

LWE Refurbishment Programme Board

Minutes and actions of 23rd July 2020



LANCASTER WEST REFURBISHMENT PROGRAMME BOARD

23rd July 2020

17:30-19.00

via Microsoft Teams

Minutes and actions from meeting

Attendees

Cllr Kim Taylor-Smith Deputy Leader & Lead Member, Grenfell and Housing (Chair)

David Ward LWRA nominee, and Treasurer

Abbas Dadou LWRA nominee, and Chair

David O'Connell LWRA nominee, and Vice-Chair

Susan Al Safadi LWRA nominee

William Wake LWRA independent advisor

Miles Watson LWRA committee member

Cllr Judith Blakeman Notting Dale Ward

James Caspell Neighbourhood Director (LWNT)

Steve Mellor Group Finance Manager (RBKC)

Monika Lee Head of Property Services (LWNT)

Andros Loizou Programme Manager (LWNT)

Shaun Haden Head of Strategic Programmes and Innovation (LWNT)

Sharon Davies Programme Delivery Lead (LWNT)

Alejandra Castillo Project Support Officer (LWNT)

Desmond Zephyr Head of Community Development and Partnerships (LWNT)

Fiona Williams Property Improvement Project Lead (LWNT)

Liam Tedds MHCLG

Apologies:

Cllr Robert Atkinson Notting Dale Ward

Cllr Marwan Elnaghi Notting Dale Ward

Laura Williams MHCLG

Fiona Doherty LWRA Coordinator

Doug Goldring Director of Housing Management (RBKC)

LWE Refurbishment Programme Board

Minutes and actions of 23rd July 2020

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Cllr Kim Taylor-Smith, Chair, led on the introductions and apologies. The meeting was held via MS Teams, with some attendees also at Baseline Studios

2.0 MINUTES & ACTIONS

- 2.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate and correct record (Appendix A).
- 2.2 James Caspell noted actions taken away from the last programme board meeting, Firstly Action 3.3 exploring the potential for alleviating overcrowding by adjoining (for example) a 2-bedroom property to a vacant studio. Planning had a concern about the loss of social units and there are also financial ramifications to the Housing Revenue Account. We are now in a position where we would only consider a knock through for means of last resort for alleviating housing need for those with a 4 or 5 bed need adjacent to a vacant property or open space. The learning from the current knock through will however be very useful in terms of knowing what the implications are, costs and benefits.
- 2.3 James Caspell advised that Action 8.3 relating to feasibility work on sustainability will be discussed later by Shaun Haden.
- 2.4 Thirdly Action 11.2 Grenfell Walk, James Caspell updated that there have been discussions with MHCLG regarding the outlook of Grenfell Walk particularly for those living in the 300s of the walkways. Consideration has been given to frosted windows, clearing balconies and possibly covering the site exclusion material with something more ornate. Also looking at investing into the gardens with residents for the short term. However, for the long term it will depend on the outcome of the Memorial Commission recommendations are. There are 22 homes for potential use however this will require further discussion and investment. Abbas asked whether there were any 5 bedroom homes on Grenfell Walk and James Caspell conformed there were two 5 bedroom properties.

3.0 PROCUREMENT UPDATE

- 3.1 Monika Lee provided an update on (Appendix B) advising that despite the pandemic, running the procurement for Technical Designers was successful and is now complete with the assistance of 17 residents on the scoring panel. The M & E and Principal Designer are now in place. The M&E Consultants have already had their prestart meetings to familiarise themselves with our requirements and the context of our estate. Andros will be working with them to proceed forward with surveys and exploratory works to achieve the required design. The Fire Risk Assessors (FRA) Team, have achieved 19% of Type 4 surveys required, and 100% in communal areas. Explaining there was a lack of take up from residents volunteering to have Type 4 FRAs carried out in their home due to the pandemic, Monika Lee explained that we would send a letter out again to residents. The overall programme is on track and the Key Decision Report was approved last week.
- 3.2 Cllr Judith Blakeman asked about the noise at Talbot Grove House. James Caspell advised that the options for noise and respite that had been planned for resident respite however due to the closure of available spaces during the pandemic (for example, the leisure centre and community centres), many of those offerings had not been possible. Alternative

LWE Refurbishment Programme Board

Minutes and actions of 23rd July 2020

measures are being put in place to provide respite, at Baseline and in empty properties on the estate. A fuller respite proposal will be in place by Autumn (**ACTION – Desmond Zephyr**)

- 3.3 Desmond Zephyr commented on managing and tackling noise on the estate, noting that residents have been written to advising of forthcoming noisy works times and that spot checks are being carried out. It was noted that contractors are expected to be fully compliant with the proposals provided and that a guidance video has been produced to further exemplify this, which will be sent to all contractors.
- 3.4 William mentioned that noise will be an ongoing problem and needs to be dealt with seriously especially for those residents who like being at home and see no personal benefits of the refurbishment. He also suggested that an officer from LWE will need to take ownership of visiting residents during this time. Cllr Kim Taylor-Smith asked James Caspell whether contractors could limit noise at certain times and provide respite on the estate at different times where residents can go. James advised that the use of other empty properties will be used for respite alongside notifying residents beforehand. Printed documentation has been sent and be proactive door knocking to identify households' needs shall improve moving forwards.
- 3.5 Cllr Kim Taylor-Smith enquired on exploring the potential of new lifts and in which particular blocks. Monika advised that the feasibility for upgrading the lift at Treadgold House and installing lifts in Camelford, Clarendon and Talbot Walk. James commented that in the Top 10 choices during resident consultation lifts were one of the key topics. By initiating the feasibility studies on lifts, this demonstrates our willingness to listen and act on resident recommendations.
- 3.6 Sharon Davis presented an overview of the delivery of the internal refurbishment programme. 9% of all tenanted households are now fully refurbished; 16% have had new kitchens, and 18% new bathrooms since the Grenfell Tragedy. Most of these are in the Walkways. To help us scale up the refurbishment, we will be identifying pilot properties with residents in situ to better learn from the practical implications.
- 3.7 Sharon Davies advised that the procurement for materials and contractors for internal refurbishment should be complete by the end of August. We are planning to roll out the internal refurbishment later this year, initiating on two smaller blocks and scaling up as we become more efficient and crystallise our the respite offer.
- 3.8 David Ward asked about whether it was defined what works contractor would be allocated to rather than the LWE team. Sharon Davis advised specialist and expertise works will be contracted out. James added that on the sustainability agenda the training of in-house operatives in the future is on the agenda.
- 3.9 Cllr Judith Blakeman queried the bin chutes which have been causing problems. James advised that a risk assessment has been carried out post two fires in bin chambers. The hoppers were

LWE Refurbishment Programme Board

Minutes and actions of 23rd July 2020

required to be changed which are an inch smaller. James advised that a waste strategy is being explored that includes recycling.

3.10 Kim Taylor-Smith queried if residents have a choice on whether they have a kitchen or bathroom. It was confirmed that residents will have a choice, on basis that they have not had either already since the Grenfell Tragedy.

3.11 Kim Taylor-Smith asked if there is a plan for conducting the internal refurbishment and if it is block by block. Sharon Davies advised that a programme Plan is being devised and will be presented to the next meeting (**ACTION – Sharon Davies**)

3.13 James Caspell presented an update on (Appendix E) Estate Improvement Project Delivery Tracker. He highlighted the progress on a range of estate improvement projects, many of which stalled due to pandemic. Superfast broadband is looking to commence shortly three providers have shown interest. Garden regeneration has had positive support from residents also a respite area. 50 Verity Close will be the borough's first low-energy council home when complete. The installation of new fire doors is in progress and fire heat sensors are at 80% completion in the Walkways. Grenfell Nursery is currently in consultation.

3.12 David Ward asked about the installation of fibre optic broadband and whether it will cause any issue when refurbishing buildings. James Caspell advised that the installation should be straight forward and use existing service channels, with appropriate firestopping. David O'Connell advised on the cost and if residents will pay. James Caspell advised that there is no cost to external installation only for receiving services, if a resident choses. David O'Connell asked about the possibility of free WIFI and the meeting acknowledged that wifi was a public good which we should seek to provide to all residents currently without If this could be founded. James Caspell has asked for piloting free WIFI from providers in community centres (**ACTION – Shaun Haden**).

3.13 Shaun Haden gave an overview of (Appendix F) Sustainability Programme, with key deadlines next Spring for up to £20m of MEEF funding, and potentially £5m grant funding from BEIS in addition. We are aligning Detailed Design phase with Sustainability Feasibility and funding. £170k worth of feasibility work has been undertaken thanks to central and regional governments support.

3.14 Shaun Haden presented on (Appendix G) Sustainability Feasibility and meeting council commitment to options appraisals with a gold, silver bronze approach to understand the benefits for residents in terms of reduced cost of bills. Opportunities to capture heat from sewers as well as air source and ground source are being explored. We will be engaging with residents on the draft sustainability strategy in August. 40 residents joined us for webinar recently which was available on the LWE App, and YouTube.

LWE Refurbishment Programme Board

Minutes and actions of 23rd July 2020

- 3.15 David O’Connell asked whether the nursery will meet the carbon neutral standard. James Caspell advised that consultations are still being and this will be fed in. **(ACTION – Desmond Zephyr)**
- 3.16 Has consultation been had with the leisure centre and the academy as there was a proposal for forming an independent energy company regarding energy efficiency and cost. Shaun Haden advised that this will be explored during the commercialisation stage.
- 3.17 David Ward enquired whether each block would have the same ‘fit’. Shaun Haden advised that the feasibility study is at a high level requiring further discussion with residents, and that block by block variations are possible and indeed likely.
- 3.18 Kim Taylor-Smith enquired about the cost of carbon of offsets and the financial viability to residents on each proposed level as per feasibility report and the few on external installation. Shaun Haden advised that the cost is indicative depending on the heating system and technologies from a project perspective. James Caspell advised that funding of 57.9 million has brought us to a stage where “essentials” are affordable. With the MEEF funding, potentially BEIS funding and new decarbonisation funding we are looking to raise to a higher energy performance. Kim Taylor-Smith advised that residents need to be consulted on spend if additional funding is achieved to ensure it is what they want and how they would benefit. **(Action – Shaun Haden)**

4.0 FINANCIAL UPDATE

- 4.1 James Caspell presented on the Finance Update spend to date (Appendix H). Year commenced with £55.243m – including the Estate Improvement Budget of £189k. We initially forecast a £12.5m spend this year. £1m has been invested so far with 90% of that in actual refurbishment. As things stand it is likely to be lower than £12.5m, depending on how quickly we scale up the refurbishment. Meeting tomorrow to explore social housing decarbonisation funds that might also be available. **(ACTION – Shaun Haden)**
- 4.2 Liam wanted to discuss the less spend this year with James for government and the roll over next year and the technical process. James Caspell advised approximately 8.5 million however we are in unusual circumstances due to the pandemic. **(ACTION – James Caspell and Liam Tedds)**
- 4.3 Abbas queried further funding for Grenfell Walk, Liam advised that discussion needs to be had with the Government Commission regarding positive resolution to the future of Grenfell Walk.

5.0 ENGAGEMENT UPDATE - TOP 10 OPEN HOUSE COMPLETION

LWE Refurbishment Programme Board

Minutes and actions of 23rd July 2020

- 5.1 Desmond Zephyr presented a summary of the completion of the Prioritisation Engagement phase, culminating in the Top 10s Launch recently. Residents' engagement in each block ranged between 32% - 86%, through lockdown showing a tremendous effort. The reports show a distinction in what we have engaged with residents on, for example a mister in 14 Upper Camelford; new windows in Morland, Video door entry pilot in Verity Close – resident have been overwhelmingly supportive and lots of feedback to go into overall refurbishment.
- 5.2 David O'Connell raised the issue of sound proofing and the needs for further works aside from the Top 10. Desmond Zephyr advised that priorities and spends can also be established once the refurbishment commences, and surveys carried out. The Top 10s are provisional, and not absolute.
- 5.3 Kim Taylor-Smith asked whether there was provision on the video entry system to investigate CCTV on the estate, and that we should ensure a holistic approach is taken with those responsible for CCTV boroughwide.

6.0 INTERNAL REFURBISHMENT, VOIDS AND LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN

- 6.1 Monika Lee presented (Appendix P) advising that the internal refurbishment had slowed down due to the pandemic and material shortages, however there were now signs of positive recovery. Two 3 beds were advertised last week and currently our first two 4 beds are in progress. The procurement for internal refurbishment should be completed by end of August, which will increase the speed and scale of the voids for the internal refurbishment.
- 6.2 James presented on (Appendix Q) Local lettings Plan and Dashboard advising 32 residents have now moved in with a 90% satisfaction. Main drivers for dissatisfaction are elements that have not been refurbished - door entry, telephone lines not installed, plus the stress of moving. Overall the Local Lettings Plan has been a success in providing security of tenure and alleviating overcrowding. We are halfway through and doing a review of the LLP, given the delays we have experienced for external factors.
- 6.3 Kim Taylor-Smith asked for feedback from a resident perspective on the LLP, David O'Connell said that it is well received and Abbas confirmed that it has been asked to be extended. Main concerns are those who do not qualify or have not registered. William would like an input into the review of the LLP allocations, and would like more control at LWNT of TA allocations also (**ACTION – James Caspell**)

7.0 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1 Desmond Zephyr presented the Community Development Dashboard (Appendix R). focused on the team going forward is identifying opportunities for additional funding and grants for the estate, also supporting residents with increasing household income through DWP. In addition to supporting local SME's and social value, plus maximising community opportunities from contractors on site. In addition to formalising LWE working for the community a programme of work placements for people living in the community. Incorporating diversity that reflect the community were also pivotal

LWE Refurbishment Programme Board

Minutes and actions of 23rd July 2020

8.0 AOB

8.1 Abbas Dadou thanked Kim Taylor-Smith for his role. Asked whether there a possibility of the purchased properties being used as permanent homes rather than temporary accommodations. Also, whether new resident moving temporary accommodation residents can be vetted due to the sensitivity of the location. Kim Taylor-Smith will take this query back. **(ACTION – James Caspell)**

8.2 Kim Taylor-Smith updated on letter to ministers on the issue of leaseholder charges..

8.3 Bomore Road Kin Taylor-Smith is awaiting an update and viewing. Currently awaiting certification.

8.4 Abbas Dadou asked when residents will move on the Resident Decant Scheme. James advised a resident has now started, with one household having moved so far. Kim asked for a summary of how this will work with overall refurbishment. **(ACTION – James Caspell)**

9.0 ACTION SUMMARY

| ITEM REF | ACTION | OWNER | TARGET DATE |
|----------|---|----------------|--------------------|
| 3.2 | Update on respite facilities and available options | Dez Zephyr | Next Board Meeting |
| 3.11 | A proposed strategy of how the internal refurb will be rolled out across the estate. | Sharon Davies | Next Board Meeting |
| 3.13 | Explore the possibility of offering free (or subsidised) Wifi to the estate. | Shaun Haden | Next Board Meeting |
| 3.15 | Works with Council colleagues to ensure that nursery development aligns with the council's zero-carbon by 2030 ambition | Desmond Zephyr | Next Board Meeting |
| 3.15 | Explore additional funding and feasibility, ensuring the pro's and cons for residents in terms of impact on bills and service charges is provided | Shaun Haden | Next Board Meeting |
| 4.1 | Explore additional funding announced by central government on sustainability | Shaun Haden | Next Board Meeting |
| 4.2 | To provide an update from discussions with the MHCLG on implications of lower | James Caspell | Next Board Meeting |

LWE Refurbishment Programme Board

Minutes and actions of 23rd July 2020

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| | than forecasted spending due to the pandemic | Liam Tedds | |
| 4.3 | Further clarity on the intentions for Grenfell Walk and allocated budget | James Caspell | Next Board Meeting |
| 6.3 | Ensure feedback from the LWRA is considered in the review of the LLP | James Caspell | Next Board Meeting |
| 8.1 | Establish the use of the 5 bed property being purchased back on LWE | James Caspell | Next Board Meeting |
| 8.2 | Refurbishment Decant Scheme – provide a projection on the availability of properties, and how this will fit in with overall refurbishment programme. | James Caspell | Next Board Meeting |

13.0 Next Meeting: dates to be confirmed.