

# NOTES OF 14<sup>th</sup> CANNING TOWN RESIDENTS' STEERING GROUP MEETING

Thursday, 23 September 2021 @ 18:00 via Zoom

## Present:

### Steering Group members:

Sheila A (SA)  
Mustaf M (MM)  
Judith J (JJ) – Chair  
Martin J (MJ)  
Ibironke O (IO)  
Sade R (SR)  
Helen A (HA)  
Edward R (ER)

## London Borough of Newham:

Dami Segun (DS) -  
Resident Involvement Manager  
Maeve Dowling (MD) -  
Senior Regeneration Manager  
Santokh Kaulder (SK)-  
Regeneration Manager

## Presenting:

Mark Green (MG) –  
LBN Senior Development Finance Manager

## NewmanFrancis:

Howard Mendick (HM) – NewmanFrancis  
Amarjit Singh (AS) – NewmanFrancis  
Clare Maybury – Minutes (from recording)

## Apologies for absence:

Algina Kamara

## 1 Welcome and introductions:

HM welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the agenda and what would be covered.

## 2 Minutes from last meeting:

The previous minutes were agreed.

### 2.1 Actions were updated:

- 2.1.1 *Item 3.4 Site traffic route:* Countryside were aware of the need to re-route site traffic. SK would visit the site in the next few days to double-check this. Portakabins seen on the site may be the Covid test centre.
- 2.1.2 *Item 5.4 Regeneration design brief and tender document:* This had been sent to Steering Group members for consideration. Some feedback had been received.
- 2.1.3 *Item 5.7 Residents' survey:* Residents had been encouraged and supported to complete the survey.
- 2.1.4 *Item 6.2 Engagement Programme:* Terms of Reference had been received by Steering Group members along with the other documents.
- 2.1.5 *Item 6.9 Study Visits Day:* see item 6.3
- 2.1.6 *Item 6.12 Future meetings:* this was due to be discussed under AOB, but was not
- 2.1.7 *Item 7.1 Canning Town Times article:* see item 6.6
- 2.1.8 *Item 9.2.2 Mears residents' involvement:* see item 4
- 2.1.9 *Item 9.2 LoveCleanStreets app:* see below 2.2

## ACTION

**Members** were further encouraged to download the LoveCleanStreets app and try it, reporting back at the next meeting.

### 3 **Engagement on Resident Homeowner offer:**

Mark Green introduced himself and explained his role in ensuring resident homeowners are offered options within the regeneration process.

3.1 The housing offer had been approved by Cabinet in principle in March 2021, and would be presented there again in more detail in October, with input from and engagement with residents. Options were explained in more detail via a presentation (also attached):-

3.1.1 **Outright purchase:** a part-purchase, part-mortgage deal with a 10% input from the council for home loss;

3.1.2 **Zero rent home ownership:** a non-rent, shared ownership arrangement with the council (share dependent on the amount of equity and mortgage available to the resident) with the 10% home-loss payment contributing toward the purchase. Home-owners have the option of gradually increasing their share (known as 'staircasing');

3.1.3 **Shared Equity:** the homeowner owns the home, with the council's share becoming a mortgage loan, registered as a charge on the property and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). This is not a relationship the council would want with its residents, with implications for debt and credit-worthiness. Hence this has been discounted as an option.

3.1.4 **Other options:** including selling and moving away from the estate, and - for those unable to buy - other rental packages and individual solutions.

3.2 Steering group members then asked a series of **questions:**

3.2.1 *Concerning the percentage of the share in option 2, what does the council's part-ownership mean to the resident, in terms of payment for works?*

MG: The council's only interest is the share falling to them. The home-owner would be responsible for all repairs and maintenance.

3.2.2 *In that case the council would be benefitting as the resident pays for any further up-grades. Does the council's percentage reflect increases in the market value?*

MG: The value of the equity would always be valued at the current market rate. The percentage share would remain the percentage of the changing market value.

3.2.3 *In that case, whatever repairs are undertaken should likewise be shared on a percentage basis, because the council has an interest?*

HM: There would be a 10-year building guarantee in place so repair costs would be unlikely in that period.

MG: Once a home is purchased, further additional payments would be possible to acquire a greater share of that property. Should a mortgage company refuse to fund the purchase or the full amount needed, the council would be able to bridge the gap by paying off the existing mortgage and this would be reflected in the percentage share of the house. This would effectively constitute a loan from the council, payable via rental payments at a low rate, equivalent to the mortgage cost.

### 3.2.4 *In that case, is that a rent or an additional mortgage to the council?*

MG: It is rent and is a trade-off to avoid the scenario outlined at 3.1.3 (Shared equity)

In discussion, members noted this would be a notional share for the council rather than practical, enabling people to stay in the area who were concerned they could be priced out. It would need to be impressed on people that this was a fair and reasonable offer; an opportunity to be worked out with the council, ensuring no-one would lose out or take on unnecessary financial burdens.

### 3.2.5 *Concerning Option 3, I'm not aware the council can loan money in this way. Would it be the council itself, or via another organisation?*

MG: Our advice is that we could legally do this, but it does not give a satisfactory outcome for residents and owners, and may have unintended consequences. The council does not wish to become a mortgage lender.

3.3 Next steps were outlined: similar conversations were happening in each redevelopment area, with Cabinet members briefed and a decision made in October. Following this, a Landlord Offer with the detailed proposal would be voted on by residents' ballot. HM added that there would be further meetings, forums and resident contact to enable detailed involvement.

3.4 **ACTION** **Members'** comments on the initial proposals to be forwarded to MG via DS

## 4 **Update on Mears Tenants:**

DS explained how residents from Mears were being brought back into temporary housing following a housing needs assessment:

4.1 90 of the 250 properties had been handed back to the council.

4.2 19 properties had been assessed as below standard or overcrowded and, of these, 11 households had now been moved, with 8 properties still being made fit for use.

4.3 16 households had been assessed as having no right to be housed, and they were being moved into the private sector. This was a sensitive, unwanted outcome and a number of representations had taken place. The mayor had now agreed to consider the situation directly and find the best ways to support those residents.

4.4 Members **asked**, *How many of these residents are in Custom House and how many in Canning Town?*

4.4.1 **ACTION** **DS** to find out and pass details on to members after the meeting.

4.5 Assessment for housing is made on a priority criteria basis, (including, for example, dependent children; pregnancy; recently left care; domestic abuse; recently homeless due to fire or flood). The Mears Decommissioning Team (led by Peter Albert, with Christopher Daniels), and the Homelessness Prevention Team were giving support to residents and were happy to meet.

4.6 This was a sensitive issue as Mears' housing management had historically been poor. It was

also recognised that there were limitations on the council in terms of housing law.

- 4.6.1 **ACTION DS** to set up a meeting for Judith, the Chair with the Director of Housing, Darren Levy, to address concerns about housing needs prioritisation regarding the Mears households where full housing duty has not been accepted by the Council.

4.7 Further concerns were raised by members:

- 4.7.1 *Consideration must be given to ensuring communication about housing law and needs assessment is in plain, simple language for residents to follow.*
- 4.7.2 *Some neighbours who are Mears tenants have been told the council is taking properties back and that they will become homeless. (See discussion above)*
- 4.7.3 *Who will be housed in the properties families vacate?*
- 4.7.4 *Has the council considered those with children and the implications for their schooling and nursery places? Historically, housing for these tenants has been very poorly dealt with.*
- 4.7.5 *Historically, Mears told residents they could bid and they were then stopped from bidding once they had moved in.*

4.8 DS explained that the majority of tenants in this situation had become temporary accommodation council tenants in existing properties. It was not ideal for those moved, but people could not be left in substandard accommodation as they were under Mears' management. Priority was being given to those in the kind of circumstances mentioned, but there was very little property available to move people to in the area, and the council was trying to make the most of the resources available.

- 4.8.1 **ACTION DS** to relay all concerns to Darren Levy, Director of Housing

- 4.8.2 **ACTION HM** to collate agenda for meeting with Darren Levy in advance, including the concerns raised

## 5 Regeneration update:

AS and MD explained that the review of tenders would take place over the next few weeks. Training sessions were planned for the end of November around the key design stages.

5.1 A walkabout to consider the Interim Upgrade of Estates had taken place, and those who had attended were thanked. Existing areas were scoped with the designers, including noting the potential for improvement at points such as footways into buildings. It had been positive to have senior managers present, and the issues raised had been noted. John Rowe Partnership (JRP) would now put together a plan for the scope of works, to be reviewed by Housing colleagues and MD.

- 5.1.1 **ACTION MD and Housing colleagues** to update steering group at next meeting on the Estates Upgrade scope of works

## 6 **Engagement update:**

DS explained proposed changes to the **Terms of Reference** and these were **AGREED** as follows:

- Membership to include a youth representative 16-25 years old;
- SG members must give annual consent for use of images and general data

6.1 Members discussed the need to recruit more 16-25 year olds in addition to Mustaf, given their potentially valuable input, having grown up in the area. This was also a Mayoral priority in the Year of Youth , not only for the steering group but in all engagement.

6.1.1 **ACTION** **DS, MG** and **all** to consider how to best use the multiple opportunities for youth involvement in the regeneration process, including sub-groups.

6.2 The **Housing Needs Survey** had been sent out in the last few weeks, to gain information about who is living in properties and their needs now and in the future. To date, as a result of door-knocking and other outreach, 37% had now completed the survey.

6.3 **Study Visits** were being planned for October to the Carpenters estate and the TfL construction skills hub in the Olympic Park. These would be a good social opportunity, with the latter particularly relevant to young people.

6.4 A **Housing Offer and Social Value** training session was planned for October, date to be confirmed.

6.5. **Community initiatives** included the survey and the walkabout concerning improvements to the public realm

6.6 SK updated the meeting on progress with the **Canning Town Times**. A photo of residents was needed for the front cover, showing people at the heart of the redevelopment.

6.6.1 **ACTION** **all** to encourage friends and neighbours to provide a suitable image for the CTT, capturing the area and whatever is meaningful to them. To be sent to SK by Weds 6 October

6.6.2 **ACTION** Local images for use in future publications and publicity to be sought using an advert in the local library – **SK to report back**

## 7 **Newman-Francis Work Programme update:**

AS had been calling and getting to know steering group members.

7.1 HM shared the NewmanFrancis timetable of tasks and work priorities for October, noting in particular:

7.1.1 **ACTION** **HM/AS** to invite Judith, as Chair, to *agenda-setting meetings* to ensure greater resident involvement, and include ideas sent in by members

7.1.2 **ACTION** **HM/AS** to invite panel lead members (such as Procurement, Editorial) to attend and give regular updates on their areas to the CTRSG

7.1.3 **ACTION HM/AS** to report back regularly on the phone and email advice and information service provided

7.1.4 **ACTION HM/AS** to provide training for and ongoing engagement with the CTRSG

7.1.5 **ACTION HM/AS** to report back on the text messaging piloted with the council to update 150+ residents monthly with a key message about the regeneration

**8 Capacity-Building and Recruitment of New Members:**

The walkabout had introduced a few residents, including Clare and Stacey who would hopefully get involved.

**9 Other Business:**

9.1 **Stakeholder engagement:** HM suggested partnering with St Luke's, for example attending their Wednesday lunch club with benefits advice, until Trinity is ready for use.

9.2 **ACTION HM / AS** to phone MJ to update him following technical issues during the meeting

9.3 **Voids as a potential health and safety issue:** The risks associated with the empty properties had been pointed out during the walkabout. MD had reported the issue.

9.3.1 **ACTION MD** to follow up on her report concerning the voids and provide an update.

9.4 **Outreach:** SK would be out and about on Lawrence St tomorrow and invited residents along.

HM thanked everyone for attending and the meeting was closed.

**Date of next meeting: Thursday, 21 October 2021 At 18:00**