

Committee	STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE	
Report Title	MINUTES	
Ward		
Contributors		
Class	PART 1	Date: 18 OCTOBER 2017

MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee held on the 27th September 2017.

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

MINUTES of the STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE meeting held in Council Chambers, CATFORD SE6 on Wednesday 27 September 2017 7:30pm.

Present

Councillors De Ryk (Chair), Bonavia, Coughlin, Onikosi, Reid & Clarke

Apologies: Councillors Paschoud (Vice Chair), Amrani, Curran, & Hall

Officers: Emma Talbot – Head of Planning, Paula Young - Legal Services, and Alfie Williams - Planning Committee Co-ordinator.

1. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meetings held on the 10 August 2017 were approved.

3. Land North of Reginald Road and South of Frankham Street, Deptford (Tidemill), SE8

The meeting began at 19:30. Chair De Ryk began by introducing the application and explained that a proposal at the site was discussed at a previous Strategic Planning Committee and was deferred.

Emma Talbot presented the amended proposal and explained the difference between the role of the Council as land owner and planning authority in this application confirming that the application would be assessed in accordance with Planning Policy. It was noted that the site is identified in the local plan as a development site and is within the Deptford Town Centre Masterplan. Emma Talbot explained that since deferral a number of meetings with community groups had taken place. It was also explained that Reginald House is not within a Conservation Area so only requires prior-approval for the method of demolition.

Councillor Clarke asked for clarification of the status of the community garden and for how long it had been in use as a community garden. Emma Talbot explained that the current community use of the garden was a meanwhile use in advance of the redevelopment and had been since 2013. Councillor Onikosi asked how it can be ensured that the public get access to the proposed community spaces. Emma Talbot stated that the Section 106 Agreement guarantees that a process for consultation with various community groups will be put in place.

Then followed a presentation by the applicants represented by Angela Woods, Tricia Patel, Tim Gaskell and Martin Savage. It was stated that the deferral had resulted in a delay to the Amersham Vale Development. It was explained that existing residents had been guaranteed first phase accommodation. The applicants then stated that since the deferral the percentage of affordable housing proposed had been increased from 16% to 47% with 74 homes for social rent. It was then explained that all of the residents of Reginald House will be offered rehousing on their current terms. The applicants also explained that a further sunlight and daylight assessment had taken place and provisions put in place to improve the public realm. The proposed scheme would be 77% dual aspect with 21 wheelchair homes.

The applicants then went on to provide information in regard to the landscaping. It was stated that the consultants being used had worked on many award winning schemes. The public spaces had been designed without fences in order to appear welcoming to the public with the aim to green the site given the existing landscaping.

Councillor Clarke raised concerns regarding the location of the pocket park being adjacent to a busy road and worried about air pollution. Chair De Ryk asked if planting could reduce pollution. Martin Savage explained that large trees could not be used given the size of the space but that other methods could be explored. Councillor Bonavia stated that the largest public space on the site would be smaller than the communal garden and asked how creating a larger garden would affect the scheme. Angela Woods explained that the aim of the scheme was to get a large number of units without increasing the height of the buildings.

Councillor Reid asked for clarification over the consultation in regard to the community garden and raised concerns that the special nature of the garden had not been fully recognized by the applicants. It was explained that four meetings had taken place with the community group. Chair De Ryk asked whether community groups will have input in the public spaces. Emma Talbot stated that it is proposed through a legal obligation that they would. Councillor Clarke was concerned that the garden has been established for a long time and it would be difficult to replicate that mature planting and diversity in the proposed scheme. Martin Savage stated that naturalistic approaches are being considered.

Councillor Onikosi stated that the increase in affordable housing is welcome and asked how other members of the community will be informed of the new public spaces. Tim Gaskell replied that a range of different community groups will be approached. Martin Savage explained that going forward the best practice would be to have meetings with the community to see what is achievable and keep up to date through workshops and newsletters.

Andrea Carey Fuller from Deptford Neighbourhood Action, Andy Thornes from Crossfields Estate Residents' Association and Pauline Wamunyu and Wei Teh residents of Reginald House spoke in opposition to the proposal. Len Duvall GLA Assembly Member for Greenwich and Lewisham also spoke against the development.

Andrea Carey Fuller stated that the engagement process had been disappointing and that progress had not been made other than on overshadowing. It was claimed that originally up to 100% of the garden could be retained. Andrea Carey Fuller stated that the garden had been given Mayoral blessing in the 1990s and had been open to and used by thousands of people since then. The meanwhile use related to the school garden not the community garden in its current guise. Andrea Carey Fuller then went on to explain that the proposed public space is inadequate and does not compensate for the loss of biodiversity and wildlife.

Andy Thornes stated that the loss of people's homes is not an aspiration for the community it is just to make things easier for the developer. Mr Thornes went on to explain that there are no empty homes in Reginald House and that all of the leaseholders and the majority of residents are against the development.

Wei Teh stated that the council had not undertaken adequate consultation with residents and had not responded to questions. Residents have never been in favour of displacement or the loss of homes.

Pauline Wamunyu said she had written to the Council in 2016 and had not received a response. Pauline Wamunyu also said that the process had not been properly scrutinised and alternatives such as refurbishment have not been explored.

Len Duvall said that the heart of the matter is getting the best deal for the community. Mr Duvall also stated that the pocket park is an existing space and much of the public space amounts to a glorified path. Len Duvall also stated that the debate does not have to be housing vs public space and that the communal garden cannot be regained once lost.

Councillor Clarke asked the objectors how widely the community garden is used. Andrea Carey Fuller replied that a petition showed that thousands of people use the garden. Councillor Clarke asked whether there was wildlife worth protecting. Andrea Carey Fuller stated that there are species of newts and a rare Native American Tree planted in the garden. Councillor Coughlin asked to what extent the community were against the loss of Reginald House. Pauline Wamunyu replied that all residents are against. Andy Thornes claimed that the figures on affordability were misleading.

Councillor Bonavia asked if any residents are happy to move. Emma Talbot stated that one letter of support had been received by the council. Councillor Bonavia asked for clarification over the status of the three new residents of Reginald House. A housing officer present confirmed that they are being used as temporary accommodation. Councillor Bonavia also asked why Council Officers were not invited to one of the consultation meetings. Andy Thornes replied that the meeting was just to clarify some points. Len Duvall explained that he chaired the meetings and that the meetings were useful to an extent. However, the Council cannot find a site similar to the existing community garden which shows that it is impossible to replace.

21:54 Standing Orders were suspended.

Councillor Onikosi asked whether in order to be fully satisfied an entirely new scheme would have to be proposed. Andrea Carey Fuller replied that they would like to see a collaboratively redesigned scheme. Chair De Ryk explained to the committee that they can only consider the present scheme.

The Chair then called Housing Officers Jeff Endean and Sara Caton up to answer questions. They explained that after the deferral the council wrote to every resident of Reginald House, knocked on doors and held a meeting at Deptford Lounge. No response was received to the consultation. Sara Caton also explained that a formal

offer and options letter was also sent out. Chair De Ryk asked if this had been sent recorded delivery. Sarah Caton stated that it was hand delivered.

Councillor Dacres then spoke under standing orders and made a number of points. She explained that Tidemill School has no green space and still uses the communal garden. The community garden is a natural space that cannot be replicated. The consultation has been inadequate and has not given adequate room for discussion. Councillor Dacres also stated that Amersham Vale should not be held to ransom.

Councillor Dromey also spoken under standing orders. He stated that the process had not been entirely satisfactory. Councillor Dromey claimed that the biggest local issue was the lack of affordable housing. The amount of affordable housing in the scheme is higher than most other proposals in the borough. Councillor Dromey also emphasized that the residents need to be officered homes of equivalent size and value.

Councillor Dacres stated that the pocket park is of poor quality and would need heavy mitigation to negate the poor air quality. Councillor Dacres said that retaining elements of the garden should be considered and the scheme redesigned.

Councillor Dromey stated that he trusted the officer recommendation and prioritized the local need for social housing. Therefore on balance the scheme should be approved.

Councillor Onikosi asked for clarification of the status of Amersham Vale. Emma Talbot replied that there would have to be discussions if the application was refused but that Amersham Vale is not a consideration for this application and Members should not give that issue any weight.

Emma Talbot then addressed some points raised by councillors and during the presentations. It is correct that the developer is not legally obliged to consult with residents but they had done so. There is a desire to work with TFL on Deptford Church Street to improve the public realm and air quality. The Council's Ecology Officer is satisfied with the scheme from a biodiversity perspective. Officers feel this is the best scheme for the site going forward.

Chair De Ryk stated that this is a difficult decision and after deferral everybody has done their best to reach agreement. However, that has not been possible and therefore a decision is needed.

Councillor Bonavia moved to approve the application and stated that it was a difficult decision as the garden is excellent. However, the proposed green spaces can also be good and the need for social housing is considerable. The motion was seconded by Chair De Ryk and it was suggested that a proposed planning obligation to ensure design quality was added in order to retain the current landscape architect.

FOR APPROVAL: Councillors De Ryk (Chair), Bonavia, Onokosi and Reid

AGAINST: Councillors Clarke and Coughlin

Application Approved

The meeting ended at 22:39

