

Record of the Meeting

Refurbishment Block Representatives Meeting

5.30pm -7.30pm, 13th November 2019

Attendees:

Lancaster West Neighbourhood Staff

James Caspell, Neighbourhood Director

Elpida Andreou, Programme Manager

Desmond Zephyr, Head of Community Development and Partnerships

Fiona Williams, Refurbishment Project Support Lead

Linda Fenelon, Resident Engagement Lead

Andrea Newton, Resident Engagement Lead

Tomassina Hessel, Resident Engagement Lead

Phoebe Cole, Service Improvement Project Manager

Block Reps:

Alex Julyan, Cynthia Edun, Fabrice Goacher, Fatima Al-Assad, Fleur Gautier, John Johnstone, Michelle Dykes, Miles Watson, Nicia Harding, Rachel Sherlock, Robert Halbert, Simon Jolly, Stephen Montague, Tanya Bounds, Andrea Newton, Linda Fenelon

Welcome and Introductions:

Desmond Zephr opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He asked the Block Reps to introduce themselves, followed by the staff members present. He then introduced James Caspell.

James began by welcoming the Block Reps and explaining the purpose of the meeting as outlined in the agenda. He talked about the idea of a 21st Century Estate, the amount of funding the estate currently had (£57.9 million) and the works that had been done so far.

Programme, Procurement and Tender

Elpida Andreou talked about the refurbishment programme and explained what had been done to date and what was still in the planning stage. She stated that we had sent out tenders for fire risk surveyors to come and look at a sample of homes on the block; and also stated that we welcomed residents' involvement in the short-listing and interview of applicants. This was well received by Block Reps, with some saying they wanted to be involved. James Caspell asked that the details of everyone who expressed an interest be collected.

Local Lettings plan (LLP)

James shared that 9 households had been given new homes under the local lettings plan. He explained that applications were on the increase and asked Block Reps to remind their neighbours that the plan was open to everyone on the estate. He stated that so far the LLP had been a success.

A Block Rep (BR) asked for clarity around the points and allocation system. James explained how it worked and reiterated that LLP was for local residents to aid them in moving to homes that met their needs. The BR questioned this because she had several people in her block with mobility issues who could really benefit from a lift – something she had been told that the blocks would not be getting. James explained that this was something we could discuss during the refurb priority workshop for her block.

Heating & Hot Water Reports

James went through the reports for both the heating and hot water systems. He explained that LWNT were researching the best systems and products and were trial-ing heating systems in 10 homes in the walkways.

The above lead to a discussion about energy efficiency and James explained that we had a staff member, Phoebe Cole, who was doing a project around this issue and who was keen to talk to residents about a more sustainable energy provide called Bulb. BRs seemed interested in this and it may be a separate meeting will be held around this.

Another point that came out of this discussion was the subject of access to energy meters. James explained that residents should call LWNT about their meter readings as they could sort out attaining a reading for them as needed.

A BR queried the energy rating of one of the systems in the report and James explained that there was a lot to consider before any decisions were made when it came to making a final choice.

The topic of individual vs communal boilers came up and a BR queried how the decision would be made about this. James reiterated it would be decided according to what the majority of residents in a block wanted. Further discussion with all residents would take place before any decision was made.

Additionally, a BR asked whether it would be possible to install air conditioning units in the properties as each summer, homes became more unbearable. James said this was unlikely, but they were looking into having ventilation units installed.

Open House and Workshop Events

Andrea Newton explained that LWNT had held three Open House events and she discussed the reports that had been produced for each event. She pointed out that the events had been popular and had allowed residents to see what their homes could look like

when the refurb took place. She mentioned that no open houses had taken place on the east side of the estate but that they would be happening in December and the new year.

She then explained that the Open Houses had been followed by Workshop events where residents from a specific block were invited to a workshop to come and talk to LWNT and state their top 10 priorities for the refurbishment of their homes and block.

Block Reps wanted to know how LWNT decided where to start with regards to the refurb programme and James explained that was basically the purpose of the workshops – ie residents decided, subject to structural surveys.

Repairs

The conversation then turned to repair and maintenance of properties and Block Reps wanted assurance that this was being taken seriously. James confirmed that they were dedicated to ensuring that residents homes and blocks were maintained to a good standard now and after the refurb.

Block reps from Upper Camelford cited a list of repairs matters that needed attention and James said all of these could be looked into.

Block Reps then asked what happened with contractors whose work was substandard. James explained that current contracts did not allow for any penalties, but many contracts were coming to an end and new ones would include both a penalty clause and code of behaviour.

Noise and Pollution

Block Reps brought up how challenging it has been to live with all the void works going on; they asked what was being done to mitigate this for residents and what would happen when the real work started. James said Andrea and Linda Fenelon (two of the four Resident Engagement Leads appointed in May) were looking into resident respite, and how this could be put in place for Lanc West residents. Comments and suggestions from BRs and residents were welcome.

Community Development

Desmond spoke about the work of the Community Development team and highlighted some of the work that had been done including getting several residents into work through the LWNT repairs team initiative, 2 employment drop-in days open to all residents, helping with vulnerable residents, and helping residents who had language barriers to access council services. In total they had worked with 121 families and individuals.

Desmond also:

- mentioned that both block reps and residents could get more involved through volunteering
- asked block reps to refer their neighbours to community development if they needed assistance of any kind.
- asked block reps to talk to their neighbours about what else they would like from the community development team

Sustainability

James and Andrea talked about the initiatives that were being undertaken to make the estate greener and eventually perhaps carbon neutral. While, lot of work is being done around this is at the research and fact-finding stage, one green initiative - a composting scheme – has been undertaken by several residents of Talbot Grove House and has proved extremely successful.

Block Rep Roles, summing up and actions

James brought the meeting to an end by explaining how he wanted to work with Block reps going forward. – he said he would like them to be more involved in the refurbishment programme and work more collaboratively with the LancWest neighbourhood team. This idea was well received by most of the block reps who confirmed their interest in being part of this process.

James also mentioned that he would like some Block Reps to get involved in different aspects of the refurbishment such as procurement, heating and hot water pilots as well as in some community development. Block Reps would be approached about this in due course.

He thanked everyone for coming out and said he would send out a notice when the next meeting would be.

Actions:

What	Who	When
A whatsapp group specifically for block reps to be set up as soon as possible	Resident Engagement Leads	As soon as possible
Blocks reps who showed an interest in being part of a procurement sub group	Appropriate LancWest Team	Ongoing

Blocks reps and residents to be approached about ideas for resident respite	Linda Fenelon & Andrea Newton	Ongoing
Research into creating a greener estate to continue, with blocks reps being invited to take part in presentations and onsite visits as and when possible	Phoebe Cole & Andrea Newton	Ongoing