

## Green retrofitting workshop - 26 January 2016 Lambeth Council's notes

### Attendees

Gerlinde Gniewosz (GG) - Cressingham Gardens Resident  
Tom Keene (TK) - Cressingham Gardens Resident  
Julian Hart (JH) - Estate Regeneration Programme Manager, Lambeth  
Huw Jones (HJ) - Estate Regeneration Officer, Lambeth  
Edward Ogundele (EO) - Independent Residents Adviser  
Cllr Mary Atkins (MA) - Ward councillor, Tulse Hill  
Abbas Raza (AR) - Consultation support, Local Dialogue

Introductions were made and GG asked attendees to set out their experience and understanding of what Green Retrofit (GRF) meant to them.

HJ explained that he was currently working on a project for Lambeth Council that includes carrying out a Passivhaus retrofit at an old hostel building on Ackerman Road (Myatts Field) to provide 6 new flats for social rent. This also includes adding insulation and Natural Ventilation with Heat Recycling (NVHR).

JH explained that he was the Estate Regeneration Programme Manager, that he has a Masters degree in Environmental Science and worked as a sustainability consultant.

AR explained that he was a communications consultant and previously supported scheme that incorporated new sustainable measures including Sustainable Urban Drainage Solutions (SUDS).

TK explained that he worked with Freelance for the London Community Resource Network which seeks to deliver locally driven green initiatives. GRF means making buildings more energy efficient, addressing moisture issues and drainage. Better standards can be achieved by 'wrapping' homes in Cressingham with insulating layers.

MA stated that her experience included investing in green solutions through Triodos an ethical investment company.

EO explained his role as the Independent Resident Advisor. His relevant experience included 20 years of working in the housing sector, Director of Housing for CBHA, part of Peabody, in Walthamstow. He has worked on a hostel conversion to a womens' refuge.

GG explained she did not have experience of GRF prior to proposals for regeneration being discussed but has since gained a lot experience in this area. This is coupled with her professional skillset in problem solving.

GG and the group discussed the goals of the Council and residents. The Council's goals included: More and better homes and a manifesto commitment to deliver 1,000 new homes for council rent. Residents goals included: improving the quality of homes, securing repairs and maintenance, ensuring homes were affordable, maintaining the community and resident relationships, and keeping existing homes.

GG set out why GRF is an option. The standard achieved with GRF would remove the need for frequent repair and maintenance. At present there are issues on the estate with window seals that have not been properly installed. TK's roof was given as example of repairs that were repeatedly carried out. TK stated that 16 visits had been made to repair his roof.

GG stated that a report prepared by Su Gomer had identified kitchen refurbishment costs as costing £2,500 but bills of £4,500 have been received. **Note:** The additional costs for kitchen refurbishment includes works that may need to take place to enable the works. This includes additional costs for plastering, moving gas connections for cookers and installing new fire doors.

GG presented and stated the goals of People's Plan and the delivery of GRF include reducing the need for repairs, providing better homes, and providing a solution that resolves the Housing Revenue Account debt cap issue.

GG opened a discussion about Passivhaus. HJ summarised his understanding of Passivhaus standards and that they result in a house requiring no additional energy to heat or cool it. The method focuses on installing insulation, creating airtight homes and addressing cold bridges (gaps in insulation). GG expanded and explained that Passivhaus was a German principle, and one of the main benefits was the strength of the standard. Each stage of the process needs to meet quality and standard requirements and must be signed off. If the contractors do not meet the standard they must continue to do whatever further works are required to achieve them.

GG explained that there are two scenarios in which Passivhaus can be applied; to new build properties and to existing buildings as a retrofit option (EnerPHit). The People's Plan would follow the EnerPHit route, and could also include measures such as solar photovoltaic panels and wind generation.

GG stated that that the People's Plan could be financed outside the Housing Revenue Account through the formation of a Community Business. The Community Business would raise the debt to finance the plan from sources that the Housing Revenue Account cannot access as well as grants. GG stated this could be done by treating homes as operational rather than capital assets. The money from rent on the estate would be used to pay back debt. JH stated that, because the works to provide this option would be carried out to the fabric of homes on the estate, he could not see how this could be treated as operating costs. Rather it would automatically be categorised as capital costs to the homes and therefore necessarily had to

be funded by the Housing Revenue Account even if a Community Business was created. This means the same issue around the debt cap and borrowing applied.

GG explained that funding could also be secured through Green Deal initiatives such as renting roofs for solar energy. GG also explained that a Social Impact Bond arrangement could be agreed, with bond payments paid for by savings the GRF would create.

JH queried where the funding from the money would come from GG stated that it would be borrowed upfront.

JH asked if the income would be paid to a Tenant Management Organisation. GG stated that this could be the case or it would be paid into the Community Business. Lambeth Council would pay a guaranteed income to the Community Business but treats it as an operational rather than a capital cost. JH reiterated the Council's auditors would not allow this cost to be treated as an operational cost as it involved changes to homes and it would be considered a capital cost and therefore subject to the Housing Revenue Account.

GG stated the GRF homes would be 50% more efficient than current homes.

MA asked if the Sturgis Report was available and GG confirmed this would be submitted by 19<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

The phasing of the People's Plan was discussed. It was confirmed by GG that works would be phased over time.

TK raised the issue of standards of repairs on the estate. He stated that he had made a number of improvements to his own home in place of the repairs which included unblocking weeping holes, filling gaps that had not been filled when new UPVC windows were installed, laying new insulation, using polystyrene blocks to improve insulation which can also be achieved using aerogel and addressing the cold bridges by installing sub-glazing. TK also stated that the guttering issues need to be addressed.

HJ stated that this was difficult to do on social homes and demountable option would be better suited.

GG stated that simple repair work was not being carried out well leading to additional costs to rectify mistakes. HJ suggested retrospectively snagging buildings to identify issues and that most homes would require stripping back to address fundamental issues and all cold bridges. TK and GG suggested that rather than treating the internal aspects of the building, an insulating layer can be created externally with a wrap around shell. This would then be covered with brick slips. HJ stated that this approach is very difficult, and a complete shell has to be created otherwise the heat loss can't be achieved. GG stated that Sturgis is addressing this.

TK stated that NVHR could be delivered using a core that already existed in homes on the estate.

HJ and JH queried how phasing would work to deliver Passivhaus to the right standard and how the suggested contractor test would be applied if works were phased. GG suggested that a pilot could be run on smaller blocks to test the best approach to phasing work.

JH queried how finance would be demarcated and who would be responsible for what in terms finance and ownership. GG stated that the TMO would be self financed and it would take ownership of the external fabric of the homes.

GG raised a general point about fans that had been installed in homes stating these did not extract enough air leading to condensation problems and these had been raised with MA. MA stated that these had not been received.

JH requested the Sturgis report on this suggested option.

GG stated that Sturgis report would be ready by 19 February 2016.

TK queried if a cost comparison could be made between refurbishment elsewhere and the suggested approach. HJ confirmed that this would be difficult as each site is different and requires different work.

ENDS