

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS****MINUTES OF THE TOWER HAMLETS SELF-BUILD FORUM****HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2017****MP702, 7TH FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,  
LONDON E14 2BG.****Members and Officers Present:**

Councillor Rachel Blake	Cabinet Member for Strategic Development & Waste
Councillor Sirajul Islam	Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing
Martin Ling	Housing Strategy Manager, Place
Tom Scholes-Fogg	Housing Policy Officer
Alison Thomas	Head of Housing Strategy, Partnerships and Affordable Housing, Place
Simon Westmorland	Senior Planning Officer, Place

**1. WELCOME**

Councillor Blake welcomed everybody to the meeting and introductions were made.

**2. NOTES FROM THE LAST MEETING**

The notes from the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

**3. FEEDBACK FROM THE SELF BUILD FORUM GROUP**

3.1. Alyssa Stanhope-Bosumpim updated the Forum about the meeting the self-build applicants had at the Idea Store Whitechapel on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2017. Alyssa advised that Jalal Aziz was now the Secretary of the group, Rodney Barrett was the Vice Chair and Alyssa was the Chair. The group's website is [www.THSBA.co.uk](http://www.THSBA.co.uk).

3.2. Representatives from the Tower Hamlets Self-Build Association met with London Citizens CLT (Community Land Trust)

3.3. The Group discussed different types of housing models and co-housing, as well as the pros and cons of working with a developer.

3.4. Alyssa advised that the CLT would send the group some information, and the group will try to meet a developer to have an open discussion about what a potential partnership may involve. The group is also meeting Poplar HARCA to explore the possibility of partnership working with local Housing Associations.

3.5. Cllr Blake stated she was interested in promoting different areas of the self-build philosophy and how best to match self-builders to developers at the right time.

3.6. Alyssa advised that the group had written a draft constitution and it was agreed that the group would share the Articles of Co-operation with Council Officers and Councillor Blake. Cllr Blake was keen to ensure that the constitution was transparent and demonstrated a commitment to promote equalities.

#### **4. LEGAL UPDATE ON SITE DISPOSAL**

4.1. Martin Ling, delivered a presentation which explored the legal view on site disposal for self-build, an update on the sites identified (including progress and constraints), the GLA update, and a discussion.

4.2. Mr Ling advised that the housing team in the council had worked on a list of sites and visited them to examine their suitability for self-build. The main rule for building and planning is that there can be no loss of green space / open space. Of the sites identified by the council, it is a mixture of possible flats and houses. It was explained that there may be a possibility of a monetary discount less than market value where land is vacant (presentation slide 4) and the council would give consideration to self-build if land is identified and agreed .

4.3. For intermediate housing there are two tests; the household must earn less than £90,000 per annum, and the home needs to be affordable 125 years. This is line with the GLA criteria on intermediate housing where subsidy is made available.

4.4. With regard to the potential sites identified, it is a mixture of 1-5 and 5-19 homes, and there are four pilot sites which have been identified as having potential for self-build. Mr Ling stated that sites with 10 or more units would require a percentage of affordable homes as per the council's planning policy.

4.5. A public consultation with local residents is essential as consideration as to the impact on the local community must be given. With regards to a valuation of those sites, it was discussed regarding getting a valuation with planning permission and without planning permission to show the difference between the potential costs.

4.6. Self-build applicants would prefer to buy it at the cost of pre-planning according to one applicant, as the land cost would increase if the land was sold with planning permission. It was agreed that anybody buying the land without planning permission would be taking a risk. Another applicant agreed and said that by buying land with the planning permission a lot of that risk is removed. A third applicant asked that the council sold the land with planning permission as it would motivate applicants more.

4.7. With regards to the GLA draft London Housing Strategy, Martin Ling advised people to look at it and respond to the consultation. It is a chance for people to share their self-build ideas at a London wide level. The consultation can be found at: <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-launches-housing-strategy-for-london> The consultation ends on 7 December 2017.

## **5. SITES UPDATE AS ABOVE**

## **6. DISCUSSION ON THE PROCESS FOR DISPOSAL OF SITES**

6.1. The self-build forum discussed the options for the Council disposing of sites. Councillor Blake advised that the choice of auction or lottery was a difficult one. One applicant said it may end up that there are six or seven groups within the Tower Hamlets Self-Build Association (THSBA) depending on the type of property people wanted to build. Another applicant said there should be a lottery based on people's need if the land is discounted, but if the council opted for an auction then it should be open to everybody.

6.2. Alison Thomas said an auction may get rid of the affordability element. Some present at the meeting, stated the difficulty is the groups may be at different stages. Martin Ling said hopefully all the groups will have finance by the time of the lottery or auction.

6.3. One applicant asked whether there was any fund people could apply to in order to get help with self-build. Another applicant advised that there is a homebuilding fund from a CLT which people could look at. Information about the fund can be read here: <http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/funding-and-resources/funding/development-finance/government-grant-and-loan-programmes>

6.4. Applicants asked about the price of land per square metre across London, it was stated plotfinder.net had such information. One applicant said people needed to be motivated to find dead space.

6.5. Applicants were again advised to send any plots of land to Tom Scholes-Fogg and he would find out who owns the leasehold and or freehold. Alison Thomas advised that people should look at the Strategic Development Committee report for Wednesday 11 October 2017 as some of the considerations given regarding the suitability of land, is on that report.

### **Next Steps**

- Consolidate the LBTH Position on Self-Build / Draft Proposal
- Tom Scholes-Fogg to write a briefing paper on what the council considers when identifying land, and for this paper to be sent to people on the register.
- Tom Scholes-Fogg to book a meeting room for the THSBA to meet in November 2017.

- Alyssa will feedback on their group meeting and whether any smaller groups are emerging based on particular types of property that people wish to build.
- If the valuations paper is ready for this to be shared.

**7. NEXT MEETING DATE**

Subject to evaluations being made and the potential sites for self-build being approved, it was agreed that a meeting would take place at 6.30PM on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017 in the Council Chamber, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Mulberry Place, E14 2BG.

**8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.

Chair,  
Tower Hamlets Self-Build Forum