

Crystal Palace Community Land Trust (CPCLT)

Minutes of Board meeting held on 5 August 2023 at Westow House, SE19

Present: Chris Axon (Chair), Lola Barrett, Janet Cooke, Bernard Humphrey-Gaskin, Vishal Shah, Rob Shaw.

Apologies: Tom Chance (Secretary), Rory Underwood (Treasurer)

1. Matters arising from the meeting held 3 June 2023:

a. Community Engagement

The public event held on 7 June at St Cyprian's School had been very successful. Local residents had been very interested in the almost final plans for The Lawns and we had received some good feedback. A short article about this had been put on the website.

b. Procurement Options for The Lawns

Members present agreed that it was still too early to make a firm decision on procurement, if anything the construction industry had become even more volatile over the past two months. The design and build route was being promoted to us as one that would lessen risk although it would give us less opportunity to influence the process once contracts had been agreed. The possibility was raised of letting the contract in two stages. The first and most complex would be for the civil engineering works to prepare the site for construction. That would make the second stage much more straightforward and give a far wider range of prospective contractors to build the flats for which we should get a much more competitive price.

There were still a few months before a final decision needed to be made on this but the Board would need to be clear on the route it wanted to take before LB Croydon made a decision on planning permission. If necessary a special meeting would be convened to discuss this further.

c. Viability

The viability calculations for The Lawns development had been revisited with updated prices and achieving sales at 70% of market value still seemed possible.

d. Meeting with Tom Copley

Tom Copley, London's Deputy Mayor for Housing, had visited the site on 20 July with three GLA officers. CA, JC and BHG had explained our proposals for the site and outlined some of the challenges we had faced in getting to this stage. The meeting had been very useful and it had been good to meet face to face some of the GLA staff we regularly deal with.

e. Legal agreement with Croydon

JC had organised a meeting between LB Croydon's solicitor and our solicitor which had been helpful in breaking the impasse which had arisen

2. Financial - Cash Flow

In advance of the meeting RU had circulated a note which confirmed that the cash position of CPCLT remained very tight. Currently there was £20.6k in the bank. Invoices totalling £16.4k were due for payment. Invoices totalling £26.4k were expected in late August / early September.

The second tranche of the GLA grant of £90k has not yet been paid to us due to delays in meeting key milestones such as finalising the legal agreements with LB Croydon and submitting our application for planning permission. Recognising the particular challenges we have faced due to Croydon's situation the GLA have been flexible and agreed to split the outstanding payment into two parts. We were expecting to receive £60k in mid August subject to a letter of

comfort from Croydon's solicitors, which we had just received, and us updating progress against key milestones. Cheryl Scott (Development Manager) has this in hand. The remaining £30k would be paid when our planning application was submitted.

The Board discussed the situation at length and agreed that no further financial commitments should be made until the £60k was received and all current liabilities had been met. The next priority was to award the contract for the intrusive ground survey to better assess the level of contamination so that we could be as clear as possible about the likely risk we were accepting before we signed the legal agreements with LB Croydon.

CS and RU were to be congratulated on their work in managing the cash flow. The financial position of The Lawns would be discussed in detail at the next meeting of the Project Committee. VS would update RU accordingly and request a detailed budget and cash flow report for the meeting. RU/VS/CS would discuss the capital grant approach with the GLA.

3. Annual Accounts

The draft annual accounts had been circulated to all Board members. There were no queries on the content but a short report on key activities during the year should be added before they were finalised. They needed to be submitted by the end of September.

4. Draft Allocations Policy for The Lawns

The Board discussed the draft allocations policy dated 2.8.23 which proposed a two stage process for evaluating eligibility for purchasing homes on The Lawns development. The first stage was a detailed check to ensure that applicants had the financial means to buy a flat and maintain a mortgage. The second stage was for applicants to be assessed by a small panel against three criteria; housing need (up to 45% of total score), local connection (up to 25% of total score), community links and involvement (up to 20% of total score). Additional points would be awarded if the household contained key workers.

The policy was agreed subject to the following:

- a. *Financial check* - rather than establish a CPCLT panel to check whether applicants would be able to afford to purchase one of our homes prospective purchasers would be required to pass a financial check by an independent financial adviser approved by CPCLT. Applicants would have to pay for this.
- b. *Local connection* - The points allocated for a Croydon connection should be spread equally across all the elements in this section rather than be a discrete element itself.
- c. *Housing need* - Regard should be had to future housing need as well as current housing circumstances.

Timescales were also considered. Soft marketing of the homes would begin as soon as planning permission was granted so that prospective purchasers could begin preparing their applications. When the application process formally opened only the first 25 applicants would be assessed. Others could remain on a waiting list for consideration only if there were insufficient viable applications in the first tranche.

It was also agreed that three months was a reasonable time to try and find applicants with a qualifying local connection but CPCLT also had to have regard to the financial implications of having homes unallocated. If it was not possible to find suitable applicants who had a local connection then after three months applications would be opened to anyone in housing need who wanted to live in Crystal Palace and who was prepared to become an active member of the local community. Similarly, on future resales residents would be required to give local people in housing need priority. However if they were unable to find a buyer who met our allocations criteria within three months then they would be free to sell on the open market (subject to a requirement that any purchaser agreed to become an active member of the local community).

The updated policy would be sent to LB Croydon and other organisations for comment. **JC**

5. Annual General Meeting

It was agreed that this should be held late in the autumn in the hope that we would be able to celebrate receiving planning permission for The Lawns and start spreading information about how potential applicants might apply.

The Secretary would be asked to hire the Salvation Army Hall on either Thursday 21st or 28th November.

6. Future Board meeting dates

7 October 2023

Dates for 2024 to be agreed at the next meeting.

JC 4.10.23