the basis that the approach taken by TCC (filling in surveys for residents) did not clarify whether the information in the questionnaires were residents' actual views. She said, therefore there were no safeguards in relation to the findings. Clifford stated that he agreed with this, as none of the questionnaires were signed by the residents themselves.

3.12 Victor asked why the business case for the buybacks was not already in place given that LBL had been talking to residents for 2 years about the regeneration. Julian said that it just wasn't ready.

3.13 Jonathan raised his concern that the buybacks were no longer part of the key guarantees and now this was much less certain. He said that the REP had been asking why they hadn't been included for 18 months and this still remained an unanswered question.

3.14 Julian said that on other estates where buybacks are already happening, they had gone smoothly, were completed quickly and there had not been any problems or complaints from residents. He said that residents need to go through the process and will be helped through this by LBL.

3.15 Nicola stated that she knew residents on other schemes who had sold their properties and they were happy. She asked why residents had to go through a process whereby they have to give their personal circumstances. If they were selling on the open market this would not be required and LBL are obligated to buy back the properties. Karen agreed with this and said there should not have to be an application process.

3.16 Fiona reiterated that within the key guarantees, residents could get their own valuations and that this was a safeguard.

3.17 Ron stated that the situation can become complicated if valuations are not agreed and it may lead to arbitration and CPOs.

3.18 Victor said that at the moment it meant that nothing was on the table for early buybacks. They are not included within the key guarantees, there is not a process to prioritise, and there is no business case to secure the buy back funds after the first 6 months. Julian said that his team were working on the business case and that it should be agreed before the first 6 months of the decision being made.

3.19 Clifford asked who would pick up the costs levied by mortgage lenders if leaseholders are charged extra for early mortgage payments. Fiona said this would be paid for from the disturbance costs.

3.20 Karen asked who was carrying the costs of the buybacks - Lambeth Council or Homes for Lambeth. Cllr Bennett said it could be either. Julian clarified that Homes for Lambeth will need to borrow the money for the buybacks. He further stated that if the Cabinet decide to go ahead with the regeneration then LBL will secure the funding for the buybacks and Homes for Lambeth will be established.

	<p>3.21 Victor asked Julian to confirm that any leaseholder will be able to have their property brought back 6 months after the decision is made to go ahead with the regeneration. Julian said that LBL should be in a position to do this.</p> <p>3.22 Cllr Bennett reminded the REP that the buybacks would not happen straight away if residents go for a judicial review. Julian confirmed that this did not apply to any exceptional cases.</p> <p>3.23 Fiona reminded the REP that early buybacks ahead of a Cabinet decision will not qualify for the extra 10% and that some residents who have already applied will only get market value for their properties if they are completed before a Cabinet decision.</p> <p>3.24 Victor said that although LBL had been talking to residents for 2 years and now there was less than a month to go before a Cabinet decision, residents were still unclear.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <p><i>Julian to provide clear assurances to residents that unlimited buybacks will be available after the first 6 months of the regeneration starting.</i></p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)</p> <p>4.1 Jonathan raised the REP's concerns about the process taken to complete the EIA.</p> <p>4.2 Julian said that this had gone through a process whereby an equalities panel had reviewed and signed this off.</p> <p>4.3 Fiona stated that she had now changed the document which states that it sets out a baseline and other assessments will take place once the regeneration begins. She suggested that this should be an agenda item on all future REP meetings. Fiona said that more equalities training would be provided for those working on the regeneration scheme and going forward the Housing Needs Survey will provide much more information.</p> <p>4.4 Jonathan stated that the EIA should have reflected the current situation on the estate and after 2 years of working with residents, LBL had opportunities to collect this information.</p> <p>4.5 Nicola asked that 2.5 of REP meeting minutes (1st November 2016) be amended to reflect that the data from the last Housing Needs Survey will not be used to assess the impact of regeneration upon residents once the work begins.</p> <p>4.6 Karen came back to the issue of TCC and asked if Fiona had received a response from TCC to her questions about the survey. Fiona said that she hadn't received a full response and can ask TCC to attend a REP meeting and explain how they carried out the surveys.</p> <p>4.7 Ron stated that as a surveying company TCC should be signed up to a code of ethics and/or a professional body. He suggested that TCC should be asked about membership and what their code of ethics is. It is unlikely that they would have breached their own code and working practice.</p> <p>4.8 Fiona will forward section 9 of the REP meeting minutes (1st November 2016) to TCC for their response and invite them to a REP meeting.</p>

	<p>4.9 Victor asked how residents would be involved with the assessments going forward. Fiona said that she would like the REP to be involved in equalities going forward.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <p><i>Helen to amend note 2.5 of REP meeting minutes of 1st November 2016.</i></p> <p><i>Fiona to invite TCC to future REP meeting to respond to the resident survey carried out during the October/November 2016 LBL consultation.</i></p> <p><i>Fiona to ask TCC to provide their code of ethic and membership of any professional bodies to which they belong.</i></p> <p><i>Fiona to forward TCC the questions outlined in section 9 of the REP meeting minutes (1st November 2016) for their response.</i></p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Postponement of Cabinet Decision</p> <p>5.1 Cllr Bennett explained that LBL postponed the report to Cabinet meeting in January 2017 because they wanted to ensure that LBL had fully considered any implications from the Cressingham Gardens Judicial Review (CJR) judgement beforehand. He said that initially the letter sent to residents postponing the December meeting was based upon the amount of consultation feedback that LBL wanted to review beforehand. The Council were also expecting the CJR early in December but did not receive it until just before Christmas. They wanted to be certain that all views were fully considered before going to Cabinet. This was the reason for the postponement.</p> <p>5.2 Karen asked if Cressingham Gardens residents' go to appeal will this postpone the decision for Central Hill again as the decision has affected the postponement of the January meeting. Cllr Bennett said it would not.</p> <p>5.3 Nicola asked whether a letter had gone out to all residents telling them that the decision to go to Cabinet in January had been postponed. She further asked if one had not been sent then why not. Cllr Bennett apologised as a letter had not gone out.</p> <p>5.4 Nicola stated that previously a letter was sent to tell residents about the December postponement and many had not received this. FC said these had be posted by officers to all residents.</p> <p>5.5 Fiona said that the letter was currently with LBL's communications team and will be going out shortly. She stated that these will again be hand delivered. Nicola requested that the letter is enveloped so that it is recognised as important and not posted without one.</p> <p>5.6 Karen asked whether the Cabinet meeting venue could be moved from Bolney Meadow to nearer the estate. She explained that she understood why meeting were been held at Bolney Meadow (due to the Town Hall refurbishments) but on occasions when important decisions that affect people lives are been taken then residents should be given the best opportunities to attend. Cllr Bennett said that he would check whether this could be done and was aware that Cabinet meetings had been held in other venues.</p> <p>5.7 There was a brief discussion about venues and Jonathan offered the Church as a venue as it can accommodate up to 200 people - similar to the Bolney Meadow.</p>

	<p>Actions: <i>Cllr Bennett to check whether the February Cabinet meeting can be held at the Church rather than Bolney Meadow.</i></p>
6.	<p>Key Guarantees and Homes for Lambeth (incorporation)</p> <p>6.1 Key Guarantees - discussion is noted above. Julian reiterated that they would be signed off and papers will be available 10 days before the meeting on 6th February 2017 (papers available on 27th January 2017).</p> <p>6.2 It was agreed that the REP will meet again on 30th January 2017 to discuss the Cabinet report and appendices. Cllr Bennett stated that he would email papers to the REP members once they are public and can bring them along to the REP meeting.</p> <p>6.3 Fiona explained the process for residents who want to present at Cabinet. REP members said that they are aware of the process.</p> <p>6.4 Julian said that Homes for Lambeth (HfL) should be incorporated by the end of this financial year (March 2017).</p> <p>6.5 Karen asked why it had taken so long. Julian said this was due to Lambeth wanting to ensure that the structure was set up the right way. Cllr Bennett stated that in the past other organisations have generally done the work after setting a company up and LBL wanted to make sure that everything was in place beforehand.</p> <p>6.6 Residents asked about the role of Savilles in HfL. Cllr Bennett said they only play a role in getting the company approved as a Registered Housing Provider (Housing Association).</p> <p>6.7 Jonathan stated that residents were concerned about the Triple Lock and the mechanism in place to protect it. These were all in-house Council bodies therefore the lock could be removed easily if the Council were to sell HfL on. He suggested that an elected resident could be on the board but recognised that this may not be enough if it is only one resident. Cllr Bennett said this was a good idea and was being considered. It will also need approval.</p> <p>6.8 Ron stated that even by having a resident member on the board they would be obliged to put the company's interests first so this may not be a solution.</p> <p>6.9 Nicola asked who was on the HfL board and suggested that the Chairs from both resident forums be elected as they were voted in by residents to represent them.</p> <p>6.10 Jonathan asked what consideration had been given to this. Cllr Bennett said that any decision to sell HfL would need 2/3rds of a majority at full council and it would be a difficult decision to make because of this requirement.</p> <p>6.11 Jonathan stated that unanimity in the Cabinet and internal bodies that make up the Triple Lock would be mean that it may not be difficult to make the decision.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <p><i>Cllr Bennett to arrange for circulation of Cabinet papers to the REP on 27th January 2017</i></p> <p><i>Cllr Bennett to feed back on the issue of elected residents on the HfL board.</i></p>
7.	<p>AOB</p>

	<p>7.1 Members had a discussion about refreshing the REP if Cabinet take the decision to go ahead with the regeneration. It was agreed at a previous meeting that the split would be a 70/30 tenant/leaseholder split. The focus would be on recruiting more tenants and names of interested tenants put forward by the REP and PPCR should be circulated to the REP and invited to the next meeting, initially as observers.</p> <p>7.2 It was agreed that the REP will meet again on Monday 30th January 2017 to discuss the Cabinet papers.</p> <p>7.3 Fiona circulated the information schedule that outlined all of the documents and information that has been given to the REP. She also circulated a copy of the indicative timelines for the regeneration.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <p><i>All to circulate details of residents interested in becoming tenant REP members</i></p>
8.	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>This was Monday 30th January, 7pm, and now confirmed as Tuesday 7th February - venue to be confirmed.</p>