

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON MONDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER 2021, 6.30pm - 10.05pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Matt White (Chair), Dawn Barnes, Bob Hare, Charles Adje, Emine Ibrahim and Noah Tucker

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred Members present to agenda Item 1 as shown on the agenda in respect of filming at this meeting, and Members noted the information contained therein'.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting room were received from Cllr Kirsten Hearn, though she was joining the meeting via video link and would participate fully in the meeting.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

5. MINUTES

The Panel discussed the minutes of the previous meeting and approved them as an accurate record.

Cllr Adje requested an update on an action from the item on the HfH Repairs Service where there had been a recommendation to amend the wording on the use of sub-contractors to reflect in-sourcing as the default option. Judith Page, Executive Director of Property at HfH, confirmed that this recommendation had been accepted.

Cllr Ibrahim requested an update on High Road West following the recent outcome of the ballot of Love Lane residents and, in particular, the length of the period of time within which residents could vote. David Joyce, Director of Housing, Regeneration and

Planning, said that the voting window was three weeks which was in line with the GLA guidance. Sarah Lovell, Head of Area Regeneration added that the Landlord Offer had been sent to residents two weeks before the beginning of the voting period.

Consultation over the detail of the Landlord Offer had been taking place with residents since the beginning of the year. Cllr Ibrahim requested that the GLA guidance be provided to the Panel including clarification on whether the two week specification was the minimum or maximum period required. **(ACTION)**

Cllr Hare requested an update on the progress of the Employment Land Study that had been referred to under the Local Plan item. David Joyce agreed to provide a written answer on this. **(ACTION)**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 8th July 2021 be approved as an accurate record.

6. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

A number of questions had been received from Mr Jack Grant. These questions would be referred to Council officers for a written response in due course. **(ACTION)**

Two deputation requests had also been received by the Panel, both of which related to Item 10 on the agenda about the monitoring of the recommendations of the Wards Corner Scrutiny Review from 2019.

The first deputation was introduced by Marta Hinstroza, who had been a trader at the Wards Corner market since 2006. Also present was Lita Kaguawajigashi, a trader at the Wards Corner market since 2003.

Marta Hinstroza told the Panel that she was speaking on behalf of traders who wished to have a direct say in the running of the market. She had gained refugee status in the UK in 2002 following death threats that she had received in Colombia relating to issues that she had been working on as a human rights lawyer. In 2017 she helped to set up a community organisation, Community Centre Pueblito Paisa CIC, with a focus on arts, culture, advice and counselling. The vision of the traders that she represented was for a market where all were welcome and included social and cultural activities. She had initially been supportive of the proposals in the Community Plan and had been involved in its development and fundraising. Unfortunately, towards the end of 2017, internal relations between traders in the market broke down. She had since been excluded from the development of the Community Plan and she had grave misgivings about those involved with the Community Plan. She alleged that she had been subjected to a whispering campaign and described as a terrorist. In response to a question from Cllr Adje about this, she explained that there were differences in political views in the market.

Marta Hinestroza said that she and other traders did not want to see a situation where a small group of people ran the market and excluded others. Haringey Council therefore needed to step up as the democratically accountable public body to ensure fair treatment of the traders.

Cllr Tucker said that his understanding was that the Council appeared to be backing the West Green Road/Seven Sisters Market Trust to take control of the lease of the market and asked for her view on this body. Marta Hinestroza said that she was not in agreement with this organisation as many traders had been excluded and not provided with proper information about what was happening. Her request to be part of the Trust had been declined despite her previous involvement in the development of the Community Plan. In response to a question from Cllr Tucker, she confirmed that a letter from 17 traders had been sent to the Council asking the Council to take a role in running the market.

Asked by Cllr Ibrahim whether they saw the role of the Council as being an honest broker as an accountable outside body, Lita Kaguawajigashi agreed with this and said that they had felt ostracised and excluded. Marta Hinestroza said if the Council wanted to take responsibility then this was the moment to have that role with the community. She added that there was no guarantee that things would get better for traders and they did not know how much they could be charged if a private company came in.

Cllr Barnes asked whether an independent body such as a charitable trust could be set up to represent the traders and help to run the market. Marta Hinestroza said that while the traders should have a voice, the management should be controlled by the Council to oversee the shared interests in the market. Cllr Hare suggested that the Council could perhaps better achieve these objectives by helping to set up a charitable body and assisting with the governance arrangements. Marta Hinestroza commented that she wished the community be united with mutual understanding but, as this was not the case, the leadership of the Council was needed.

The second deputation was introduced by Myfanwy Taylor, a local resident from West Green ward, an active member of the Wards Corner Community Coalition, an academic expert in the community value of markets and a trustee of the West Green Road and Seven Sisters Development Trust. Also present was Nicholas Amayo, a trader at the market for the past 12 years and the deputy chair of the Seven Sisters Market Tenants Association.

At the outset, Myfanwy Taylor noted that it was sad to hear some of what had been said in the previous deputation, but recognised their contribution to the Community Plan and campaign and expressed the hope that the community divisions could be healed. She noted that it had been just over a month since Grainger had withdrawn from Wards Corner, citing viability problems with the scheme. She said that it was now

urgent to deliver on the Community Plan and so she was encouraged by the Council's decision to show support for the Community Plan.

Myfanwy Taylor said that the Community Plan proposed the sensitive and sustainable restoration of the Wards Corner building to deliver a new and improved space for the indoor market alongside new affordable retail, office and community space. All existing traders would be included in the market with rents maintained at existing levels. The Community Plan had originally been proposed by a group of market traders in 2007 and had been revised several times since then following community meetings, workshops and events. The Community Plan had obtained planning permission in 2014 and again in 2019.

Myfanwy Taylor said that 28 out of 38 market traders had recently signed a statement in support of the Community Plan. Following a successful application to the Architectural Heritage Fund for a Project Viability Grant this summer, reports were being prepared to put the Community Plan on a more conventional design pathway. Meetings would be organised with traders and the community to inform those reports. Studies commissioned by the West Green Road/Seven Sisters Market Trust had demonstrated the financial viability of the Community Plan which would be a £13m development funded by £6m of identified grant funding, £6m of ethical investment and a £1m community share issue. Conversations were underway with potential funders and investors and specialist advice had been sought to inform the community share offer. Work was beginning to develop the Wards Corner Community Benefit Society (CBS) which would be a democratic organisation, owned by its members to deliver the Community Plan and manage the building for the benefit of the community on a one-member one-vote basis. This would be open to all traders and community members with everyone invited to participate in workshops to shape the CBS in the coming months. The role of the Trust would be to reinvest the surplus from the Community Plan in other projects but not to deliver the Community Plan itself.

Asked by Cllr Adje about the ethical investment funding, Myfanwy Taylor said that informal discussions had taken place with two ethical investment banks but the lack of sightline to the lease from TfL remained a barrier. Asked by Cllr Adje about the status of the Trust, Myfanwy Taylor said that it was currently listed as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee but the aim was to register it as a charity.

Asked by Cllr Ibrahim for further details about the ethical investment banks and the potential role of the Council as an ethical investor, Myfanwy Taylor said that discussions with the two banks were at an early stage and that the Trust would of course be willing to explore any funding opportunities from the Council or the GLA. Only £6m of grant funding had been identified which was why support from an ethical investment bank was required.

Asked by Cllr Barnes how they proposed to engage with market traders who do not support the Community Plan proposals, Myfanwy Taylor said that the Trust engages directly with all traders and would continue to do so. Nicholas Amayo added that the divisions in the community was unfortunate but that they were open to reconciliation and that the goal was a Seven Sisters market with a bright future.

In response to a question from Cllr Barnes about the idea of the Council managing the market, Myfanwy Taylor said that the role of the Council was important to advance the Community Plan and to support the development of good relations between all stakeholders. However, the ambition of the traders had long been to self-manage the market.

Cllr Tucker suggested that what was being proposed was a complicated arrangement involving unnamed grant funders and investment banks that need a return on their money. He then raised the proposed one-member, one-vote management structure of the CBS, asking who would be able to vote under these arrangements and why this would be preferable to management from the Council which was a publicly accountable body with expertise, financial wherewithal and a direct relationship with local residents. Myfanwy Taylor responded that the CBS had not yet been set up and that establishing the membership criteria would be discussed through the forthcoming workshops. The CBS was intended to benefit the local community so there would be few restrictions on membership and would include market traders and local residents. She added that the return of investment required by the investment banks had been factored into the financial model commissioned by the Trust. The CBS would be owned, run and managed by the local community, would draw on professional advice and would work productively with the Council.

Asked by Cllr Hare whether there was a possible language barrier between the two groups of traders, Myfanwy Taylor said that, wherever possible, materials were translated into Spanish though this was a work in progress and resources were limited. In response to a query from Cllr Hare about rent paid by traders, Myfanwy Taylor said that rents in the new market space would be kept at existing levels and that any surplus generated by the scheme would be reinvested in the market rather than being taken out by private shareholders.

Cllr Ibrahim commented that a key point from the previous deputation was that public assets are best held in public control. She also asked how the CBS would engage with the wider community, including those who were not aware of the CBS or found it difficult to attend meetings. Myfanwy Taylor said that the original public meetings and workshops that informed the Community Plan had been initiated by market traders themselves and had been a successful approach. It would be necessary to build the CBS in a way that was democratic and inclusive but there was a lot of work to do. She felt that the community should be offered the chance to carry out the plan themselves

noting that the Council had proceeded with the Grainger plan for the past 15 years. The Council would still have a key role to play in the Community Plan however.

7. WARDS CORNER SCRUTINY REVIEW (MONITORING OF RECOMMENDATIONS)

The Chair noted that the report provided updates on the four recommendations from the previous Scrutiny Review on Wards Corner that had been accepted or partially accepted by the Cabinet.

Cllr Adje suggested that the August 2021 updates in the report should be noted by the Panel but no further action was required on the recommendations as they no longer applied. He also noted that there was a minor error on page 40 of the agenda pack with a reference to 'October 2021' which was intended to read 'October 2020'. However, the points heard from the deputations could be taken forward for further consideration. Cllr Ibrahim observed that some of the recommendations had been overridden by recent developments, including references to Grainger and market facilitators which did not apply to the current circumstances. She suggested that the Panel should consider carrying out a short update Scrutiny Review into Wards Corner in light of recent developments.

Cllr Tucker welcomed the opportunity for the Panel to look further into these issues but expressed concerns about the time parameters as TfL would be looking to move forward quickly to reach a consensus on the future of the market. Cllr Barnes observed that recommendations and actions could potentially be made quite quickly on communications issues and the relationship with market traders.

Cllr Ibrahim expressed concerns about making recommendations at the meeting without the opportunity to discuss and consider the issues in more detail. This could potentially be done properly over the course of a series of meetings held over a period of a couple of weeks. Cllr Hare suggested that recommendations could be made on some broad-brush aims and require that a report is received on the basis of this from the Cabinet Member. Cllr Ibrahim took the view that scrutiny recommendations should be specific and that this could not be achieved at the current meeting.

Cllr Ruth Gordon, Cabinet Member for House Building, Place-Making and Development, said that the Council's position was to support the Trust and the Community Plan which already had planning permission. Joint statements had been issued with TfL and the Council was making sure that the Community Plan was being driven forward. She said that it was an extraordinarily exciting project and the Council's aims were fully in line with the Community Plan. There were clearly divisions within the community in the market and so the Council should be aiming to heal those divisions. There had also been divisions between the traders and Grainger over the past 15 years and now there was an opportunity to move forward.

The Panel then proposed to take forward the issues raised on Wards Corner via a short Scrutiny Review. Ayshe Simsek, Democratic Services & Scrutiny Manager reminded the Panel of the existing pressures on the Work Programme and the need to seek approval for this change to the Work Programme from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – That the Panel note the updates to the progress of the recommendations.

RESOLVED – That the Panel add a Scrutiny Review on Wards Corner to the Work Programme. This Review would be held via special meetings in a short time-limited way given the existing pressures on the Work Programme.

8. HFH REPAIR CONTRACTS

Judith Page, Executive Director of Property at HfH, introduced the report on this item. She commented that the most repairs and maintenance work was delivered through the in-house Haringey Repairs Service (HRS) but subcontractor use had increased in recent years as could be seen from the graph in the report. Analysis was taking place on how to reduce this, though the use of specialist sub-contractors would still be required for some types of repairs. A major area of outsourcing related to gas services, the first break in the contract for which was in 2022. A review was being undertaken on whether to bring these services in-house at that time.

Cllr John Bevan, Cabinet Member for Planning, Licensing and Housing Services, added that the delivery of facilities management services for the Council's buildings had been transferred from Amey contractors to the HRS. In addition, the HRS had previously been configured to deal with average levels of demand with subcontractors brought in at times of peak demand. There was now a project to reassess the workload to try to ensure that the HRS could deal with more peaks in demand. Cllr Bevan added that his commitment was to bring services in-house except in the case of specialist services where this would not be cost effective.

Cllr Tucker welcomed the review on gas services and asked for clarification on the figure in paragraph 1.4 of the report that 16% of jobs were being delivered by subcontractors. Judith Page said that this figure applied to responsive repairs and not planned works. Asked by Cllr Tucker about the Council's construction programme and planned works and Council's ability to carry this out in-house instead of using contractors. David Joyce said that this was not part of the current plan as this type of work required a particular level of experience and expertise and it would take some time to build that capacity in-house. Cllr Tucker suggested that the administration started looking into how this could be achieved, given that the Council was aiming to deliver thousands of new homes in the coming years and did not need to make a profit unlike private contractors. Cllr Adje asked if outline dates for this could be provided

but David Joyce said that this was not part of the current plans so no timescales could be provided but he could set out in writing why the Department did not currently consider this approach to be in the interests of the Council. **(ACTION)**

Asked by Cllr Hare about the timescales for the review of the gas contract, Judith Page said that the break in the contract would be in October 2022 so the review was taking place this year as around 9 months would be required to bring the services in-house.

9. ST ANN'S DEVELOPMENT

The Panel agreed to defer this agenda item to the next meeting due to lack of time.

10. BROADWATER FARM

Consultation of residents in the Stapleford block

Cllr Ruth Gordon, Cabinet Member for House Building, Place-Making and Development, introduced the report noting that this item was due to be considered by the Cabinet at their meeting the following day. The report set out the S105 consultation that had recently been undertaken with residents over whether they wanted refurbishment or demolition of homes in the Stapleford North block of the Broadwater Farm Estate. Responses had been received from all 21 of the households eligible to participate in the consultation. The majority of the responses favoured demolition rather than refurbishment so that recommendation would be going to Cabinet for consideration.

Cllr White commented that there had been only two options provided to residents and there was no option for temporary rehousing during refurbishment which risked conflating the issue of dealing with the disruption with the issue of the long-term future of the block. Cllr Gordon observed that an extensive response on this had been provided by the Director and that this issue would be the subject of a deputation at the Cabinet meeting the following day. David Joyce added that the recent exercise was a S105 consultation and not a ballot so residents could answer in any way they wanted and not necessarily in a yes/no way on the two options. The team also spoke to the residents directly as part of the consultation. The next stage would be to ballot residents and that would be a yes/no choice.

Cllr Ibrahim said that previously one of the challenges with having a binary ballot on the Northolt and Tangmere blocks was related to immediate health and safety concerns and so the GLA accepted that a ballot was not required. She noted that the Cabinet Member had previously expressed strong views about having a ballot on demolition and asked why it was different in this case. Cllr Gordon said that it had been a consultation not a ballot. The ballot would be on whether the scheme should

go ahead. David Sherrington, Director of Broadwater Farm at HfH, confirmed that the GLA exemption on the Northolt and Tangmere blocks did not apply to Stapleford North. David Joyce confirmed that the whole estate would be balloted on this. Cllr Barnes noted that, with regards to the recent Love Lane ballot, there had been allegations that there had a campaign for a Yes vote rather than a neutral approach and asked whether lessons had been learned on this ahead of any ballot on Broadwater Farm. Cllr Gordon said that it was a different set of circumstances on Broadwater Farm as the proposal redevelopment was for 100% Council homes so there was less controversy. Cllr Gordon said it was clear that the Love Lane ballot was carried out in line with Council protocols and the GLA guidance.

Update on repair and maintenance issues

Cllr John Bevan, Cabinet Member for Planning, Licensing and Housing Services, introduced this report and accepted that there were issues with the repair service on Broadwater Farm. A number of actions were listed in the report and these would be reviewed next March to see if they had produced the required improvements.

Cllr White said that much of the feedback from the ward Councillors that represent the Broadwater Farm area was about repairs being reported but not being actioned or the repair work being done to a poor standard. Judith Page, Executive Director of Property at HfH, said that the majority of capital investment had been internal on things like the heating system and new kitchens/bathrooms so a lot of the current issues on Broadwater Farm related to the communal areas. The capital investment for communal areas had been delayed and it was acknowledged that the way that communal repairs was managed needed to change and be more proactive. A lot of repairs were carried out but did not always have the desired impact or were not done to a sufficiently high standard. To address this, block surveys were carried out at the beginning of August, identifying 330 outstanding repairs, with 93 completed so far since then. She added that quite a lot of repairs reported by Members were found not to have previously been reported.

Asked by Cllr Tucker for more detail about the repairs that had been completed, Judith Page said that the 93 completed repairs were spread fairly evenly across the blocks and had been mainly plastering and electric works. From the block surveys, Debden block was found to be the by far the worst with 64 repairs required. Asked by Cllr Tucker who had conducted the surveys, Judith Page said that this had been completed by four interns over the summer. A surveying resource was being recruited but they hadn't wanted to wait for this before carrying out the surveys that were needed. These had been paid interns and, while they were not surveyors, they had been fully trained before carrying out the surveys and some quality audits had been carried out by the Repairs Manager after the surveys had been done to check that what they had picked up was correct.

Cllr Ibrahim welcomed the internal works that had been done but said that she had visited the estate a month or two previously and had found the Debden block to have been in a shocking condition in the communal areas. She asked why the improvement work had not yet been done despite previous commitments. Cllr Bevan said that, as a previous member of Homes for Haringey board, he had supported a holistic approach being pursued. He agreed that the communal areas were in a poor condition but said that when the blocks were refurbished the holistic approach would apply and everything would be done, including the communal areas. This would be programmed in as soon as possible. In response to a question from Cllr Ibrahim, Judith Page confirmed that funding was in place to carry out the communal works.

Cllr Barnes expressed concerns about the length of time taken to complete repairs and speculated that some residents might not report communal repairs because they lacked confidence that anything would be done about it. She asked whether there were satisfaction check with residents after work had been completed and spot checks carried out to verify the quality of the repairs. Judith Page responded that there were published timescales for all of the repairs in three categories – emergencies (within 24 hours), routine (within 20 working days) and planned (within 60 working days). Statistics on overdue repairs were reported as part of the key performance indicators. A resident satisfaction survey was carried out by text message after all repairs and the satisfaction rate was currently in the high 80s (in terms of percentage). There was a target to carry out post-work inspections on 10% of repairs but this target had been suspended during the pandemic with fewer inspections carried out. These were in the process of being restarted. Cllr Barnes requested that statistics on repair timescales be provided to the Panel. **(ACTION)**

Cllr Hare reported that there had been helpful written correspondence on the repairs issue from the local ward councillor, Cllr Seema Chandwani, and proposed that the Panel look into these matters further, perhaps through a short Scrutiny Review. Cllr White said that the correspondence from Cllr Chandwani queried how the repairs money had been spent but did not feel that this had been addressed in the report. Cllr Ibrahim proposed a site visit from the Panel to the Broadwater Farm estate and to then for the Panel to produce an action plan with recommendations. **(ACTION)**

RESOLVED – That the Panel add a short Scrutiny Review on Broadwater Farm repairs and maintenance to the Work Programme. This Review would involve a site visit and one meeting to discuss and agree on recommendations.

11. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

Due to time constraints, it was agreed that any suggested changes to the work programme could be provided to the Chair by email.

12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- 4th November 2021
- 9th December 2021
- 28th February 2022

CHAIR: Councillor Matt White

Signed by Chair

Date

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