

Helen Shervington

Fri, 24 May, 17:22 (2 days ago)

to Eleri, George, me, Lee, Layla, Robert, Gareth, Naomi, Councillor, Councillor,

Dear George

I hope you are well and thank you for your patience.

I want to start by stressing I in no way underplay the extent to which the Regeneration impacts the community, particularly for those whose homes (in which they have invested in for years) may be at risk. You're right to ask questions, push for clarity, and advocate for yourself and your neighbours, and we value you doing so.

We'd really like to get to a position where you feel satisfied with the level of response provided, however, we're conscious of the challenges in providing the level of detail you seek. These are important questions and pertinent, in light of the potential direct impact upon your homes. Nonetheless, at this early stage of the project, we are unable to elaborate further on what we have already provided as this would be premature and potentially misleading to do so.

Many of the questions raised rely upon a finalised Partnership Development Agreement being in place which then enables more significant engagement around the masterplan to commence. The opportunities to explore and influence your areas of concern will proliferate in this next phase. The absence of a finalised PDA limits the involvement of St Joseph Homes in the interim. However, where I am able to provide additional clarity, I will always strive to be transparent and do so.

It is crucial that we engage with as many of the community as possible and ensure that we communicate with all affected households. All residents will be written to within the next few weeks to ensure that everyone knows what's happening, with many of the questions you raise being addressed and shared with the whole community.

I will reemphasise St Joseph Homes were lawfully and duly selected as the delivery partner and maintain that documents relating to the St Joseph bid are commercially confidential. A masterplan is still to be developed with the community and this will be achieved through meaningful engagement by St Joseph Homes and the Council, for which formal consultation will follow.

Enabling residents who wish to remain in the area, to do so remains a key priority. The financial viability of any redevelopment, particularly of this magnitude is critical, however, profit is not the driving force behind the regeneration of the area. The profit margins stated within the cabinet report is standard across the industry.

I am not able to comment on the Ward Councillors newsletter you have referred to as we have not had sight of this. However, we can confirm that the regeneration boundary (or red line) was stated within the 2019 cabinet report which is publicly available. We have been able to view the publicly available Ladywood Ward Forum minutes from February 2019 which indicate a discussion around the impact upon homeowners took place but recognise engagement at this time was very limited.

I will be open and transparent, echoing what is stated within the cabinet report, that homes and properties within the parameters of the regeneration area could be replaced by new homes. Increasing the amount of housing and creating more affordable housing continue to be a key aim of the project. However, the extent to what homes/properties will definitely be affected, and how, will not be known at this stage of the project. Engagement and consultation for a masterplan, along with relevant planning permission must take place. Assessment on the environmental impacts will also be completed as part of the consultation and planning process.

You have made specific reference to Question 14 in your email and so I will address this directly. This was recently addressed by Councillor Cotton and I reshare the response below.

The Council is committed to ensuring independent advice is available to residents affected by Regeneration throughout the life of the project. We believe residents should be well-informed, consulted and equipped with the details that may affect their future housing. All residents have legal rights relating to regeneration and, through the provision of Independent Advice, we want to ensure Residents are supported, fully aware of their rights, options and any implications that may affect them – this includes capacity building. This will be put in place in the coming months and more information will be made available through the Resident & Community Charter workshops. From a community engagement perspective, both St Josephs and the Council will work together to make sure the community are informed, involved and properly consulted in line with our agreed engagement principles.

We will be using the upcoming workshops to understand more about what the community want to see from an Independent Advice organisation. We aim for this to be in place before the formal masterplan consultation commences.

We acknowledge the need for improved clarity and communications and want to move away from a focus on semantics. It's really important that we are able to focus our available resources on engagement and communications being widened, focussing on all those impacted, which include seldom heard voices.

Engagement will be fundamental across the lifetime of the project and not just a single phase or period in time. All households, businesses, places of worship and community groups will be engaged in a variety of ways and broadening how we engage and who we engage with is of the highest priority.

We're happy to revisit arranging a further meeting with Ladywood Unite soon after we have finalised the PDA, as a meeting is likely to hold more value for you at this key stage. In the interim there will be face-to-face workshops to continue to work with you and the wider community on the charter, along with newsletters, surgeries, ward forums, and more.

The dates and details will be included within the information being sent to all residents. We look forward to working with you at these future events.

Have a great bank holiday weekend.

Kindest regards

Helen

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