

**Hidden Homes Meeting
13 March 2012**

Minutes

Attendance

Derek Taylor – RBKC Planning
Sacha Jevans - TMO
Mark Anderson - TMO
Danielle Torpey – RBKC Property
Ruth Angel – RBKC Housing
Stan Logan – RBKC Housing
Jane Trethewey – RBKC Housing
Mike Nestor - TMO
Peter Gibson – Hunter and Partners
Kevin Roberts - Pellings

1. Minutes and matters arising

- 1.1 MN reported that progress has been made in meeting with Legal Services to establish the title for the Hidden Homes sites.
- 1.2 Other matters are covered on the agenda.

2. Greaves Tower update

Appointment of team

- 2.1 The TMO has gone through a tender exercises and Hunters and Pellings have been appointed. Various decisions will be required from the TMO and the Council in order to progress the projects from here, including selection of options, and clarity over budgets.

Development of Proposals

- 2.2 The current Greaves Tower office units provide nothing that can be re-used. Though the windows and doors were all replaced recently and can be retained. The proposal is to create 3x2b 4person units, each with a small balcony. Current caging to windows can be removed to create usable amenity space. All 3 will be Lifetime homes.
- 2.3 Access is a major issue for the flats, as there are steps up to the door entrance level. Ramped access is hard to achieve due to the height above ground level. Alternatively access could be knocked through from the existing entrance to the main tower to access the lift. This might be difficult, but a cost for this option was requested to find out if this is viable. **Action: MN**
- 2.4 Planning commented that there is a balance in planning policy terms for loss of office use here, changing back into residential. Policies do tug in different directions, so providing lifetime homes units would add to the argument to convert back into affordable homes. The planning policy is there and has to

be addressed, but there are arguments that can be made to support this proposal.

- 2.5 The units have only a limited footprint to work with, and must be contained within this, providing small amenity space per apartment. DT advised that Planning wouldn't refuse for a half meter shortfall of amenity space.
- 2.6 Floor to ceiling heights should be able to achieve 2.4m minimum requirement. Hunters to check as current office use has a smaller ceiling height. It was noted that they will be no worse than in the rest of the building. The Mayor's guideline is for a 2.5m ceiling height, which exceeds other guidance.
- 2.7 The units can tap into the existing communal heating and hot water system, but the TMO is interested in having costs for independent services too, given problems with the World's End system. Planning's preference would be to tap into the existing communal system for reasons of sustainability. Hunters to investigate both options, with a third option of independent services with provision for tapping into a refurbished shared heating system in due course. MA noted that boiler renewal would be in about 10 years time.
- 2.8 The TMO noted that the electrics in WE Estate have a 'cyclo meter' system, which is very expensive to run. Opportunity to change these should be considered.

Budget

- 2.9 Pellings reported that the budget estimate stands at £249,466. Pellings regard this as an appropriate cost.
- 2.10 Costs for taking the projects through Planning are £80k per project. The TMO's on costs could be about £85k.

3. Holmefield House update

Development of proposals

- 3.1 The development area has adequate head height to permit residential opportunity, with a pleasant courtyard aspect. There are 2 'bays' between structural columns required to deliver a unit, leading to the conclusion that 3 units are possible. Services from the units above lead to this area and terminate here. Floor to ceiling height is 2.4m, and services require some of this space, so the floor would need to be excavated downwards by approx 300mm to maintain the 2.4 ceiling height. Precedent is in place at the crèche and office space next door where this has been achieved.
- 3.2 Two options are being investigated based on 2 accesses to the site. Option 1 is to go through the existing Holmefield House entrance, with access to the courtyard area via a ramp and main access to the units from there. Also secondary access would be provided via the stairs for those not needing ramped access. This allows 3x3 bed 5 person units. There is a slightly restricted layout, but with a large hallway feature, which aids wheelchair use, though can't be fully wheelchair compliant.

- 3.3 No private amenity space is provided, but with a courtyard outside, and terrace area possible. One bathroom is a wet room type Part M facility. We can choose to have a separate kitchen/living area, or combined.
- 3.4 The option of delivering a fully wheelchair compliant unit was discussed. This would have to be a 2 bedroom unit to allow sufficient circulation space for a wheelchair user. There are also issues of parking locally to be fully compliant. However, the area can provide additional benefits towards compliance.
Action: MN to investigate the wheelchair unit option.
- 3.5 Option 2 delivers a squarer form with more usable lounge space, but no separate access to the kitchen. It was noted that folding or sliding doors tend to be more problematic for maintenance than other forms.
- 3.6 There are privacy issues from Hazlewood Crescent, so likely to need obscure glazing and skylight form to maximise daylight. The courtyard side can utilise glass blocks to create full glazed walls to maximise light.
- 3.7 A landscaping scheme will be required to ensure that it is beneficial to all. The design also has to provide for communal use by other residents and privacy issues for the basement units.
- 3.8 Option C gives a corridor to the Hazlewood Crescent frontage, so deals with privacy issues, but is less aesthetically pleasing than the courtyard access options, and loses usable space to the corridor. This option reduces provision to 1x3b and 2x2b, and also level access is tricky to achieve. It delivers only secondary light to units, with the boxed in corridor having a mesh grille top to provide fresh air. This is agreed to be the least favoured option.

Budget estimates

- 3.9 Pellings view is that these are currently rather light. Need to be higher than the £427,926 currently quoted. More like £16k per m sq as opposed to current £15.5k. This takes the cost to £450/475k, plus on costs, and VAT.

Surveys

- 3.10 The only way to budget fully for costs is to survey. MN outlined a 2 stage tender process. This involves taking the design to planning application stage and then going out to tender with the planning drawings. Then select 2 contractors at the first stage, and pursue detailed investigation of the buildings at this stage with both contractors. This will establish all risk items. Otherwise the contractor will assume the worst up front and charge accordingly. The second stage of tender should combine with the planning consent, and the intention is to leave it to that stage to do intrusive surveys. MN reported that there are no signs yet of any real problems.
- 3.11 SL noted that there should be information within the Council on the crèche development, as it was a Council scheme. **Action: DT** to seek information on FCS crèche development from files.

Timetable

3.12 The process may take longer than ideal as it is a new process for all sides, and the details of governance need to be established as we go. But an outline timetable looks like this:

- Pre-app by end of March
- Consultations with Ward Members, Cllr C, residents
- Budget by end of May
- Internal approvals at TMO and Council to sign off proposals by 19 June
- In for planning and out to tender end June
- Consent may slip due to holidays and Olympics
- Builders will be at the Olympics too
- Start on site October or November
- Handover May/June next year

3.13 MN enquired about the process of signing off at officer level for the budget and for plans. JT advised that Cabinet level approval was required for this investment, after a presentation to Coleridge. This will set the timetable back.

3 Hidden Homes Communication Planning

Consultation

4.1 Holmefield and Greaves consultation process has been mapped out but not yet started. Ward Members and key Councillors will be approached first. The Chair of the RA will then be asked to advise on how to handle the consultation process with residents in Holmefield. Then the TMO will report back to the residents with details of the proposals. Further consultation will happen when the plans are more fixed. **Action: JT** to confirm handling of Ward Members and Key Councillor meetings with MN. Noted that separate meetings should be provided for Ward Councillors from North and South Wards.

4.2 JT advised that local lettings are worth investigating as a way of showing residents the benefits of the scheme to the block. **Action: RA** to forward Silchester Local Lettings and Decant Plans to MN for reference. DT noted that this could potentially be linked to the decanting of street properties too.

4.3 WERA are not yet aware of the proposals for Greaves Tower, but recognise that the space is vacant and would like to see if used, so the proposals are likely to go down well with them. MN spoke to Janet Edwards, and agreed the same process here.

TCC Presentation

4.4 JT advised that a presentation to the TCC in June is planned to allow residents from across the Council to be updated on the development of regeneration and Hidden homes proposals. This is intended to inform them, explain that this approach may be considered more widely across the HRA, and seek their advice upon suitable sites for this approach elsewhere.

- 4.5 SJ, Janet Edwards, Alasdair Manson and the Resident Engagement Team will meet to discuss communications around Hidden Homes and pick this up within their work. **Action SJ** to meet first with her staff, and then with JT.

4 Grenfell Tower update

- 5.1 MA advised that use of Studio E architects has been agreed, and he has met them on site to discuss the proposals. Initial work is underway on the interaction between the Grenfell and KALC Briefs, largely around the lower levels of Grenfell and the east-west link past the entrance of Grenfell. Studio E need to work out interrelationships and how these are picked up in designs.
- 5.2 MA met with the EMB re estate investment priorities, and they have agreed the importance of the external fenestration for Grenfell and communal heating for Lancaster West. Subsequently MA visited Mr Daffarn's flat and viewed the windows from the interior. These are in repairable condition, but single glazed, with runners and springs gone, making them unsafe. The EMB were generally supportive of the Grenfell Tower proposals. More important for them is timescale for the rest of the estate. MA advised that the availability of funds and prioritisation of works required.
- 5.3 28th February Grenfell door knocking survey was undertaken, with 52 responses received so far. Waiting to the end of week for last entries before carrying out an analysis of the comments, and will circulate this when completed.
- 5.4 JT noted that the additional residential units are a key part of the Grenfell project. MA advised that the design of these form part of Studio E's work, along with rationalisation of office accommodation.
- 5.5 MA is reviewing how the works between KALC and Grenfell are divided in cost, and how to take the respective elements forward. It has been agreed that Peter Wright will have an overview of both projects, though his main focus will be KALC. The TMO will provide an assistant PM with primary responsibility for Grenfell. A paper will go to the TMO Board at end of March, with a submission to the Council from the TMO to follow. This is important to help to define the project, and form the basis of the paper to Cabinet that secures the funding.

5 Middle Row/West Row update

- 6.1 SL advised that the school had their consultation last week. Housing and FCS are consulting separately on this. We are waiting for Corporate Property to determine the best route to achieve the scheme, with the potential to take forward the housing across both sites together. **Action: SL** to follow up with Simon Rose on the decision due this week.
- 6.2 DT confirmed Planning advice is that it makes sense to do this development comprehensively. There are ongoing debates in Planning about the right approach and height of development appropriate in planning terms.