

Wokingham Borough Council

Gorse Ride Project Residents Steering Group

Wednesday 6th June 2018 - 7pm
St Mary's and St John's Parish Centre
Meeting Notes

Residents / Stakeholder Attendees:

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|-------------------|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Steve Bowers | (SB) | Dart Close Resident / Tenant / Finchampstead Parish Councillor |
| Claire McEnoy | (CM) | Meeting Vice Chair / Firs Close Resident / Tenant |
| Chris Wallace | (CW) | Gorse Ride South Resident / Tenant |
| Harry Row | (HR) | Church volunteer, Nine Mile Ride / Gorse Ride School governor |
| Ian Pittock | (IP) | Ward Councillor for Finchampstead South |
| Mike Jones | (MJ) | Orbit Close Resident / Homeowner |
| Mandy Gatricks | (MG) | Billing Ave Resident / Tenant |
| Matt Sales | (MS) | Whittle Close Resident / Homeowner |
| Jim Laphorn | (JL) | Whittle Close Resident |
| Jen Laphorn | (JLe) | Whittle Close Resident |
| Jade Morgan-Jones | (JMJ) | Orbit Close Resident / Tenant |
| J Launchbury | (JLa) | Orbit Close Resident / Homeowner |
| Angie Woods | (AW) | Gorse Ride South Resident / Tenant |
| Angus Parfoot | (AP) | Orbit Close Resident / Homeowner |
| Sue Parfoot | (SP) | Orbit Close Resident / Homeowner |
| Steve Bromley | (SBr) | Ratepayers Hall |
| Becky Eytel | (BE) | Finchampspead Parish Council |
| Peter Holt | (PH) | Firs Close Resident / Tenant |
| Zaheer Sheikh | (ZS) | Billing Avenue Resident / Homeowner |
| Roland Cundy | (RC) | Finchampstead Parish Council |
| Neena Corran | (NC) | Firs Close Resident / Homeowner |
| Hayley Rentall | (HR) | Orbit Close Resident / Tenant |
| Annette Lenton | (AL) | Billing Avenue Resident / Tenant |

WBC / WBC representative Attendees

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|---------------------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Louise Strongitharm | (LS) | Category Manager, Economic Prosperity and Place / Senior Manager for the Gorse Ride Project |
| Zareena Ahmed-Shere | (ZAS) | Senior Specialist (Estate Regeneration) / Gorse Ride Project Manager |
| Pauline Jorgenson | (PJ) | WBC Executive Member |
| Audley Phillips | (APh) | Tenant Services, WBC |
| Victoria Higgins | (VH) | Housing Policy Officer |

WHL representative Attendees

| | | |
|------------|------|-------------------|
| Bill Flood | (BF) | Managing Director |
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Apologies

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| Richard Dolinski | (RD) | WBC Executive Member for Adult Services |
| Simon Weeks | (SW) | Borough Ward Councillor |
| Andy Croy | (AC) | WBC Councillor and Gorse Ride ex resident |
| Simon Price | (SPr) | WBC Housing Operations |
| Matt Vicars | (MVic) | WBC Housing Officer |
| Jennie Grieve | (JGr) | Community Development Worker |
| Barbara Wojna | (BW) | Nine Mile Ride School Governor |
| Jim Gallagher | (JG) | FBC Centre |
| Doug Bates | (DB) | Dart Close Resident / Homeowner |

| ITEM | SUBJECT | ACTION |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 1 | Welcome and Introductions | |
| 1.1 | SB welcomed everyone to the meeting. | |
| 1.2 | Meeting attendees briefly introduced themselves. | |
| 2 | Actions from the Previous Meeting / Action Tracker | |
| 2.1 | <p>Actions in progress or outstanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Housing Team at WBC are coordinating a visit to the next Steering Group from residents of Phoenix Avenue to speak about their experiences. • ZAS is liaising with the School Planning Team to discuss potential impact on school places. • First draft questionnaire for youth consultation (8-16 year olds) about possible use of new green spaces in the re-developed estate e.g. skate parks, outdoor gyms etc. has been circulated to relevant WBC Officers for comment. The plan is for the consultation to take place in September aided by the FBC. | |
| 3 | Executive Decision Update | |
| 3.1 | <p>All recommendations in the Executive Report were approved at the Special Executive Meeting on 16th May. This includes the demolition and development of the Gorse Ride estate. The Council have committed £28 million of commuted sums into the project, agreed where applicable that Loddon Homes will be the end landlord for the new homes and that tenants will receive similar tenancy conditions to those currently held. The Executive also agreed that homeowners will be offered a shared equity option, and that the budget for tenant home loss payments is to be extended to £2 million over the life of the project.</p> | |
| 3.2 | <p>IP advised that a number of questions were raised at the Executive Meeting and noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Dolinski was asked if the new bungalows on the estate would be protected from Right to Buy. Answer – yes, there is a mechanism for this. • Richard Dolinski was asked whether or not the mix of housing was still under consideration. Answer – yes, this is still under consideration and there is potential for more bungalows and/or a small number of one bed houses, at the expense of some of the green space and/or some of the garages. | |
| 3.3 | <p>LS advised that the one to one sessions have started to enable residents to discuss their particular circumstances and plans, which will help to inform the final mix of homes. LS also confirmed that it is possible to watch the full Executive Meeting via YouTube.</p> | |
| 3.4 | <p>CM asked whether or not tenants will also be able to have garages. LS confirmed that we will find out more about the demand from all residents for garages on the new estate during the one to one meetings. LS advised that all the houses that don't have garages will have a good sized shed for storage.</p> | |
| 3.5 | <p>CW noted that a question was raised at the Executive Meeting about the mixture of tenures being offered, and how many of those currently paying social rent will be expected to pay affordable rent in their new home. LS confirmed that 136 properties will remain at social rents, and that all residents currently paying social rent will keep this rent level. Some of the additional homes will be for affordable rent, shared</p> | |

ownership and outright sale. Selling some properties is part of the funding model for the estate regeneration.

3.6 CW asked about Teckal exemption, why Loddon Homes has been chosen as the end landlord, and how it will be ensured that WHL will be cost effective as a developer. BF explained how the procurement process works, and that WHL are owned by WBC and governed by the holding company (the shareholder who represents WBC). Loddon Homes is regulated.

3.7 CW felt that some of the service provided to residents at Phoenix Avenue was below standard and questioned whether Loddon Homes would be able to manage the number of new tenants coming out of the regeneration. BF confirmed that many residents at Phoenix Avenue are very happy with the level of service received, but did acknowledge some contractor issues on site. BF confirmed that, in future, residents can expect a seamless service. Loddon Homes will have a service level agreement (SLA) with WBC to provide tenant services to residents on the new estate.

4 Public Meeting Update (23rd May)

4.1 ZAS confirmed that a drop-in public meeting was held on 23rd May between 4pm and 7.30pm to follow on from the executive decision. The session was well attended and it was positive to note that some residents came along who had not previously engaged. The latest plans and information for Arnett Avenue was available to see, plus the masterplan for phase 2+ and an indicative timeline. A number of one to one meetings were also arranged.

4.2 ZAS advised that one to one appointments are being offered at home, at Community House and at WBC offices. ZAS noted that some residents who had not previously engaged were also now coming along to the fortnightly regeneration surgeries, which are ongoing at Community House. LS asked attendees to raise awareness about these sessions with residents.

4.3 CW felt that some residents choose not to engage because they feel that they will have no impact. SB highlighted the importance of residents taking part and BF pointed out that involved residents have had a significant impact on the plans.

4.4 MJ asked for clarification on the purpose of the one to one meetings. ZAS confirmed that WBC is finding out about each households particular circumstances and plans. This information collected will feed into the next stage of masterplanning and planning application drawings.

4.5 AG asked whether or not consideration has been given for residents who need to upsize due to their medical circumstances. LS confirmed that allocations will be based on need, and that WBC is aware of around 20 households who are overcrowded. This has been factored into the plans. LS advised that the one to ones will ensure WBC has more information about particular issues.

4.6 MS asked if the total number of properties being built at Phase One was a separate figure from the total number of properties being built at Phase Two+. LS confirmed that they are separate figures for planning purposes, but can of course be added together. The total number of properties for all phases is expected to be 290.

5

Wokingham Housing Limited overview

5.1 BF gave a presentation – to be circulated with the minutes.

- 5.2** CW asked who will be responsible for street lighting. BF advised that if the road is adopted it is WBC, and if not it is the developer (during the 12 months defect period, any issues would go back to the contractor).
- 5.3** CW asked for more information about the profit generated from rented properties. BF confirmed that all profit made is funneled back to WBC to provide services for residents. BF advised that, for social rents, a small margin is usually made on top if homes are managed efficiently. The margin is greater for affordable rents as you would expect, and that this is why a mix of tenures is important.
- 5.4** LS advised that there are about 20 homeowners on the indicative first phase of the main estate and that we are carrying out one to one appointments to discuss their needs and options. MJ queried whether or not these residents will consider moving into flats. CW asked if WBC is hoping that half of these homeowners will leave the estate. LS responded that WBC will not know until after the one to one appointments are completed and plans have allowed for all homeowners to stay if they wish. However, it is likely that some homeowners will decide to move away from the estate. BF confirmed the likelihood of some temporary moves because this project is being driven by keeping the community together.
- 5.5** SB asked what prohibits WBC from using commuted sums to purchase homes from a large developer on a Section106 site. BF confirmed that this is not permitted as it is double subsidy, but that is possible to use commuted sums and Homes England funding for this project.
- 5.6** MJ asked about the provision of external storage facilities for rubbish. BF confirmed that the planners will not allow a scheme to go ahead without suitable refuse provisions. BF stated that WHL is interested in building good quality homes that meet the needs of residents and that keep maintenance costs low.
- 5.7** CM asked whether or not tenants moving twice will be compensated for both moves. LS confirmed that these residents will receive two disturbance payments, but only one home loss payment. BF advised that it is very likely that the properties will have carpet and vinyl flooring fitted before being let. This is cost effective and is gifted to the first new tenant.
- 5.8** HR asked for confirmation that there would be no separation between the design and amenities for rented properties and those for ownership, especially for parking and garages. BF confirmed that this will not be the case and suggested looking at the WHL website to see the quality of homes that have already been built by WHL. HR noted an issue with double driveways (one car in front of another) for consideration.
- 5.9** BF, or a WHL representative, was invited to attend the Steering Group going forward.

6 Phase One - update

- 6.1** ZAS advised that the full planning application is expected to be in by the end of June, with a determination expected this autumn. It is expected that demolition will start mid to late July 2018 and that development works will start in spring 2019.

7 Phase Two+ - next steps

- 7.1** WHL will be going out to tender for architects to take the masterplan forward to planning application soon. There are two procurement options for this:
1. Using a contract framework to get ACG on board. We have developed a positive working relationship with ACG and this is therefore the preferred

option. WHL is seeking advice from Legal Services and Procurement Officers at WBC about this. If we can go down this route, the timeline will be reduced by several weeks.

2. Alternatively, we will have to go out to full tender through the OJEU. This is a fixed process and can take up to six months.

- 7.2** IP noted that option 2 would allow all parties more time. LS advised that the architects need to be involved in the design and BF advised that there is a lot of fundamental work to be done. CM felt that it was important to progress with the project given the length of time residents have been aware of the potential regeneration for.
- 7.3** LS advised that WBC is meeting with a specialist to discuss the shared equity scheme. More information on this will also be available for the next meeting.
- 7.4** AL stated that she is currently in Phase Three and is unhappy with the idea of development works taking place around her.
- 7.5** MJ will email a list of twelve questions to WBC for response. MJ is aware of several homeowners who want to move away from the estate as soon as possible. LS confirmed that within the next 3 to 6 months, residents will have more information on the shared equity option in order to make an informed decision. In the meantime, WBC will work with any homeowners wishing to move away from the estate.

8 AOB

- 8.1** Agreed that the next Steering Group will take place in September. In the meantime, ZAS will send monthly updates to attendees via email. More information will be available in September following the one to one meetings. ZAS will produce a list of FAQs from the one to one meetings for the next meeting. **ZAS**
- 8.2** LS ran through the indicative timelines – to be enclosed with minutes.
- 8.3** CW understood that SP has advised that all tenants will be given decant status following the executive approval. LS will look into this and bring more information on the allocations scheme to the next meeting. She stressed that tenants' moves will need to be prioritized according to the phasing given the number of residents needing to be rehoused. **LS**
- 8.4** IP asked why homes will be left empty for two years from decant to build. MS noted that once people have started to move, empty properties may be used for decanting or temporary accommodation. LS advised that some homeowners will move sooner than some tenants and vice versa.
- 8.5** AL reported that there are rats on the estate and that she has been advised by Pest Control that building works will exacerbate the problem. BF advised that he is not aware of a rat issue getting worse because of building works.
- 8.6** AP raised a concern about his specific household circumstances. LS confirmed that WBC are aware that there are residents with specific circumstances and encouraged AP to arrange his one to one meeting to discuss matters in more detail.
- 8.7** CM asked for clarification about Lifetime Homes Standards. BF advised that properties will be required to meet a certain standard so that they can be adapted more easily, but that actual adaptations will not be in place unless required by residents. It is important that these are raised through the one to one meetings. BF confirmed that residents requiring adaptations will have their needs met on a

bespoke basis as part of the development. BF confirmed that WBC, WHL and Loddon Homes have experience of providing these sorts of adaptations.

Date of Next Meeting – September 2018.