

CENTRAL HILL RESIDENTS' ENGAGEMENT PANEL

Tuesday 5 January: 19.00 – 20.30
Upper Norwood Resource Centre, Central Hill Estate

Attendees:

1. Jonathan Croucher (JC) *Chair of Central Hill Resident Engagement Panel*
2. Karen Bennett (KB)
3. Nicola Curtis (NC)
4. Clifford Grant (CG)
5. Christina Searle (CS)
6. Andrea Rose (AR)
7. Abraham Namoyo – (AN) PPCR
8. Councillor Bennett (MB) *Cabinet Member for Housing / Councillor Gipsy Hill Ward*
9. Fiona Cliffe (FC) *LB Lambeth*
10. Felix Shaw (FS) *Local Dialogue*
11. Marcus Shukla (MS) *LB Lambeth (minutes)*

Apologies

Tayo Richards, Victor Hernandez, Lucy Pyne, Cllr Brathwaite, Cllr Francis

1.	Introductions & Apologies	Action
	Apologies listed as above.	
2.	Minutes and matters arising	
	<p>The draft minutes of the meeting from December 2015 were circulated and approved pending the following amendment:</p> <p>Key Guarantees: "Issues remain outstanding".</p> <p>It was also agreed that all design options, when presented, need to be on A3 paper (as a minimum) and printed in full colour.</p>	
3.	Design options	
	<p>FC outlined the design options as prepared by PRP Architects. She also mentioned the difference between the current stage of the project (options appraisal) and the next: 'high level masterplanning', stating that options appraisals are about massing – identifying possible number of new homes and facilities on an estate – as opposed to a more detailed architectural look at what will be delivered.</p> <p>FC added that this stage of the regeneration was about developing 'guiding principles' and said that the REP should engage with CABE to develop these. NC said concern was expressed by residents that working on design options was a waste of time – it seemed unlikely those currently on the estate would choose to be here when it was rebuilt. Other members of the group agreed with this statement in a personal capacity. JC encouraged the group that part of its role was to feed comments in to the design of a new estate – they were representing all the residents and they cannot say at this stage that no-one is coming back. Whilst some were being produced for the broader 6 estates regeneration programme, there could be nuanced principles relating only to Central Hill.</p>	

Issues from discussion:

Density

The maximum number of storeys presented in the design options was 7 (9 at Peartree House but two of these are below street level) – NC stated that this constitutes high rise ‘tower blocks’ similar to Stockwell Park Estate and Myatts Field North: MB stated that MFN is 7 storey maximum. KB asked if the design standards on MFN were being adhered to: MB explained that there were statutory standards that the Council and other developers have to work towards and these have since been updated.

NC requested the maximum density achievable for the estate.

FC explained PTAL – Public Transport Accessibility Level – is used to measure the density and possible impact on nearby local transport. The group raised concerns that traffic volumes on Central Hill – Crystal Palace triangle were already very high and that local schools were oversubscribed.

Fire and safety

KB asked for the procedure for extinguishing fires in high-rise properties. MB stated that since a fatal fire at Lakanal House in Southwark (2009), strict guidance was in place about procedures for tackling fires in high rise properties.

Note: LBL does not obstruct fire crews from extinguishing any fire:
<http://moderngov.lambeth.gov.uk/documents/s58628/06a%20Lakanal%20Response%20Tenants%20Council%20July%202013.pdf>

Future consultation

AN advised the group that he would be holding smaller consultation meetings for local residents starting late January. He said to the REP that they needed to get the best possible deal for the residents on the estate from the Council. NC said that it was necessary to have full details about tenancies before residents considered any design options. JC added that it appeared clear that new tenancies would be Lifetime and that these are different from current Council tenancies. AN added that if an option is taken to Planning, residents can appeal against this but he added that rehousing issues are more important at a later stage and that LBL probably hasn’t considered them for Central Hill in detail so far.

Housing Revenue Account

MB explained to current position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) saying that there is not enough money within it to undertake refurbishment of Central Hill. MB added that there was a black hole within the HRA – this was £56 million in 2012 and has grown since.

MB added that investment costs on Central Hill are significantly more than costs for elsewhere in the borough.

JC added that LBL had determined the affordability of full refurbishment, the independent QS had agreed their figures were

**Regeneration
Team to contact
PRP for details**

reasonable, and that the resident REP members should now get advice from AN as to what could be done if they wanted to challenge the decision that refurbishment is not a viable option. There is nothing really left to say on this that has not been said by either side.

MB added that refurbishment is not being presented as an option and therefore cannot be consulted upon. NC asked why Infill is not an option – it was explained that, as with refurbishment, Infill is not viable financially and also only delivers a small number of homes at council rent levels (33).

MB said that council homes are very expensive to build and also generate low rental levels in a year. He added that Lambeth has produced a new Local Plan which would determine 40% affordability; he added that failing to meet this would not get through Planning.

JC requested a formal narrative from the Council as to why Infill was not being consulted upon. There were issues that were raised at the December meeting about the way this had been presented and it would be good for the Council to clarify the basis on which the decision has been made.

Rent levels

MB – Explained the LHA (Local Housing Allowance) and Target Rents for the new homes and also added that HfL would not have to enforce the Government's recently introduced 'Pay to Stay' policy as this would only apply to HRA properties.

NC – wanted to know the guarantees that rents would not go up dramatically. She also requested that CH properties are included within the borough's annual Rent Setting consultation.

AN advised that all London Boroughs (and Housing Associations) had to produce a Tenancy Strategy. This would outline the council's commitments to providing homes at affordable rent levels.

JC asked how the process would work for tenants who would have to bid for new properties – MB confirmed that this is included in a Decant Policy that is currently being drafted. MB informed the group that there are currently 1,700 people in Band A out of a total 21,000.

FC stated that the Council is committed to limiting the number of house moves and this could be achieved through developing on Infill land (sites that are currently not in use) first. This has been the approach on other estates.

Other issues

GS said that the threat of demolition had prevented people from selling properties / putting off prospective buyers. MS stated that some properties had been sold recently. AN stated that it is the leaseholders/purchasers' obligation to conduct research. GS wanted to know how leaseholders could leave the estate before any development takes place. AN explained that an early buyback was an option however the Council needed to commit to this first (currently there is no early buyback policy in place).

JC queried who makes the decision on Policy. MB explained that a decision is taken by Council Cabinet (April 2016) then the policy will go

Regeneration Team to provide information ahead of public consultation

Abraham to write a formal request to LBL regarding rent consultation

MS to send Lambeth's Tenancy Strategy to AN

	<p>live. JC added that it would be helpful if the council produced an early buyback policy.</p> <p><u>Timetable / consultation</u></p> <p>JC stated that a detailed Q&A should be provided at the next meeting. FC added that the Council would endeavour to provide this.</p> <p>KB enquired about visits to other estates; FC said that these will take place and residents will have the opportunity to visit other schemes this could be to see what worked well, and also what didn't.</p> <p><u>Outline Design Principles</u></p> <p>Annotations made by JC</p>	<p>FC to provide Q&A document at next REP (JC paper to be expanded with answers).</p> <p>These would be included in the consultation material.</p>
Date of next meeting: Tuesday 3 February 2016		