

# Wokingham Borough Council

## Gorse Ride Project Residents Steering Group

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 – 7:15pm  
St Mary's and St John's Parish Centre  
Meeting Notes

### Residents / Stakeholder Attendees:

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
Angie Woods	(AW)	Gorse Ride South Resident / Tenant
Mandy Gatrack	(MG)	Billing Ave Resident / Tenant
Teresa Bunce	(TB)	Billing Ave Resident / Tenant
Clifford Bunce	(CB)	Billing Ave Resident / Tenant
Tony Spearing	(TB)	Billing Ave Resident / Tenant
Thomas A Spearing	(TAS)	Billing Ave Resident / Tenant
Annette Lenton	(AL)	Billing Avenue Resident / Tenant
Zaheer Sheikh	(ZS)	Billing Avenue Resident / Homeowner
Matt Sales	(MS)	Whittle Close Resident / Homeowner
Jade Morgan-Jones	(JMJ)	Orbit Close Resident / Tenant
Ryszard Szymczyk	(RS)	Orbit Close Resident / Homeowner
Peter Holt	(PH)	Firs Close Resident / Tenant
David Bolam	(DB)	Firs Close Resident / Homeowner
Lorraine Bolam	(LB)	Firs Close Resident / Homeowner
Becky Eytle	(BE)	Finchampspead Parish Council
Roland Cundy	(RC)	Finchampspead Parish Council
Richard Rampton	(RR)	Finchampspead Parish Council
Steve Bromley	(SBr)	Ratepayers Hall
Jac Pluves	(JP)	FBC Centre
Barbara Wojna	(BW)	Nine Mile Ride School Governor

### WBC / WHL / representative Attendees

Pauline Jorgenson	(PJ)	WBC Executive Member for Housing
Simon Weeks	(SW)	WBC Ward Councillor
Bill Flood	(BF)	WHL Managing Director
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
Jennie Grieve	(JGr)	Community Development Worker
Audley Phillips	(AP)	Tenant Services, WBC
Mark Tomkinson	(MT)	Localities Officer
Tabitha Davis	(TB)	Housing Officer

### ACG Design Team Representatives

Jonathan Walton	(JW)
Marie Price	(MP)
Paul Avery	(PA)
Mo Enayet	(MO)
Marc Austin	(MA)
Olly Wood	(OW)

### Apologies

Jim Gallagher, Harry Row, Joe Launchberry.

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
1	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	
1.1	SB welcomed everyone to today's meeting.	
2	<b>Actions from the Previous Meeting / Action Tracker</b>	
2.1	<p>ZAS reported on the two actions from the last meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAQ from one to one resident meetings is not ready yet as these meetings are still ongoing.</li> <li>• Clarification on Decant status will be covered later in this meeting</li> </ul>	
3	<b>Phase 1 Update</b>	
3.1	<p>ZAS advised that a planning application for 46 new dwellings has been submitted and is under consideration. It is to be determined at Planning Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> October. If the planning application is approved then demolition will start around November and the development of new homes will start in Spring 2019.</p>	
4	<b>Phase 2 – Progress</b>	
4.1	<b>Update on Residents Individual Meetings</b>	
4.1.1	<p>During the summer ZAS has had individual 1:1 meetings with over 100 (tenants and homeowner) residents on the estate to find out about their rehousing preferences. She has been able to meet with 65% of all homeowners and 70% of all tenants so far. These meetings are still ongoing.</p>	
4.1.2	<p>Approximately 28% of the tenants have advised her that they would like to leave the estate and be rehoused off site. From the feedback given, those tenants who do want to come back to the rebuilt estate have expressed a preference to be rehoused in a bungalow or house. Very few people have indicated that they want to live in a new flat.</p>	
4.1.3	<p>A few people have said that they would like a garage, but most have indicated that they would be happy with a good sized lockable, secure shed.</p>	
4.1.4	<p>Some people have also indicated that they would like to have more reception rooms on the ground floor to give them flexibility to adapt / convert this into an additional bedroom if needed. Others prefer open plan living arrangements.</p>	
4.1.5	<p>Residents have been advised that compensation (Home Loss and Disturbance costs) will be paid after they have moved to their new home. Some residents have expressed concern that they would struggle to fund the cost of moving upfront as they are on a low income and have asked if the Council can provide support / financial assistance in advance.</p>	
4.2	<b>Decant / Rehousing Position</b>	
4.2.1	<p>There are plans in place for the Gorse Ride Estate to be redeveloped in 3 phases (2A, 2B and 2C) over a period of 8 years starting in Summer 2020.</p>	

- 4.2.2** Phase 2A covers 68 properties in Firs Close, Dart Close, and 17-21 Billing Avenue that are due to be demolished in Summer 2020. Phase 2A is in priority decant status so residents living here will be prioritized for re-housing. The residents who move off site will be paid compensation. Void properties in this phase will be let as temporary / homeless accommodation only.
- 4.2.3** Phases 2b and 2c are roughly 5-7 years away, so residents living here are not prioritized for rehousing unless there are exceptional circumstances. Tenants wishing to move early will do so on a voluntary basis without compensation. Voids will be let in the usual way.
- 4.2.4** MJ asked for clarification on the decant dates. ZAS explained that Phase 2A will start in Summer 2020 which is when we anticipate the Phase 1 Arnett Avenue development to be completed. This will enable some 2A residents to move into some of the newly built properties in Phase 1. It is anticipated that Phase 2A homes will be ready for occupation by Autumn 2022. At this point we will be able to move some residents from Phase 2B into the rebuilt Phase 2A. The final Phase 2C is expected to start around 2025.
- 4.2.5** MJ asked whether buying back homes would be 2 years ahead of the above dates. LS advised that buy back of properties in Phase 2A are being prioritized. However if someone from a later phase would like to move and funds are available within that financial year, then we can consider buying back their home earlier.
- 4.2.6** In response to a question from SB, LS confirmed that 28% of tenants and a slightly higher proportion of homeowners said that they wanted to move off site.

### **4.3 Private property buy-backs**

- 4.3.1** The council is buying back properties (where no equity loan is needed) from homeowners voluntarily where a purchase price has been agreed. The first sale completed last week. There are a further seven where purchase price has been agreed, solicitors have been instructed and we are awaiting completion of the sale.

### **4.4 Equity share loan development scheme**

- 4.4.1** The Council has been working with one specialist housing provider to set up and administer the equity share scheme on behalf of the Council but they have since pulled out due to current financial regulation issues related to acting as “administrator” rather than “lender”. We are now talking to other providers housing providers to see if they are interested.
- 4.4.2** DB asked when more information will be available about the equity share loan. LS replied that we had expected to have the answers in October. We are now working to find a quick alternative solution that would enable us to roll out at the end of this year, whether this involves working with a partner or setting it up and managing it in-house.

### **4.5 Appointment of the project design / delivery team**

- 4.5.1** Architects ACG and consultants AECOM have been jointly appointed to take this project through to the detailed design, planning, delivery and completion stages.

## **5 Masterplan Development and Refinement**

- 5.1** OW gave a brief overview of the updated Masterplan which:

- Has been updated to reflect information gathered from Individual Residents Meetings on people’s rehousing preferences.

- Provides 255 new homes and 370 car parking spaces (WBC parking standards compliant).
- Introduces a new green ribbon pedestrian connection from east to west
- Provides an increased number of 18 bungalows (12 x 1 bed and 6 x 2 bed)
- Re-configures the 4 apartment blocks
- Provides additional housing at the southern end of the green open space

**5.2** The following ACG 6 presentation boards were made available for review and discussed on tables:

Board 1 : Masterplan – where we were

Board 2: Masterplan – what has evolved

Board 3: Masterplan – where we are

Board 4: Living – how do you wish to live (internal layout options)?

Board 5: Unit Typology Examples

Board 6: Materiality

**5.3** Table 1 discussion feedback:

- Group split on en-suites and larger bedrooms
- Mostly partial open plan living favoured
- No one liked fully open plan layouts
- Larger downstairs wc favoured as then can future proof the homes
- Straight stairs – futureproofing for stairlifts
- Smart technology for central heating controls, etc.
- Preference to have parking and driveways in front of house rather than at the side to give privacy from road. Prepared to reduce rear garden length to gain extra driveway space in front of the houses that was shown in previous Option B.
- Car parking provision should be above the minimum standard
- Traditional build with bricks and tile is robust and therefore favoured

**5.4** Table 2 discussion feedback:

- Positive comments on east/west walk through as it will move school pedestrian traffic away from Billing Avenue. However concerned about route through/rat-run on roads. Could put in bollards as a mitigation measure.
- Also concern that entrance to this route is in between 2 parking spaces – this should be revisited
- Parking around the school is a serious problem
- Broken plan preferred choice with the kitchen/diner and then living room at rear of property.
- Couple of people liked the courtyard option
- Liked flexibility and adaptability to remove partitions later
- Straight stairs as provides option for stair lift and regular lift.
- How to make bungalow easier to access with a Jack and Jill bathroom
- Red brick options/patterns would be nice

**5.5** Table 3 discussion feedback:

- Increase of bungalows was welcomed but would like more
- Parking – good to have more spaces
- Storage space to put bikes/cars
- Preference for open plan living.

- No preference for a courtyard but would like a large garden
- No preference for materiality but liked robust materials and patterns
- Raised issues mentioned earlier re tenant status and what would their status be going forward?

#### 5.6 Table 4 discussion feedback:

- Pitched roofs rather than flat preferable.
- Noise in flats so construction materials need to be considered
- Use of roof space
- Parking is a big concern, good that some had private parking but didn't like parking away from their front doors in courtyards – particularly for vulnerable people.
- Suggestion that Phoenix Avenue development should be looked at as parking provision is well designed.
- CCTV on the estate, especially in potential ASB areas eg. public open spaces
- WCs not wanted at back of homes as it would stop people putting in conservatories
- Dining area should be within the kitchen space
- Concerns regarding brick detail – prefer traditional style - didn't like anything modern.
- Concerns over block paving on the flooring as weeds grow so prefer alternatives

#### 5.7 Table 5 discussion feedback:

- Overall a positive Masterplan
- Revisions to apartment block to the north welcomed as it reduces impacts on Whittle Close residents
- Walking through – east to west could alleviate walking through the estate
- Not in favour of open plan
- Noise concerns about active frontage of the 3 bed (6 person) houses being so close to the road – request to investigate 2m defensible space.
- Would like kitchen and dining combined and living area partitioned off
- Courtyard is nice element for bungalows but could have impact on heating bills due to increased window wall space.
- With 3 storey floor living, do you need WC on middle floor of a town house?
- No to the closed plan – could have more bedrooms in a reception room which has a knock-on effect with regards to parking / overcrowding as more people will be living in the home.
- Materials – local area is brick and tiles. Could have a modern look as long as sympathetic. Definitely no to black timber boarding / render.

#### 5.8 Table 6 Discussion feedback :

- Review car parking to increase
- Move garage back towards the unit and use as a first floor terrace area
- Prefer broken plan but no negatives to open plan.
- Sliding doors between areas
- Positive ideas in courtyard
- Preference for 3 beds to have 2 storeys rather than 3
- 2 storey houses should have garages

- Move ground floor wc and shower into centre of home so can build at the rear
- Provide shelves area in kitchen
- Provide adaptability / accessible kitchens
- Set back first floor for garage
- Making sure lots of light by having large windows
- Satellite dishes – design team will look at this
- Positive on brick and tiles.
- Create safe spaces – children / playgrounds / home zones /roadways should have safety features and built to Secured by Design Standards.
- Textures of brickwork, colour – not orange!
- Insulations and acoustics – fire retardant

## **6 Any other business**

- 6.1** The problem of rats on the estate was raised. SW has raised this issue with Simon Price who will come back with a definitive decision regarding the rats.
- 6.2** CM commented that it would be good for the architects to review layout with reference to the feedback this evening. She asked what would be the timeframe for residents to see new plans? It was hoped that the new plans would be ready by the end of the month.
- 6.3** All information presented at this Steering Group will be available at Regeneration Surgeries. Feedback would be appreciated by the 16<sup>th</sup> October. Forms are available to complete and can be dropped off at the community house.

**Date of Next Meeting – tbc**