

LADYWOOD UNITE

OVERVIEW, ISSUES AND ACTIONS

MEETING WITH CLLR JAYNE FRANCIS 28TH NOVEMBER 2023

INTRODUCTIONS AND OVERVIEW

Would BCC commit to either:

1. **Go back to the beginning and working with residents to produce a co-produced masterplan?** Dropping the current developer for a developer who puts residents at the core of decision-making processes. For ethical and moral reasons.
2. **Re-drawing the red line and take a brownfield-first approach covering a wider area of Ladywood?** From an environmental perspective - commit to preserving the good quality homes.
3. **Commitment to a single move and re-housing in the areas in like-for-like properties at no additional cost to residents?** For those who need to move - the wellbeing and welfare of residents remains paramount throughout the process.

LACK OF COMMUNICATION & LACK OF RESPONSE TO QUERIES

- Lack of engagement from local councillors and refusal to bring to the attention of BCC our concerns. At best residents receive ad hoc generic email responses from council officers that often do not answer the specific queries and concerns raised. In addition, we find over time that information received from BCC is contradictory and inconsistent giving the impression of a chaotic organisation – the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing.

THE CPO CAP ON PROPERTIES CONTINUES TO BE A CONCERN

- Raised several times with BCC to no avail. My property, for instance, was valued £330k at the beginning of July by two independent estate agents. It was suggested by the CPO Manager, Rebecca Farr, in a meeting I had with her at the beginning of July 2023 that CPO entitlements such as home loss payment and disturbance payment would support to compensate me towards my home reaching market value should my property be demolished. There are researchers from various universities interested in the regeneration of Central Ladywood from a range of perspectives including the financial implications of the project and the environmental impact of the demolition of 60 hectares of homes and public buildings. A researcher from the University of Birmingham has suggested from the figures provided by BCC in relation to securing the land that the cap on properties is between £200k and £230k. To replace my home like for like in the city centre will cost in excess of £500k.



BCC HAS NOT PROVIDED A RATIONALE FOR DEMOLISHING GOOD QUALITY HOMES

- This is particularly so for those built from the 1990s onwards of which most, if not all, are in phase I and therefore due to be demolished at the start of the project. In order for private homeowners to stay in Central Ladywood in a new Berkeley home information gleaned so far indicates that there will be an additional 'gentrification' cost. Moreover, the information provided by BCC, through the local councillors prior to the Cabinet Report June 2023, names the streets directly involved in the regeneration – this changed once the developer was named, for instance, the private housing estates were not mentioned in the original information leaflets as well as several other streets.



LIMITED RESIDENT PLACES AVAILABLE FOR ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOPS.

- There are over 600 private homeowners and yet only 75 places (12%) have been made available for these residents to attend workshops. The majority of residents do not have a voice in relation to the Community Charter.
- Further engagement workshops were promised by BCC officers November 2023, which didn't happen. The quality of these workshops has been poor because greater focus and interaction is needed to create the Resident's Charter.



NO TIMEFRAME GIVEN TO REFURBISHMENT OF TOWERS (628 FLATS)

- Conversations with our councillors would indicate that Berkeley Group is fully funding this. Refurbishment total cost £37.7 million – shortfall of £9.6 million (FBC June 2023) £75k per flat – ‘This sum would potentially not cover any additional structural elements which may still be a latent risk in the towers’ C3 FBC June 2023) There is much concern from council residents about the poor and dire conditions they live in – many commenting about the exterior (new cladding) not matching the interior. There is widespread dismay from council tenants of towers that their properties are being excluded from being demolished.



LACK OF SUFFICIENT AFFORDABLE HOMES

- Data provided so far would indicate that there are around 5% additional new affordable homes to be built in Phase 4 October 2036. Social housing units would remain the same. 35% affordable homes in Cabinet Report Feb 2019 and BCC Affordable Housing Statement as well as the scheme's aspirations and considerations stated in the Big City Plan – Ladywood Report (7.3.4). Additional affordable homes are subject to viability 'largely predicated on achieving private unit sales' (FBC Appendix 2 C3 June 2023)

STIGMATISATION OF THE CURRENT COMMUNITY IN REGENERATION DOCUMENTATION.

- The Indices of Deprivation Dec 2019 states that 43% of people in Birmingham live in areas that are ranked in the most 10% most deprived areas nationally. Out of 69 wards in Birmingham, 69 being the top, Ladywood is ranked 42 one above North Edgbaston and one below Moseley. There are 41 wards out of 69 that are more deprived in comparison to the ward of Ladywood.
- Language like 're-homing' used for people when it is usually used for animals

FAILURE TO FULFIL THE DUTY TO CONSULT PRIOR TO THE BIDDING PROCESS

- There are several options of good practice such as developing a Neighbourhood Forum and procedures including timeframe for engagement outlined in the 2019 leaflets. There was a breakdown of democratic representation at an early stage in the process e.g. appointment of CLR Community Organiser and the development of a Steering Group. We have been told that these initiatives were not of BCC's instruction but purely from the political stances of our councillors and MP – why did all information have BCC coat of arms and 8 principles deemed as approved by BCC?

FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE BREAKDOWN OF DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION

The 8 Principles agreed by the Council which are the backbone of the project are not mentioned in Cabinet Report June 2023

1. To secure high quality, sustainable new homes as part of a well-designed neighbourhood;
2. To provide a safe and attractive network of connected public open spaces and pedestrian routes;
3. To create a new local centre with facilities and amenities to serve the local community;
4. To enable the enhancement of the canal through improved access and greater levels of utility and interface with development;
5. To create improved connections across the Middleway including boulevarding;
6. To create a complementary mix of commercial and other uses to support a vibrant active neighbourhood;
7. ***New, high quality social housing;***
8. ***Ensuring that the existing community is retained and involved in the development of the new neighbourhood.***

MOVING FORWARD ACTIONS

- The regeneration process is restarted **putting Central Ladywood residents at the very core of the process** following the procedures outlined by the Council in the leaflets June – December 2019 including the **8 Principles**) which according to these documents are approved Council Principles.
- **Redraw the red line area** in conjunction with Central Ladywood Community Forum taking a brownfield-first approach including the brownfield land in surrounding areas adjacent to the red line for which there is plenty. There are also several derelict council owned buildings within the red lines such as Ladywood Neighbourhood Office which will provide ideal redevelopment brownfield land.

MOVING FORWARD ACTIONS

- An **independent consultation specialist is provided to help**, assist and support the local community - *To that end, the council will be going out to tender for a consultation specialist to help, assist and support the local community during the lead up to and during the consultation period. The successful applicant will be independent from St Joseph and will act on behalf of the council with the best interest of the local community (Cllr John Cotton July 2023).* A similar proposition was made in the 2019 information and has yet to come to fruition. Residents require a consultant that will also be independent of BCC.
- Residents are provided with a ringfenced budget that can be used for legal challenge so that decisions made by BCC in relation to the regeneration project can be fully tested including through the court system if deemed necessary

MOVING FORWARD ACTIONS

- **Residents are represented equally** in all meetings between the developer and BCC in relation to the project
- **Residents are provided with the Indicative Masterplan June 2023** which was part of the procurement process and as stated page 6 Cabinet Report 'will be the basis of consultation with the community once the contract has been awarded'. Several FOI requests have been made by residents to no avail
- There are **sufficient space and quality Engagement Workshops** offered to all residents. Presently there are only a limited few spaces e.g. 12% for private homeowners

MOVING FORWARD ACTIONS

- Central Ladywood Community Forum is involved in drafting the Residents Charter with Council Officers. A draft copy of the Residents Charter is made available for final consultation with the Forum before the final version is distributed. This is particularly important as there are only limited number of places available for residents to attend the Engagement Workshops
- Private homeowners are offered like for like properties at no additional cost and rehoused in one move to prevent disruption. There should not be an additional gentrification cost to remain in the area for private homeowners. “Ladywood community will be able to benefit from the redevelopment by being able to remain in the area.” Ladywood FAQs 2023

MOVING FORWARD ACTIONS

- There is a clear plan in place to support housing association residents. Presently, according to the Cabinet Report June 2023 housing association residents would be housed in phase 4. Nearly all housing association properties, mostly build 26 years ago, are in phase 1 of the project
- BCC provides clarity in relation to CPO. On the one hand BCC inform residents that the only decision made as far in relation to the regeneration is that a developer has been chosen whereas on the other hand there is considerable information available about the finer details of the project e.g. CPO in the Full Business Case June 2023
- Ladywood Unite Committee is in the process of setting up Central Ladywood Community Forum.

LADYWOOD UNITE WISHES TO WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH BCC

Residents such as myself have made Ladywood our lifelong home and as such have invested heavily in our properties

The possible displacement of an entire community and therefore obliterating the essence of Ladywood is alarming

History is at risk of repeating itself – see book/films *The Forgotten People*, Vicar of Ladywood Canon Norman Power, 1965

