

Minutes - Mill Farm Close Residents Steering Group Meeting

19 January 2010

Steering Group representatives in attendance:

Jackie Fineman (Chair), Mrs Rajani Uthayakumar, Mariam Yabou, K Selvanayagam, Suresh Panara

Advisors:

Alison Pegg – Harrow Council, Louis Blair – First Call, Elaine Slowe – Harrow Council

Catalyst Housing Group:

Murray Crawford, Judith Marshall (PTE architects)

Apologies:

Phil and Olive Balch, Darrell Alexander, Michael Gant, Tilman Marsh

	Action
1. Matters arising from the previous meeting None.	
2. Planning update - Judith Marshall JM reported that some planning issues had arisen at a meeting with Planners held on 17 December 2009. Planning officers had expressed concerns relating to the proximity of the proposed buildings to trees and boundaries and the dense appearance of the development. Planners felt that a more suburban feel was needed. Following the meeting, a site visit was carried out with Catalyst and PTE Architects, AP and Planning officers in attendance. The 3 main areas of concern identified during the site visit were: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The rear building line is still too close to existing Northcote trees. The design needs to avoid positioning houses under the tree canopy.• The 4 storey block has too much effect on the surrounding area and TPO trees and there is too much hard landscaping. The design needs to reconsider the massing and position of the flat blocks and their relationship to the Green and surrounding properties outside the site• There are currently no gaps between any of the buildings, resulting in an unrelenting terrace. A break in the continuous terrace should be included to create views through to existing trees. These issues have been addressed by PTE Architects in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Different house types have been included in the terrace (as at Page Road) which results in bigger gardens. There are not as many houses. Due to recent changes in Lifetime Homes Standards, living rooms can now be located on the first floor of houses. JM will run through the design of the units at the next meeting.• The road pinch point has been moved to extend the Green.• The 4 storey block has been reduced to 3 storeys and one block has been moved to alter the sense of height in the area of the blocks.	JM

- Two gaps have been inserted between houses and blocks of flats. These provide a view through to trees and break up the design, but do not provide a walk through as the gaps lead only to refuse areas for the flats.

The changes to the design have resulted in a loss of 8 units overall. The Green will be slightly reduced in size but there will be bigger back gardens for the houses. The total number of car parking spaces has been reduced, but still provides 1:1 parking for residents.

MC confirmed that, as 8 units have been lost, the business plan has been retested and remains viable and that the revised proposal still meets the promises made in the Offer document. Catalyst now needs to decide which tenures will lose units. There may be a loss of 3 units from the social rented tenure and a loss of 5 from the sales units.

There is a further meeting arranged with Planners on 26 January to discuss the design revisions. The next Planning Committee is on 10 March and Catalyst is aiming to resubmit the revised application for this Committee. It was agreed that the next Steering Group meeting date be kept (3 weeks time on 9 February) to feedback the results of the discussions with Planning. AP said that, if the revisions do not satisfy the Planners, there is a limit to what can be done to meet their concerns at this stage of the project.

MC said that Catalyst are hoping to exchange contracts with Harrow by the end of the financial year (31 March) to enable a grant claim to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), but pointed out that if HCA grant cannot be drawn down this year the loss of 8 units will have a bigger impact and mean a further review of the business plan (although sales values are currently higher than originally anticipated, so that has helped).

LB asked AP what Harrow's view is of the loss of social rented units. AP stated that the overall percentage is still in excess of the minimum requirement and the requirement for family units. Harrow is prepared to accept the loss of a small number of units in order to move the scheme forward. The scheme will provide less additional bed spaces overall now, but if it drops below the existing level of bed spaces it would not be acceptable to Harrow.

In terms of timescales, Catalyst aim to submit the final revised plans to Planning in mid February. Planning then carry out a statutory 21 day reconsulation period. AP requested letters of support from residents to balance the 1 objection that has been received. MC will ensure this request is put into the Newsletter to encourage residents to contribute letters of support during the Planning consultation period. Following the Planning Committee on 10 March, the Council's Cabinet meeting is on 18 March. Planning issues have meant that 3 months have been lost from the start on site date, so this is now anticipated to be late August 2010. MC explained that 6 months of detailed design is needed after planning permission is obtained. During this time the garages can be demolished, the Hawthorn Court right of way can be dealt with and other enabling work can be carried out.

MC confirmed that the next Newsletter is being drafted and will be sent out after Catalyst has met with Planners next week.

3. Transfer progress report

AP confirmed that the legal documents are currently being drafted and that Harrow and Catalyst are currently in discussions to finalise them. The transfer document contains the obligations of Catalyst and the Council on transfer and in the future and enables the Council to take action against Catalyst, and vice versa, if anything goes wrong. AP also stressed that, whilst legal documents are required to secure a successful future for Mill Farm Close, Catalyst and the Council are partners and would seek to negotiate

<p>a way through any problems before taking legal action in the event of any disagreement.</p> <p>LB confirmed to the Steering Group that his experts have looked at the transfer document and have advised that it is a standard type document. The Steering Group agreed that LB and his expert colleagues should go through the legal documents on behalf of residents. LB also pointed out that the Forum will be established to monitor progress of the regeneration.</p> <p>AP handed round a document to the Steering Group which summarised the legal documentation and described the provisions of the transfer agreement. AP went through this document and discussed the main sections and issues in the transfer agreement. AP said that the tenancy agreement will be brought to the Steering Group for finalisation.</p> <p>It was agreed that the following documents will be brought to the next Steering Group meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tenancy Agreement - Resident Forum Terms of Reference and Constitution - Development Agreement - Transfer document 	<p>AP</p>
<p>4. Update on Estate Forum plans</p> <p>LB issued a revised draft Terms of Reference and Constitution to the meeting and went through the changes that have been made (highlighted in bold on the revised document).</p>	
<p>5. Any other business</p> <p>None</p>	
<p>6. Date of next meeting</p> <p>Tuesday 9 February 2010 at 6pm</p> <p>Further meeting dates: Tuesday 09/03/10</p>	