

Minutes of Central Hill Project Group Meeting – 25th March 2019

Present:

Rosemary Porter - resident
 Victor Hernandez - resident
 Cllr Matthew Bennett
 Jason Emile - HfL
 Nicola Curtis - resident
 Cllr Peter Elliott
 Peter Culley - resident
 Rev Jonathan Croucher - Chair
 Tunde Akinyoye - Lambeth
 Pamela Kovachich – PPCR

1.	<p>Minutes & Matters Arising</p> <p>JC said there had been a discussion on the standard of properties let – specifically those let as TA. He raised a specific case where the standard was very poor. Tunde said he would take these issues back to housing management/voids. PE asked for the Lettable Standard. FC said that for any void there would only be new kitchens & bathrooms if essential – also linked to potential asbestos. JC also commented on the length of time for the buy-backs to be let out. Once the contract was in place with Acorn FC said that there had been a delay in getting the void works done. This process is being reviewed and a new approach will be reported back to the group. PE said it was outrageous that homes are empty when there is such a demand in Lambeth for affordable housing. He did not think that the buy-backs should be let out as private rents. JC said the group had had a discussion on this and the reason that the properties were rented as a market rent was to cover the interest costs of the buy-back.</p>	Tunde
2.	<p>Affordable Housing.</p> <p>A paper was presented on the different affordable housing options. MB said that the rent values against a full market rent would vary, as market rents are different according to locations, e.g Gipsy Hill Ward to Kennington Ward. FC explained the products – and the estimate of the percentage against a market rent. NC said she had looked at rent levels for a specific ward. This showed that some rent products and the level of rent v the benefit cap would mean that it would be difficult to survive. MB said that for those on Central Hill moving to a new home their rent would be at a council level rent. Over the level of replacement council rent level units, the rents would be a rent strategy – 1 & 2 bedrooms at the local housing allowance/housing benefit level and the 3 bed+ at a council level rent.</p>	

	NC used the example of a Guinness property and the local housing allowance and said this was not good if you were a single parent with 1 child on benefits.	
3.	<p>Procurement</p> <p>JE outlined where we are and explained there had been a delay in relation to this.</p> <p>For the masterplan HfL have been in discussions with Arup to look at the engineering constraints of the estate.</p> <p>FC said that the full engineering surveys hadn't been carried out – this would be done as part of the masterplan process.</p> <p>PE asked about what the costs where for the procurement of Mace.</p> <p>FC said that Mace were not paid anything for the process – this was within the tender documentation. The group had been given the document, as part of the DMT procurement process.</p> <p>There had been some costs for Lambeth.</p> <p>JE gave an example of what savings could be made by not going with Mace.</p> <p>PE asked if he could have the list of work that could be re-used.</p> <p>NC asked about the timescale for Roman Rise & the masterplan.</p> <p>JE said that at the next meeting Arups should be on board.</p> <p>For Roman Rise it was anticipated that design would take about 6 months.</p> <p>FC said we have an indicative timescale for Roman Rise, which will be circulated when the process starts.</p> <p>VH asked whether there were minutes of the decision not to appoint Mace.</p> <p>JE said that he reviewed the contract with Mace and after discussions with the Chair of HfL, it was agreed that it would be better value for money and better in the long run if the masterplan was managed in-house.</p> <p>JC asked what consultation with the group can take place if decisions are made of commercial/contractual terms.</p>	<p>FC</p> <p>JE</p>
4.	<p>Newsletter</p> <p>This draft newsletter had been circulated.</p> <p>VH said that the reasons for not going with Mace was not enough. HfL needed to explain to residents on the scheme why there was a change of strategy, in line with what the group had been told by JE.</p> <p>The information in the newsletter would be re-drafted, giving more detail and also giving details of a residents' meeting.</p> <p>Further comments were made about the layout and articles, with an emphasis on keeping the text simple.</p>	
5.	<p>Resident Involvement</p> <p>For Roman Rise the representatives from the Project Group would be part of the interview process for the architects.</p> <p>For the masterplan, there would be wider resident involvement for the procurement of the architects and engagement consultants.</p> <p>When a resident engagement officer is on board, there would be the 'softer' activities, potentially including a jobs fair.</p>	
6.	<p>AOB</p> <p>Figures</p> <p>NC said there figures in the void totals that don't look right.</p> <p>FC said she would review.</p> <p>PE said these figures need to clearly state what properties are actually empty – this isn't clear.</p>	

	<p>Ownership & Stewardship Panel PE asked about the level of scrutiny Lambeth have. Is one tenant enough on the panel? NC said there should be a representative for the different tenure types. MB outlined as a cabinet member there have been a number of council meetings about HfL – including the business plan approval. PC asked about the approval of funding from Lambeth. MB explained about the budget & funding decisions and the audit that would also be in place.</p> <p>Use of Housing Office PE asked whether this could be used temporarily, e.g. for a youth project. Rathbone Society had been asking about this. Tunde explained about the condition of the office & H&S. There were also concern about disturbance & ASB, if there was a youth facility on the estate. If there was proposed use there should be consultation & a risk assessment.</p> <p>Buy-backs There was concern that there were delays to this. FC explained that Lambeth were reviewing their client team which includes purchasing properties. There had been a resourcing issue. MB said this would not include the funding. PK said she had been contacted by a number of homeowners who were experiencing problems/delays. JC asked that the group have a process map and the service level provided by Lambeth. NC asked why non-resident leaseholders had been bought back. In one case the private tenant had been told to leave. FC said these homeowners may have a priority for sale – the Voids Strategy report does not distinguish between resident and non-resident homeowners.</p>	
7.	<p>Resident Meeting It was agreed this would be on a Saturday in the church hall. JC to propose dates when the hall is available.</p>	
8.	<p>Next Project Group FC advocated returning to meetings on the first Tuesday of the month. Next meeting 7th May 2019</p>	