

Central West Sounding Board (CWSB): Meeting notes – 02/04/2024

Agenda:

1. Purpose of the Sounding Board.
2. Reflections.
3. Feedback to Shepherd's Bush/Guinness, partnership/MP
4. Next steps.
 - 4.1. Valuations (*Vote taken*)
 - 4.2. Moving forward strategy (*on the agenda for next meeting*)
5. Next meeting.

Notes: For the purpose of ease, the Board refers to the Sounding Board.

1. Purpose of the Sounding Board: Point for anyone asked about joining sounding board - it's about looking forward, finding solutions and not about getting angry/reliving past issues.

Action for CWSB: Board to obtain a terms of reference, and Lee and Doug to take that back to residents see who else wants to be involved (*NFL nominated, CWSB agreed*).

2. Reflections.

Sandi: All questions gotten across by the board, not entirely happy with the answers to some of the questions. My experience - main focus with Housing Associations has always been about costs. Guinness partnership is late to the party – they do not know what has gone on / Clear that SBHA have mismanaged their finances / it is also clear that the either or policy is not a cost effective route/ A lot of residents would prefer to do the buyback rather than the remediation. People are very fed up and tired now and they just want out. And it is not sure who will be able to live another four or five years of this. So I think it is worth trying to pursue an argument where we do put forward some solutions.

Lee: Found the answers disingenuous – politically responded – just filling time with noise for me. You've told us this. And this will mean... did not get any of that. If we are going to have these meetings regularly with SBHA/TGP ... One of the quarterly meetings should be face-to-face space (disliked that NFL controlled the microphones – said that the management team could not hear people shouting.)

Doug: Shared the FRA with NFL, raised the issue that not all flats have fire alarm – heat sensors. Remediation plan was being talked about since before NFL came on board – still they had nothing to share in the meeting when asked (nothing from the technical guy). Really concerning for me.

Ademola: Meeting went very well – to have the management team in the conversation. Guinness did not get the seriousness of the situation. They thought that the building was safe

Action for NFL: NFL to use Doug's questions and the FRA he sent to feedback to CW. (*AD nominated, CWSB agreed*).

Binnie: Too, many apologies – lot of time spent on this. We need action. Another meeting – cut this out. Sorry does not cut it to get good results. We need to have clarity very soon – buyback/remediation. Pretty sure they have done the maths. Not going to be cheaper to remediate – concerned that costs will be hidden and covered by us

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Action for NFL: CWSB have requested that NFL send the summary (questions), then the full approved minutes of the meeting to SBHA/TGP/MP attendees. (*AD nominated, CWSB agreed*)

Action for NFL: In addition to the approved minutes of the meeting, NFL to create a document containing the questions raised by leaseholders at the meeting, the responses given to those questions raised by the CWSB to the SBHA/TGP/MP meeting guests. This includes the unanswered questions that SBHA took an action to respond. (*LJ nominated, CWSB agreed*).

3. Feedback to Shepherd's Bush/Guinness, partnership/MP

Action for SBHA: The Central West Sounding Board would like clarification on the following sections of the minutes:

2. Buyback – 2.1

Action for SBHA – CWSB clarification request to SBHA: That the Board would like SBHA to comprehensively clarify this [action]. For example, what does SBHA mean by evaluate the results? And what happens when they understand the position of each resident?

3. Remediation – 3.1, 3.2

The Board agreed to communicate back to SBHA that these are the discussions they have been having:

1. Most members agreed that the ballot needs to go forward. They said that a decision must be made by SBHA, for them to move forward.
2. There are only 6 days left to the end of the ballot, with approximately 22 responses to the ballot, and the feedback received from residents is not knowing about important details, strongly emphasising remediation. Meaning, that they are not currently in a position to vote.
3. Residents must be given exhaustive options, and related information before being able to vote, especially because there are no remediation details, to inform our vote, as told to us at the 27/03 meeting.
4. On remediation, there was the TGP expert at the 27/03 meeting, at the very least, he should be outlining to us a detailed process based on his project experience about what we can likely expect including the time it will take, what the process is going to be like – we do not have this information.
5. Residents have considered campaigning about not being involved in the ballot process – not having a voice in the process which they believe could have enabled all residents to vote. Wider residents have told us that public and school holidays have not been taken into account for seeking independent advice (i.e., legal/financial) to help make a life-changing decision. As it is, there are residents who will not/cannot vote.

Action for SBHA: Are SBHA prepared to do anything about these discussions?

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Action for SBHA – CWSB access request to SBHA: That SBHA provides to the Board all the numerical costs and all related information about the funds for the buyback and remediation – this being the budget – in writing at this point in time. The Board noted that they expect SBHA to have this information due to the lender information recently provided to residents. Additionally, it was noted that the lack of information around remediation was possibly because SBHA did not really consider remediation an affordable option before the Guinness partnership merger. Therefore, the Board are also expecting to be provided by SBHA clarity and information on:

1. SBHA's cut off points or thresholds for considering both remediation and buyback options. A Board member noted that with a 3 million grant SBHA could afford to buy out at least 10 properties at approximately £300,000 each (very approximately, a lot of residents have been offered less than this, inclusive of the 10%) with 4 million that is potentially another 3 - 5 flats.
2. With the additional financial backing of the Guinness partnership, the Board member believes SBHA does have scope to offer both options. The Board member believes it would make financial sense to do this as SBHA will make money back on the sold properties and save money and disruption of residents who could use the properties for decanting during remediation.
3. Admittedly even those residents that do want buyback may vote against, as they are not willing to accept the current offer. Those residents that are willing to accept the current offer may fall into the affordable threshold for considering both options.
4. SBHA obviously have had some financial difficulties, and the Board member hopes the Guinness Partnership does not make the same mistake and are more open to a cost effective solution which makes long term financial sense for all.

4. Alternative Accommodation – 4.1, 4.2, 4.3

Action for SBHA – CWSB clarification request to SBHA: That the Board affirms the commitment and would like SBHA to comprehensively define and immediately requests (due to the ballot deadline):

1. A date when these discussions are going to start
2. A descriptions of what the discussions look like?
3. The scope of support
4. Availability of accommodations
5. Porting (mortgage, equity)

Solutions raised:

Possibility of people being moved into council (partnering with local councils to explore council exchange programs where leaseholders can swap their properties for alternative council-owned homes that better suit their needs) and/or SBHA and TGP properties. Investigate and obtain other shared ownership schemes (including other arrangements.) SBHA have thought of the exchange contract, we are thinking they need to come up with other contingencies: Short-term rentals, transitional housing facilities while more

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permanent solutions are being considered, developed or in progress. We should not be homeless. People do not know what options are available - until then they cannot vote.

5. Compensation – 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4

Action for SBHA – CWSB clarification request to SBHA: The Board acknowledges SBHA/TGP commitments to compensation and the action to explore the different ways to provide it. SBHA/TGP have said that residents have given the organisation ideas, so now the Board would like a date when those discussions are going to start. What those discussions will look like. How many meetings? And the Board are unanimous that compensation is not offset by increased bills. Additionally, these explorations around compensation must involve and consider residents' views (i.e., Lease extension as added compensation and not as a substitute to monetary compensation, especially mortgaging issues - if your lease is under a certain amount of years.)

5:3. **Action for SBHA** – CWSB clarification request to SBHA: The Board noted that it did not seem like TGP understood the seriousness of the situation. The Board would like sight of exactly what SBHA has told TGP they have done to mitigate fire risks? Do they, TGP have the complete fire report? It was also noted that SBHA have not exercised their right under the lease to gain access to flats to install fire safety devices.

5:4. **Action for SBHA** – CWSB clarification request to SBHA: A Board member had raised that residents would be made homeless if they decided buyback. What she was saying to SBHA – to help them – let's put all these measures in place. And this needs to be done at the same time as the ballot. @TGP the Board requests to have a list of all those measures right now and to have them before residents vote – because that will inform how residents vote.

The Board also seeks clarification about the forms being talked about in this section. Can the options mentioned be viewed now? Because this needs to go out to leaseholders who have not voted to inform their vote. And if residents have voted they should get another opportunity based on the new information they have received. If SBHA are committed to this.

Next Steps

1. Meeting with SBHA on 04/04/2024. {Going to send this debrief response from the CWSB meeting to SBHA – before pass to the CWSB to amend – but ready for the meeting} Anything out of the SBHA meeting will be taken to the CWSB for considerations
2. 27/03 Draft/Final minutes with recording out this week
3. Lengthy valuation discussions. Valuation vote taken – results, 1 yes / 5 no {Doug felt overall the valuations were 10K light}
 - a. Do not think that SBHA will pay for valuations to be done again
 - b. Let's first confirm if buyback is happening before we reconsider valuation.

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Next meeting (Just the sounding board): Thursday, 11 April 2024, starting at 6:30 pm. This will include the feedback from Mekor and Syed's meeting with SBHA. Meeting link remains the same as used last Tuesday, 2 April, 2024:

Agenda (Draft):

1. Feedback from SBHA (Mekor/Syed)
2. CWSB Terms of reference
3. Moving forward strategy (inviting Mark Field to Sounding Board meeting)

Meeting end: 19:42

Meeting duration: 1h 49m 48s

CWSB attendance:

Ademola (AD)	CWSB	Central West Sounding Board
Sandi Arthur (SA)	CWSB	Central West Sounding Board
Lee Jones (LJ)	CWSB	Central West Sounding Board
Douglas Moat (DM)	CWSB	Central West Sounding Board
Binnie Sandhu (BS)	CWSB	Central West Sounding Board
Mekor Newman – meeting (Chair)	NFL	NewmanFrancis
Syed Momin	NFL	NewmanFrancis
Daniel Newman	NFL	NewmanFrancis