List of Public Questions – Housing Scrutiny Committee – Tuesday 18 June 5.30pm

Question 1 – Agenda item 8

- How much of this work is currently carried out by in-house staff? if so what work is this?
- What is meant by it is almost certain that there could be TUPE implications for the council in respect of staff and contractors currently working for Fosters Property Maintenance limited but is unlikely that former LGPS staff pensions will transferred to the new providers Why?
- Has an options appraisal exercise been done? including consideration for an in-house bid for any of the work?
- Has an inhouse bid been considered? If we make an in-house bid we can develop the skills to maintain the new builds, securing future in-house jobs for a directly employed workforce.
- If not why?
- Has there been an outline business case carried out?
- Could you explain why there is a 11% variation on the estimated value of the contract £6m to £7m?
- What are the measures for 'social value will be in the contract? that past outsourced contracts have led to wages stagnating, lack of the Real Living Wage, poor health and safety.

Question 2 – Agenda item 6

The residents have lived in Ekin road for a number of years ranging from a few years to 40 + years as these buildings were built in the fifties and now it's 2024 the buildings are subsiding ,walls with no insulation, mould on the walls in all the rooms and windows, leaks in the pipes ,no lifts in the flats ,roads unsafe ,and people have lived in these conditions for years why has it taken this long to decide whether or not to pull it down this should have been done years ago .

All the house's and all the flats are in serious trouble EVERY SINGLE PROPERTY should be demolished let Ekin Road have a new lease of life it's time this is 2024 .Cambridge is in need of more affordable homes so think about what is going on around us there are more and more homeless families plus with the Barnwell road development this would generate more homes more jobs and people be more happier living in a area knowing it's safer for there families places for children to play it doesn't matter if you live in the north south east or west of Ekin road the buildings need to come down I know the minority want to save their house's but think about the majority of the residents who live in Ekin road who want out . They don't want there child to be the next casualty to be taken into hospital with pneumonia after in haling the spores from black mould this should not be happening are you going to

risk the life's of many to suit 14 homes out of 122 homes do they not realise that they are causing suffering to the residents some have new born babies the mental health is now at breaking point.

So after reading this my question is.

Why are the council not listening to the council residents and some home owners of Ekin road myself and my partner have been speaking to the residents and I am now speaking on there behalf you say you have spoken to us .but have you listened to the residents we have been telling you that it needs to be demolished and all we hear is yes we know but until you have lived in one of the flats or houses that are in desperate need of repair you won't know what it's like to live in these conditions.

Question 3 – Agenda item 6

As a freeholder in Ekin Road, I wholeheartedly approve the Councils plans to redevelop Ekin Road, and keep the 14 houses on the South side, even though this means my house will be demolished. I think this plan is a good compromise, balancing the need for redevelopment with the residents opinions.

The flats, and many of the houses on Ekin road, are of poor quality and in urgent need of upgrading. They are quite simply not safe to live in.

The proposed designs create the much needed new family homes, increase parking, and make use of a lot of the wasted green space currently found to the east and west of the estate.

I believe the Committee should vote to approve the plans, anymore delay is an insult to the residents that have been in limbo for 3 years.

Question 4 – Agenda item 6

We are the Save Ekin Road community group, and we are writing to you regarding Cambridge City Council's proposals for Ekin Road. We are a group of 60 council tenants, leasehold and freehold residents. As done in the past, we wish to express our concerns regarding the investigation work and potential development of our estate.

We note Agenda Item 6 of this meeting, where the Council is now putting forward a proposal to redevelop a majority of the Ekin Road estate. We welcome a houses-led development of Ekin Road. We welcome the redevelopment of the flats and emergency Home-Link banding for those council tenants. We welcome the

rehousing prioritisation of tenants whose living conditions are the worst on the estate.

However, although we welcome the retention of the 14 houses on the southern edge of the estate, we believe that this does not go far enough. We have repeatedly asked the Council to preserve all 32 semi-detached houses on the estate; this proposal only preserves 14, which is less than half. We cannot accept this.

Having reviewed the proposal for the estate, and having consulted our members, we now wish to make the following three requests to the Council, which we believe are reasonable and justified, with reasons to follow below:

Request 1:

We request that the 6 semi-detached houses in the north-east corner of the estate (odd numbers 13-23 inclusive) be retained in the redevelopment of Ekin Road, in addition to those 14 houses on the southern edge of the estate (odd numbers 33-59).

Request 2:

We request that the Council prioritise rehousing all those council tenants from houses that are to be demolished into the retained Council-owned houses, making use of those which currently house temporary residents or are void.

Request 3:

We request that any refurbishment work done on any Council-owned retained houses on the estate is only to be carried out after a full and thorough consultation with the affected residents, to understand their concerns and the impact on them. And we request that any decision to proceed with such works is first brought back to this Housing Scrutiny Committee for approval.

- Our reasons for request 1 are as follows:The majority of the residents in those houses have expressed a strong desire to keep their homes, and some have been in theirs for over 40 years. These are well-loved family homes, and there are no intrinsic reasons to take them down.
- Several of the residents in those houses have physical, or mental, health issues, for which their house is their lifeline. To forcibly remove them from their home will substantially reduce their quality of life, in ways that, for many, will be irreversible. We will not articulate their (very personal) circumstances here; the Council has already been made aware directly from them.

- There is a strong sense of community even within those 6 houses. Many residents are very close, and have been family friends for decades. There is also a community connection to the remainder of the estate, with some of those residents having relatives who live in the retained 14 houses on the southern edge of the estate.
- As per page 6 of the BPTW document, full redevelopment of the north-east corner would only lead to a net gain of 3 houses compared with retaining those 6 existing houses and “building around them”. Thus, it is extremely wasteful and unnecessary to carry out so much demolition.
- The remainder of the design plans for the estate are undisturbed if those 6 houses in the north-east are retained. Again, as per page 6 of the BPTW document, all that would change is the layout of that north-east area, and nothing else.
- We are aware of various protected species which live in the gardens of the houses in the north-east corner, whose habitats would be destroyed if those houses are demolished.

Our reasons for request 2 are as follows:

- There is absolutely nothing wrong with the houses in the centre block and northern edge (numbering 12 in total). They are merely “inconveniently placed” for the redevelopment that the Council is proposing. As such, those residents are paying a significant personal price for the redevelopment that the Council wishes to carry out, and so should be assisted to the fullest possible extent.
- Several of those living in these houses as council tenants have been in them for decades, with the longest-standing council-resident having been in theirs for over 50 years. That's half a century where this person has made that their home, has diligently paid rent, and has cared for their home and raised their family in it. If these residents are to be forcibly moved from their longstanding homes, then the harm to them should be minimised by offering them a near-identical house on the same street, given that such housing is indeed available.
- Residents in those houses have strong ties to the area, and to the local community, including to those living in the 6 houses in the north-east of the estate, and the 14 houses on the southern edge. It adds insult to injury to not only take these people’s homes, but also take them out of the community they have known and adored for most of their lives.

Our reasons for request 3 are as follows:

- A refurbishment of any retained houses might be a significant undertaking, potentially leading to substantial changes to people's family homes, as well as to a possible resident decant for a prolonged period.
- Such impact needs to be properly understood before any decision is made on whether, and how, to carry out such a refurbishment.
- It would be totally counterproductive for the Council to "save" several council houses on the southern edge (and in the north-east corner), for those residents to be then evicted from their homes anyway, potentially permanently.
- The severe impact this might have on residents therefore warrants further consideration by this committee before a final decision is made on any such refurbishment.

We hope the Council can see that our requests above are a significant concession from our group, as we are no longer calling for the retention of all 32 semi-detached houses on the estate, but rather for this reduced set of 20 houses. Having looked at the plans for the estate we believe that, with the changes outlined in Request 1 and the harm-minimisation actions outlined in Requests 2 and 3, this might become a proposal that our group can openly support. Unfortunately, as things currently stand, it is not.

We believe that our requests here are reasonable, and moreover implementable, without causing disruption to the overall plans for our estate. We simply want to be able to preserve our community and way of life, and these minor changes to the proposal would make that possible.

Kind regards,

Save Ekin Road

Question 5 – Agenda item 6

Dear Councillors,

I live with my family in a house in the north-east corner of Ekin Road. I'm devastated that these plans will take away my family home and my safe space. Why are you taking away my home, and my local support network, where there is no need for it. Our homes are fine, but you want to take them anyway. Our little support network in that corner of the estate will be broken apart beyond repair. We rely on each other for so many aspects of our day to day lives, and that is all going to be taken away from.

Please leave our homes alone. We don't care what else you do on the estate. We just want to be left in peace, and the thought of losing what we have is unbearable.

Question 6 – agenda item 6

1. On the 23rd January and subsequently on the 12th of March, the Executive Councillor reported that of the 72 flats damp and mouldy on Ekin Road, 5 were vacant (void works) and 67 were occupied, could she please update the meeting on how many are currently vacant and occupied.

2. Does the city council agree that making the decision on the redevelopment of Ekin Road at this meeting during a general election campaign is irregular and implies that the incoming labour government will have the same housing policy as the conservative one?

3. Does the city council agree that the issue of moving residents out of damp and mouldy flats should not be linked to the development of the estate and that irrespective of the development decision all flat residents should be rebanded to the highest priority on homelink immediately.