

LADYWOOD WARD MEETING NOTES

WARD: Ladywood	DATE: 20 July 2023
VENUE: Ladywood Health & Community Centre, St Vincent Street West	START/FINISH TIMES: 7pm – 9pm
COUNCILLORS Kath Hartley & Albert Bore	NOs OF ATTENDEES: 300
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Kathryn James, Assistant Director, Property Services Nick Matthews, Project Delivery Manager Justin Brennan, Housing Development Manager Naomi Morris, Housing Modernisation & Partnership Manager Helen Shervington, Housing Modernisation & Strategy Manager	Visiting speakers - Joel Spittles & Will Rimel, St Joseph (lead developer)

MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING INCLUDING LOCAL CONCERNS:
<p>1. Welcome</p> <p>Councillor Bore welcomed all to the meeting and advised that additional meetings would be held later in the week to accommodate all. He emphasised that this was the start of the regeneration consultation process and information would be regularly circulated. Officers would make a presentation and then there would be an opportunity for questions and answers.</p> <p>2. Notice of Recording – meeting advised that press/members of the public could record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.</p> <p>3. Community Funding – Beyond Birmingham 2022</p> <p>Councillor Hartley advised that 3 applications had been received for funding from the Beyond Birmingham 2022 ward allocation and the councillor’s recommendations were noted as follows –</p> <p>a) Friends of Chamberlain Gardens – Ladywood Healthy Bodies supported in the sum of £6,300</p>

- b) Ladywood Community Project - Ladywood Fun Day supported in the sum of £4265
- c) Affinity Venture CIC – Affinity Active – Not supported. No geographical significance, not targeted to Ladywood.

4. Ladywood Regeneration – Gilby & Ruston area, Guild & Rodney area, Kilby & Lighthorne, St Marks and the Middleway View Estate

At this point in the meeting there were 200 people in attendance in the venue (maximum capacity) and 100+ people outside the venue wanting to be part of the meeting. To enable those outside to hear what was being said, speakers were placed outside. Residents expressed their frustrations and anger that a larger venue had not been made available so that everyone could have access to the information being made available. Councillor Bore said that letters had been sent to residents from during 2019/20 (not during lock-down) and the most recent on 19 June as soon as councillors received information, also asking for residents to join the regeneration steering committee.

A presentation on the Ladywood Regeneration Scheme explaining about the project, why it was proposed and what would happen was made by officers. It was stressed that this was the first of many meetings and consultations and that community concerns were being heard. Meetings for specific groups would be organised so that targeted responses could be provided. The planning application would not be submitted for 24 months to give time for engagement with the community so it would be at least 3 years before any actual work commenced.

Residents then asked the following questions –

- a) Ledbury Close resident – concern that leaseholders/freeholders who had purchased properties under Right to Buy would not receive enough money via a CPO to purchase new properties in the Central Ladywood area.
- b) Many older people who had lived in Ladywood all of their lives, were invested in the area, owned their own properties or rented properties and did not want to leave. This was causing undue stress at a time in their lives when they should not be worrying about such things.
- c) Were residents being forced out? Would they be offered like for like properties?
- d) Would the amount given to residents whose home were being cleared be enough for them to purchase a new property in the same area without having to find additional funds. Would residents be offered market value for their properties and what would be the cost of the new homes?
- e) The percentage of properties available for rent or shared ownership was queried. Concern that if not offered best value for own properties residents would have to take shared ownership and end up paying rent.
- f) Those residents living in tower blocks expressed extreme concern regarding their future.

The following response was given to the questions above. It was the intention of this regeneration to keep people in the community and not to move people out. There were approx. 500 homeowners affected who would be made an offer by BCC or Berkley Homes. The Right to Buy discount would not affect the offer made and people could move into a new home in Ladywood or they could move elsewhere. Properties subject to CPO would be valued assuming the scheme was not taking place so properties were not blighted.

Tower blocks would be refurbished and not demolished. Residents in low rise blocks would be rehoused with an option to stay in Ladywood. There were currently 630 council properties which would be replaced with the same number of bedrooms. All BCC tenants would remain BCC tenants in Ladywood if that was their wish. New properties would be built first so that tenants could move into them. At the appropriate time during the regeneration a housing officer would make contact and arrange an individual interview.

h) Houses on Ladywood Middleway owned by Midland Heart - what was proposed for those properties, had Midland Heart been alerted, would that community be kept together and query regarding the rationale of demolishing relatively new properties.

In response meeting advised the regeneration team would be working with Midland Heart. The proposals looked at the wider area so that a place could be created that everyone was proud of with new facilities, schools, open space etc

i) Private landlord properties – what was the position for people who rented privately? Many residents had lived in private rented accommodation in the area for numbers of years and did not want to live elsewhere.

In response it was acknowledged that answers re personal circumstances were expected but those questions could not be answered in this meeting. As soon as property details etc were known officers would work with individuals/families/groups. Offers for each type of tenure would be a written offer.

j) Details of this meeting was the first time many residents had heard about plans to regenerate Central Ladywood. Letters had not been received. The proposals affected people living and working in the area and had shocked many people who were now fearful for the future, especially those elderly residents who could not look 20 years into the future. There was a duty of care to residents and questions were not being fully answered by officers.

k) Details of the process by which the developer was chosen was requested as hearing that the council was working with a for-profit company to develop prime land in central Ladywood was considered questionable. The proportion of social housing proposed in comparison to the number of current council tenants highlighted the urgent need for a workable allocation policy for current residents to return to the area once moved from their existing homes.

In response to the above – re; the choice of partner for the project, 3 parties expressed an initial interest but 2 dropped out. Legal advice was sought to ensure the process was competitive and a report to Cabinet in June 2023 agreed Berkey/St Joseph as the developer. The project would take 20 years to deliver and while there were commitments on both sides, things were not ‘set in stone’. This was the start of the consultation and the opportunity for residents to express their views and it was hoped that everyone would get involved so resident’s voices could be heard. Detailed consultation would be held with groups so that answers to questions pertinent to that group could be answered in more detail.

l) Would there be new 4 bed properties? What property sizes were proposed? Some residents were currently living in overcrowded properties, would new housing be allocated according to need?

A property that lead to overcrowding would not be allocated, the property would have to suit housing need. Property sizes were not yet decided

m) Residents from the tower blocks commented that having listened to the meeting they were not confident that their homes were ‘safe’ despite noting that it had been reported that the tower blocks were being refurbished and not demolished. Would tenants be able to move from the tower blocks into a new council property?

In response meeting advised that those living in the tower blocks would remain in their homes while the refurbishment work was carried out. If there was a housing need, another property could be requested and the regeneration did not affect this. 3 of the 7 blocks had already been upgraded and the remaining blocks were programmed for refurbishment so there was a future for those properties. Tenants wanting to move could do so in the normal way.

n) Businesses – how would they be affected? Would they have to close?

In response meeting advised as part of the scheme it was intended to retain as many local businesses as possible and there should be continuity so that businesses did not have to cease trading.

o) Query re the date at which the market value for CPO of properties would be set. Price scale of new properties requested. A number of residents lived in properties built at same time as the Symphony Hall that were in good repair so did not need demolition. They had a garden and parking spaces so

would the new homes offered be on a like-for-like basis with similar outside space/parking?

In response – the market value would be set at the time negotiations began and would look at comparable values as if the regeneration did not exist so that properties within the regeneration area were not blighted. It was hoped to acquire properties by negotiation rather than CPO using experienced valuers and with homeowner's interests represented, paid for by the council. It would be the same for leaseholders/freeholders irrelevant of length of time property had been owned. It was hoped, by building new homes first, to decant residents in one move.

Sales price of new properties was not yet known.

p) Ashton Croft residents – concern expressed re the map shown on the communication posted to residents as it did not show the same level of detail as the map available on the council's website. There were a number of properties that were not council properties and were not highlighted on the communication map but were shown within the red line on the website. It was therefore a concern that residents in Ashton Croft whose only information was the communication sent to their homes might be unaware that their home was within the regeneration area and at risk of demolition. Included in the meeting details was a request for residents to group together to submit questions prior to the meeting for response. This had been totally ignored and there had been no mention of or response to pre-submitted questions and they were not addressed in the presentation by BCC officers/developers. Residents in Ashton Croft had taken the trouble to get together and with residents in neighbouring roads and representatives had attended the meeting to represent those roads but had no answers to report back.

q) There were numerous comments made throughout the meeting and a general feeling that residents had the detail of the regeneration scheme 'sprung' on them and had not been asked if they wanted this scale of redevelopment. There was anger among many residents that this was the first they had heard of the proposals and concern that they would lose their homes and the community would be split up forcing people who had lived in Ladywood for most of their lives to live elsewhere. Residents pointed to the numbers of people who had attended the meeting as an indication of the strength of feeling. The economic situation was causing anxiety amongst homeowners who believed they would not be able to afford to buy a new property in the Ladywood regeneration area as the purchase price given by the council for their existing property would be insufficient and the majority of those in attendance wanted to remain living in Central Ladywood.