

Columbia TRA

CTRA General Meeting minutes - 4 March 2019

Present from the Committee

1. Kevin McKenna (Chair)
2. Penny Creed (Vice Chair)
3. Jonathan Moberly (Secretary)
4. Rupsha Begum-Smith
5. Ed Furey (Treasurer)
6. Pam Haluwa
7. John Cotter

Others present

Cllr John Pierce, Cllr Rachel Blake, Mary Dinneen, S Clark, J White, Matt Zeunest, Lee Griffiths

Apologies

Spencer Brown, David Raedecker, Jean-Louis Shuller, Dave Sinclair, Abul Zahir, Jenny Dunn, A.Chunu

Agenda

- 1 - Updates on Major Works and Estates Refresh
- 2 - Rachel Blake - Council housing policy
- 3 - Rachel Blake - Air pollution issues

1 - Updates on Major Works and Estates Refresh

Major works

- Starting on Hackney Road and Pelter St (odd numbers). Sivill house starting April.
- Major works finishing on Cuff Point, Dunmore Point.
- Tomlinson Close - section 20 coming within the week. Major works should start around Autumn. The estimate will rise from the previous 30K estimate .. for example new windows are planned now which were not in the original estimate. Question of whether curtilage works should be carried out without coordinating with major works. EG spikes have been fixed to one property but not others - spikes will be part of the major works programme.
- Updates are / will be on the website, and CTRA can help steering groups assistance. Advice on major works available on website. Dunmore Point and Cuff Point people can provide feedback.

Curtilage Works

- Refresh of railings etc. We've done a walk around the Newling estate, awaiting a full list of works and a breakdown of costs. No clarity about charges to leaseholders but expected to be £60.00.
- Other things requested - lighting / bins / noticeboards / outdoor repairs. Nothing confirmed until we receive the full breakdown.
- A followup is on 15 march at 10am when there will be another walk-around. (Kobir - to drop an email to check whats getting done and dates. Kobir to channel queries).
- Other issues - new lightbulbs are not as bright as the old ones. On the other hand - the Dunmore new lights are too bright and flooding other properties. (Kobir - these can be picked up on the walkabout on 15th as electrical engineers will be there)
- New bin sheds have gone in at Cuff Point and Dunmore Point - they look good.
- The 300K to improve the environment after Dunmore and Cuff works is going through budget approval. The new system for these funds is called SIL - a pool of development funds that replaces the old Section 106 agreements. 33

Rupsha raised the issue of works charges refunds - these are credited to service charge accounts but should be offered back to leaseholders as cash. Pam - this system is under review.

2 - Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor - Council housing policy

Tower Hamlets has the highest levels of housing need in London. Thirty years ago, 80% of the borough was council rentals and therefore affordable. Now around 40% owner-occupier, the rest is private or social rent. Change driven by right to buy and homebuilding.

Tower Hamlets has a target of building 4000 homes per year of all types (private, social, council). A lot around Aldgate, Whitechapel, Isle of Dogs.

Council wants to be sure housing is relevant.

- Council target is 50% affordable for all new housing.

What is affordable housing?

Anything that is not a market home for sale or private rent.

The council have two different 'actually affordable' rent levels:

Social Rent should be £150 - £176 per week rent. + service charge.

Living Rent = 1/3 of average income. £191.90 for 1 bed, £211 for 2 bed, £249 for four bed.

Other terms for *Social Rent* are *London Affordable*, *Target Rent* and *Council Rent*

Government-defined "Affordable" is 80% of market rent which bears no relation to affordability in terms of median Tower Hamlets incomes. Tower Hamlets Council has managed to drive this figure down to 50-66% within the borough.

Proportion affordable in a development -

Council policy is to target 35 % affordable of which 70% has to for rent.

Baroness road - example of council development.

- paid for out of several sources including rent and right to buy % of receipts
- will be 50 % *Social Rent* and 50% *Living Rent*.
- a percentage of the new homes will be for allocating to estate residents

Local allocation

ideally local housing will meet local housing need but really hard to deliver in practice. [Pam mentioned example of a tenancy succession in which the tenant couldn't be transferred to a smaller flat on the same estate]

Housing waiting list

- 20,000 people on the housing register.
- Bands 1, 2A 2B are urgent.
- 10,000 in urgent need.
- Band 3 are 'deemed adequately housed'
- 3-4 yrs ago there were 2,000 lettings annually, that is now down to 1,700.
- 2,000 households are homeless in temporary accommodation. 1,000 in the borough and 1,000 out of the borough. Council wants to keep them in Tower Hamlets. Council building target is 1000 homes between 2015-18 and 1000 per year from 2018 on.
- To build council homes we need council owned land. Spaces on the estates. We have looked across all of the estates and buildings.
- The council is keen to talk to local communities about their own ideas where it might be useful to build new homes locally.
- There is an active community of self-builders. It might be better value for money to hand small sites to these groups.

General discussion - suggestions and rumours about possible sites for new build. Eg car park opposite Tesco's. Swanfield St near the Boundary, small car park. On the corner with brick lane. Football pitch behind Tomlinson. Area by Dunmore hut

[TODO - Rachel to send us a handout explaining the complexities of 'affordable housing']

3 - Rachel Blake : Air pollution issues

Question from John Cotter - re the roads around the Columbia school, Old Market Nursery and Virginia School. The schools have had an audit assessed for air quality impact.

Rachel Blake: they will have an action plan for what they need to do. Council is also Identifying how streets around schools can have better air quality. Council is looking at designating some streets as 'School streets' which would be closed off at pickup time and drop-off time.

The Ultra-Low Emission Zone is imminent. Petrol vehicles registered after 2005, and diesel registered after 2015 will be affected.