

Wokingham Borough Council

Gorse Ride Project Residents Steering Group

Friday 8th February 2019 7pm – 9pm

St Mary's and St John's Parish Centre

Meeting Notes

Residents / Stakeholder Attendees:

Steve Bowers	(SB)	Dart Close Resident / Tenant / Finchampstead Parish Councillor
Mandy Gatrack	(MG)	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
Doug Bates	(DB)	Dart Close Resident / Homeowner
Nikki Bell	(NB)	Dart Close Resident / Homeowner
Jade Morgan-Jones	(JMJ)	Orbit Close Resident / Tenant
Mike Jones	(MJ)	Orbit Close Resident / Homeowner
M Head	(MH)	Gorse Ride South Resident / Homeowner
Harry Row	(HR)	Church volunteer, Nine Mile Ride / Gorse Ride School governor
Steve Bromley	(SBr)	Ratepayers Hall
Rachel Roberts	(RR)	FBC Centre
Barbara Wojna	(BW)	Nine Mile Ride School Governor
Becky Eytel	(BE)	Parish Council

WBC / WHL / representative Attendees

Norman Jorgenson	(PJ)	WBC Councillor
Simon Weeks	(SW)	WBC Ward Councillor
Ian Pittock	(IP)	WBC Ward Councillor
Holly Messenger		WHL Head of Development and Operations
Louise Strongitharm	(LS)	Acting Assistant Director – Place Commissioning
Rhian Hayes		Category Manager (acting), Economic Prosperity and Place
Zareena Ahmed-Shere	(ZAS)	Senior Specialist (Estate Regeneration) / Gorse Ride Project Manager
Amy Ba	(AB)	Decant Officer

AECOM / ACG Project / Design Team Representatives

Jonathan Walton	(JW)
Martin Schizoder	(MS)
Paul Avery	(PA)
Mo Enayet	(MO)
Dominic Gaunt	(DG)
Matt Timms	(MT)
Magda Opala	(MO)
Rida Khan	(RK)

Apologies

Claire McEnoy, Bill Flood, Councillor Parry Batth, Sarah Lynch, Tabitha Davis, Jim Gallagher, Roland Cundy, Simon Ingle

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
1	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>1.1 SB welcomed everyone to today's meeting. Apologies were noted as above.</p> <p>1.2 This meeting will be in 2 parts. We will discuss agenda items first and then view the updated Phase 2 designs in groups.</p>	
2	<p>Actions from the Previous Meeting / Action Tracker</p> <p>2.1 ZAS stated that there were no specific actions from the last meeting. Some residents had requested Homeowners FAQ's / information paper which has been complied and is available upon request.</p>	
3	<p>Phase 1 Update</p> <p>3.1 Demolition of Cokayne Court / Arnett Avenue site was completed before Christmas.</p> <p>3.2 Tenders are out for the build stage with closing date of 1st March. Evaluation of tender returns will follow with the aim of appointing a development contractor in May.</p> <p>3.3 The project is on track to complete in late Summer 2020.</p> <p>3.4 A few concerns have been voiced in relation to construction traffic being routed through Gorse Ride North / Arnett Avenue. It was noted that there are no construction vehicles on the estate now as demolition is complete. A Construction Method Statement / Traffic Management Plan (that will be put together by the appointed development contractor) will need signing off by planning before any development can start on the ground.</p> <p>3.5 Residents asked how the cars that are parked on the road will be affected by the construction management plan. The plan will provide details on the parking of construction vehicles and loading and unloading of materials. Heavy vehicles will have to avoid the school drop off and pick up times. Residents will be able to park on the road and the site manager will be responsible for making sure that deliveries can make it to and from the site. At present there are no plans to introduce restrictive parking.</p>	
4	<p>Phase 2 – Progress</p> <p>4.1 There are more project team members on board. Amy is the new Decant Officer to help residents with their move during the development. Simon Ingle is replacing Jennie Grieve as the Community Development Worker</p> <p>4.2 Youth consultation on use of the new green open space has taken place with 3 groups so far. There was a Creative Fun Day with under 8's in the summer 2018. Consultation with older children between age range 9-17 through 2 youth groups (Explode and Shape Drop-In) based at the FBC took place in November 2018. Consultation with a further 2 local youth groups (2nd Finchampstead Scouts and Kicks) is taking place later this month. The consultation will complete next month.</p> <p>4.3 So far 25% of those who responded used the existing Gorse Ride facility. The majority use FBC or California Park. The play spaces are used every day or at least once or twice a week by most. 92% feel safe using the facilities. A new traditional</p>	

	<p>play area, outdoor gym/trim trail and Parkour were the top 3 choices. It was noted that there are few facilities for over 10 years old in this area. ZAS will analyse the results which will feed into the planning application.</p> <p>In response to a query it was clarified that children are able to use play facilities at the FBC on Sundays (the playground goes not belong to the FBC – it is open).</p>	
4.4	ZAS provided an update on the ongoing individual resident meetings. She has met with over 75% of all affected residents (75% tenants and 76% homeowners) and is still receiving requests for meetings. 7% of tenants have permanently moved off site in line with their wishes and a further 18% have expressed a preference to move off site permanently. 50% of tenants want to come back to the rebuilt estate. No contact has been made with 25%.	
4.5	16% of homeowners have moved off the site permanently and a further 24% have told us that they wish to move off the site. 32% want to return to the rebuilt estate and buy a new home in either Phase 1 or 2. 28% of homeowners have either not made contact or told us that they are undecided.	
5	Decant / Rehousing Position	
5.1	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.	
5.2	Phase 2A is in priority decant status. As homes become vacant they are being used for temporary / emergency accommodation for the homeless.	
5.3	Phases 2B and 2C are not prioritized for rehousing unless there are exceptional circumstances.	
6	Private property buy-backs	
6.1	Since May 2017, 6 properties have been purchased from owners who have made their own rehousing arrangements off site without equity share assistance from the Council. A further 6 are going through the conveyancing process.	
7	Equity share loan development scheme	
7.1	Since our appointed scheme provider Catalyst pulled out last October, the Council approached 4 other local RPs but unfortunately no one was interested in running this scheme.	
7.2	WBC then took legal advice to set up scheme in-house but this was not viable due to the legal and financial regulations. WBC wanted the equity loan scheme to be provided on a zero rent and zero interest basis. The only option that complied with the legal advice was for the scheme to be delivered through an Registered Provider (RP) who would have to set up the loan in their name. Proposal was put to the Loddon Homes Board (who are an RP) to run this scheme. The Loddon Homes Board agreed to run the scheme on 8 January 2019. Since then WBC have been working with their legal advisor to set this up for next month.	
7.3	A resident mentioned that they had spoken to their mortgage provider, who had mentioned that they might not be able to get a second charge on the mortgage for WBC. If there was a second charge it may affect the mortgage rates being offered.	

	<p>WBC have one person who is ready to take this up and they have not reported any difficulties in obtaining a mortgage. The mortgage provider might want to see a legal document from WBC with the terms and conditions to be satisfied.</p> <p>ACTION: WBC to get legal advice on this to make it clear that WBC are the second charge on the mortgage.</p> <p>ACTION: WBC to put together information detailing the scheme including the zero interest and rent for the lifetime features.</p>	<p>ZAS</p> <p>ZAS</p>
7.4	<p>The equity loan will be held as a percentage of the purchase price paid. There will be some minor admin charges eg. £100 to pay if you wanted to repay it. Residents will be able to buy the equity in tranches of 10%. A market valuation would be required if you wanted to buy additional equity.</p>	
8	<p>Compulsory purchase order (CPO)</p> <p>The Executive approved a report on 31 Jan 2019 to start the CPO process. This gives the Council the flexibility to CPO properties if needed (as a last resort) to keep the project on track. It is a backstop if we cannot acquire by agreement. The CPO process is made up of a number of stages that will take between 6 and 18 months to complete. WBC are starting the preparatory work for the submission of the Order to the Secretary of State.</p>	
9	<p>Masterplan Development and Refinement</p>	
9.1	<p>Architects presented the updated plans for the main estate following the feedback from October's Steering group and feedback from Planning Officers.</p>	
9.2	<p>PA invited Steering Group members to look at the model.</p>	
9.3	<p>The attendees then split into 4 groups for the workshop to discuss the updated designs. The groups provided their collective feedback at the end of the session.</p>	
9.4	<p>There were 10 presentation boards that took us on the design journey. These will be displayed at the Public Consultation events on 9th and 15th February.</p>	
9.5	<p>Steering Group members were provided with feedback forms with a request to send comments back by 6th March. The design presentation boards and associated feedback form will be posted on the Council's Gorse Ride Regeneration Webpage and available to view at Community House.</p> <p>Board 1. Where we were – Why Regenerate</p> <p>This board explains why we are regenerating and the design evolution. It also lists the multi-disciplinary team involved in the design development.</p> <p>Board 2 Where we were - Consultation</p> <p>This board summaries the various consultations undertaken to date. The design team have reviewed plans to introduce bungalows and provide more parking.</p> <p>Board 3 Where we are – Current Masterplan</p> <p>The current masterplan was developed taking into account comments from the last Steering Group and the site constraints. Planners have looked at the apartments blocks that are stepped back 3 and a half storey. The shallow roof form keeps the massing down but does look slightly different to a houses.</p> <p>There are now 248 properties at medium density. Overall 421 car park spaces are provided including the 23 garages. A total of 398 spaces (excluding the garages).</p>	

The car parking is over policy requirements. There is one car parking space per apartment.

Going forward there is a need to work with the constraints relating to attenuation and the public open space. Too many car park spaces will negatively impact on the public realm. Reduced parking has allowed the provision of more green spaces. There will be reduced/no undercroft parking as planning do not favour this. There will be pedestrian routes through the scheme.

Board 4 Where we are – Unit mix

There has been a reduction in Units from 255 to 248. This change has occurred due to the reduction in units per apartment block. In response to Planners comments a set back top floor and reduced pitch roof form has resulted in 3.5 storeys.

Unit types are colour coded. As before there are 18 bungalows, however the design team have introduced ground floor 1 and 2 bed apartments with private gardens.

Board 5 Where we are – Phasing Strategy

Shows an indicative timetable which will be firmed up once we have a building contractor on board.

Phase and Units	Build Period	Start	Complete
2A - 87	33 months	Sept 2020	May 2023
2B - 90	36 months	May 2023	April 2026
2C - 71	30 months	April 2026	Oct 2028

Board 6 Where we are – landscape & POS

The Masterplan seeks to retain and enhance as much of the existing vegetation as possible. There is a central village green area which provides a pedestrian link north to south and contains a Trim trail. There is also an east to west green / pedestrian connection. Integrated attenuation basins and rain gardens manage water flows. Different and varied vegetation adds character to the area. There is an overall increase in open space.

Board 7 Where we are - Transport and Parking.

Has been reviewed by consultants to make sure it works for emergency and refuge vehicles.

Board 8 Where we are - drainage and utilities.

Further investigations are ongoing to feed into design. Attenuation basins, tanks and rain gardens are part of the drainage strategy. These will manage the flow so that it is phased. 4 existing substations will be replaced with new ones situated within the apartment blocks to improve public realm.

Board 9 Where we are - Typologies and materials.

PA went through the unit mix / numbers which reflects information provided by WBC on housing re-provision.

Materials being explored is brick, masonry brick as a tile brick. Metal is used to link, balconies etc.

In response to how do people want to live in the units, there were concerns that open plan bungalows with the courtyard would be expensive to heat. The

courtyards have been changed to accommodate this. On the 2 beds the courtyard could be used for in plot car parking.

Chimney is used for ventilation stack on the houses, not a traditional chimney. Windows separate the architecture. Wokingham's history of the brickwork is important.

Board 10 Where we are going - comments.

This board summarises where we are in terms of design evolution and next steps. There will not be a 4-storey apartment block to reflect Planning advice. Plant, bins, substation and cycles are incorporated into the block. Top floor has a roof terrace. Flat roof to restrict overlooking on parts of the apartment blocks.

Car parking provision has been balanced with the desire to provide enhanced public open space. Minor updates on the masterplan is intended for example unit configuration and garage position.

Please provide your comments on the feedback forms available. Go on website, view plans and make comments.

Group Feedback:

Table 1

Flat block and 3 or 4 storey – surprise over the step back design

ACTION: See examples of both, flat and pitch roof and dormers

Question regarding the balconies. Some of the balconies were removed in phase 1 due to overlooking. How have these balconies have been designed?.

Garages – debate over whether they were wanted/needed. Do we have no garages at all?

Good support for the materials, liked the tiles looking bricks. Don't want to replicate what is already there. Bin storage is built in - this is good.

Question – bungalows and storage for scooters – charge in hallway. Lifetimes Homes.

Question – management of satellite dishes?

Quality better than private developments.

Would prefer use of Gorse Ride Community not "estate"

Talked about solar panels. HM explained that on other WHL schemes in the houses the residents get the benefit of the solar panels and the residents are encouraged to claim the feed in tariff. HM wasn't sure if the feed in tariff had closed but thought there might be a new scheme starting. On flats often the solar panels power the communal lighting etc. to reduce the service charges and the landlord doesn't qualify for the feed in tariff.

Table 2

Parking for 1 bed bungalows far away from property. Drop kerbs

Traditional masonry.

Internal finishes need to be robust. No need for regular maintenance.

ACG

Allocated parking was big concern. Unallocated will make it difficult to find parking competing with houses from the flats.

Samples of proposed materials – no timber cladding. High quality brick.

Boundary treatment discussed. Concrete posts for example in the fences.

Bungalow plans favoured

Concerned over the pathways and moped/quad bikes – manage this with bollards?

Trees – keep mature trees. Some will have to go. No sycamore or pine no sap.

Bin storage important

Read garden access is important but also have gated alleys to stop ASB.

Table 3

Concern with access around school drop off times

Questions about shared spaces, how can we slow cars down, family areas be safe

Roof maintenance, green roof, make roof terraces private

Road surfaces between adopted and shared surfaces, slow down traffic

More detail on open spaces and play spaces. Typography.

How do the house work – scale things up on the plans. Larger scale drawings to understand how it works. Which are 2 and 3 houses?

3 bedroom bungalow – would this work – be considered?

Lifetime Homes, adaptable, wheelchair accessible standards.

Notices about Gas meters being done. Works in the area – how can this be best managed.

Asbestos in the roads – demolition and rebuild

Architecture – Arborfield Garson – liked architecture. 3 and 4 storeys

Summary

- 9.6 JW will put together the planning application for May / June submission (depending on the amount of work needed. Currently working on developing the technical items, drainage etc
- 9.7 Public Consultations / Drop in Information Days on Saturday 9th February and Friday 15th February will display design to a wider audience outside the Steering Group. Details on the website.
- 9.8 There will be a further steering group meeting before the planning application is submitted. There will be some feedback as part of the planning process. We are taking into account everyone’s view and opinion but can’t please everyone. We will try to accommodate what we can.
- 9.9 The design will incorporate the electric car charging points. This has been mentioned by planning and will be looked into in the next design stage.

<p>10</p> <p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p> <p>10.3</p> <p>10.4</p> <p>10.5</p> <p>10.6</p> <p>10.7</p> <p>10.8</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>It was mentioned that the development needs to involve the community police to keep an eye on the estate. It was confirmed that PCSO have been invited to the steering group. They get the papers but have not been able to attend the meetings.</p> <p>Update on the rats – 24 bait boxes. There isn't a problem – this is the message from the people who are looking into it. Contact the Council if you have rats.</p> <p>Bins haven't been picked up because of the snow. Tenants can contact the clean and green team.</p> <p>SB wants to do a Pod cast for the development and needs a technical person to assist him. Once set up he will be interviewing people. WBC Comms team should be able to facilitate this.</p> <p>The group thanked the architects / design team</p> <p>LS is leaving WBC to go to Woking Council to take up the post of the Director of Housing. This is an exciting project and LS will be keeping an eye on things and will be popping back. LS is here until April.</p> <p>Last summer, homeowners asked if they could have a solicitor paid by the Council for the shared equity loan. If the home owners want to work as a group and instruct a solicitor then the Council will pay for this. If homeowners want to get quotes for this that would be good.</p> <p>In future can it be in writing that the properties were only ever built for 20 years. There were concern from government at the time that they would last 20 years. Louise has information form the national archives on this that she will share.</p> <p>ACTION: Louise to share national archive information.</p> <p>Next meeting: Thursday 9th May - Steering Group - 7pm at this venue.</p>	<p>LS</p>
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