Minutes of Barking Housing Forum  
Wednesday 25th May 2016  
Town Hall, Barking

**Board Members Present:**  
IBRAHIM Zahra (Acting Chair)  
CHOUDHURY Cllr Faruk  
SHAUKAT, Cllr Faraaz  
RAI, Cllr Hardial Singh  
GARTH Barbara  
BREMNER, Cllr Simon  
LINCOLN, Micheal  
BUTT, Cllr Laila  
SMITH, Cllr Danielle  
GEDDES, Cllr Cameron  
QUADRI, Cllr Moin  
ROFFE, Heather  
U’RENN Daphne  
KIFF Alan

**LBBD Members/Elevate Officer Present:**
ENDRIT Shuli  
BAXTER Liam (Minutes)  
HARTIGAN-BROWN Toby  
LANE Nicola  
LA TORRE Franco  
OSINAIKE Hakeem  
PORTER Caroline  
OTITOJU Akin  
PEARCE Neal  
HARLEY David  
KAMUHUZA, Laurence

**Apologies:**
ASHRAF, Cllr Saima  
LAWRENCE, Cllr Danielle

**Absent:**
CHANNER, Cllr Josie  
OLUWOLE, Cllr Adeboyega  
SHAW, Val  
RICE, Cllr Lynda

**Residents Present – 34**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zahra Ibrahim the chair of the Barking Housing Forum Board welcomed everyone to the meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising</td>
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<td>One issue was raised with regards to Cllr Simon Bremner being shown from the attendance records of the last meeting as having attended when he did not. No other issues were raised regarding the previous minutes and action points.</td>
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<td>The minutes were otherwise accepted as a true record</td>
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<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Vicarage Fields regeneration scheme</td>
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|      | David Harley  
|      | Group Manager- Regeneration, Benson Elliott, Studio Egret West and LondonNewcastle |
|      | A presentation was delivered concerning the proposed redevelopment of the Vicarage Fields shopping complex site in |
Barking. It was confirmed that this project had not yet reached the planning application stage and the Council was looking to pre-emptively consult residents to see if the proposals would be supported.

Proposed developers and architects confirmed that the project would be a mix of residential and enterprise units across the site with a 36 storey block of residential apartments as the centre piece. The development would be creating a ‘continuous route from Abbey Green to Barking station’.

Questions & Answer’s

Q1: Are we going back to the ‘old Barking and Dagenham’ with too many high rise blocks?

A1: Density of required housing in the borough to meet our housing needs means we need to build up rather than just across. No concerns about high rise blocks as they will be high quality units..

Q2: What disruption can we expect during these works to Barking town centre?

A2: Main residential blocks will be ‘car free’ schemes and parking areas will be below ground..

Q3: How does this scheme fit in with LBBD ‘replace as seen’ scheme?

A3: Not yet passed planning stage so residents can feedback on proposed plans. Very high quality units expected.

Q4: How will we attract businesses to the area if we cannot fill Vicarage Fields shopping mall now?

A4: Housing demand and quality of development should attract business. Development will be a stand out across London.

Q5: Will this be a new LBBD white elephant?

A5: Planning and consultation still ongoing. Development not yet approved (as above).

Q6: What about pollution and congestion concerns?

A6: All parking for the enterprise areas will be underground and housing stock will be car free developments.
Q7: Will expensive properties and no car schemes mean local residents will be unable to take up the housing opportunities?

A7: No parking permits are planned. High quality housing so will attract a variety of tenant/ owner.

Q8: How will we ensure top retail is attracted to LBBD?

A8: No promises can be made at this point but there are big aspirations for the development.

Q9: Timescale for project?

A9: Hopefully will be at planning stage by the end of 2016. Approximately ten year expectancy to have plans agreed, current development to come down and new development to be completed.

Q10: Resident concerns regarding local infrastructure to cope with new housing units, schools/ health facilities etc…

A10: Residents need to feed back concerns regarding the development at the consultation stage.

04  LBBD Homelessness Strategy 2016/21

Neil Pearce
Housing Strategy & Partnerships Officer

Neil Pearce from the Council’s Housing Strategy team gave an update on presentation he delivered in January concerning the Council’s five year Homelessness strategy.

Neil covered a number of areas including the government’s legislative changes affecting the borough’s Housing service delivery, changes demographically to the borough in recent years and feedback from our Homelessness consultation between November 2015 and February 2016 of which 200 residents took part.

Neil explained that approaches to our Homeless team at John Smith House (JSH) had increased by 340% since 2012. The borough had seen almost a 25% rent increase on our private rented sector during this time and that internal reporting showed that up to 30% of repeat approaches to JSH could have been dealt with better with a result of the tenant not needing to return.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions and Answers</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Q1:</strong> Is the Council’s proactive crackdown on buy to let ‘multi occupancy’ properties indirectly causing homelessness?</td>
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<td><strong>A1:</strong> This is a conundrum but the Council is committed to ensure all our Housing stock is maintained to a high standard. The Council is working hard to address street homelessness and has levels comparably low to many other London boroughs.</td>
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<td><strong>Q2:</strong> How is the Council ensuring properties are affordable for tenants of the borough?</td>
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<td><strong>A2:</strong> Roughly 2000 affordable properties have been built in the last five years and the Council remains committed to this scheme even in the current financial climate.</td>
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<th>LBBD Ambition 2020 Plan</th>
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| **Nicola Lane**  
**Tenant Participation and Resident Engagement Manager** |
| Nicola introduced a Youtube video which outlined the key plans for the Council through to 2020 within the current financial constraints it faces. The key message of this presentation was that without making changes to the way we work, the Council would be unable to deliver key services. |
| The main themes for the council were the idea that ‘we all have a part to play’ and that as part of our proposals there will be ‘no one left behind’. |
| Nicki confirmed that June 16th 2016 was the deadline for feedback on the Council’s spending proposals which would encompass our entire vision through to 2020: |

**Questions and Answers**

**Q1:** Will residents be listened to if they feedback on the proposals?

**A1:** If you have any feedback on the proposals the best way to get your feelings across are through the consultation.

**Q2:** Will jobs be available for local people to apply for?

**A2:** Cllr Geddes confirmed that there are a number of work schemes in the borough and we are working with local businesses to open up
opportunities for local residents. Information was given out regarding the Council’s Job Shop facilities.

### Any Other Business

A number of residents from Harts Lane and Gascoigne Estate attended the meeting to discuss the issue of the Council making a decision that all metal security gates on the front of Council properties had to be removed for fire safety reasons.

It was established that a meeting for residents of Gascoigne Estate had been held the previous night. Residents were unhappy about the decision and debated the security concerns they held for their properties if the gates were removed.

Caroline Porter and Hakeem Osinaike from the Council’s Housing Landlord Services team confirmed the reasons for the decision and gave some background on how the decision had been made after consulting with the Fire Brigade and other partner services.

The Chair agreed to invite the Metropolitan Police to the next meeting to discuss fears from residents about the safety of their properties. The meeting was then called to a close.

**Q1:** There is very poor security on blocks in areas such as Gascoigne Estate and Harts Lane, especially those surrounding blocks that are coming down as part of the Council’s regeneration programme. What is the Council doing to support tenants?

**A1:** Caroline confirmed that a meeting was held the previous night on Gascoigne estate for residents who had made their feelings about the gates known. Tenants in attendance would be written to concerning their issues. The gates however are a fire safety hazard and the Council has a duty of care to all residents as a responsible landlord.

**Q2:** Residents are aware of the high crime figures in the borough and this will only increase if gates are removed. What is the Council doing to support tenants?

**A2:** Hakeem advised that fears of crime across our estates were a perception rather than reality and were not backed up by crime statistics. The borough is a very safe to live. Hakeem also advised that specific examples of crime given by residents were issues that happened outside of their property so would not be affected by a gate on your front door.
Q3: Crime is only being kept outside of properties because tenants have gates on their properties. Surely this will increase within properties if security is reduced.

A3: Doors fitted by the council on blocks are the most secure that money can buy.

Q4: Why are we being asked to pay for extra security for our properties ourselves and not being compensated for the removal of our gates?

A4: Tenants are responsible for securing their properties. Gates are a fire safety risk and this is backed up by partner agencies.

Q5: Who can we speak to if we are not happy with the decision of the Council? Not enough answers to issues raised at yesterday’s meeting.

A: Tenants affected will be written to explaining the Council’s decision. Grievances will be responded to.

07  Items For Future Meetings

Met Police to discuss crime and personal safety issues following discussion on ‘metal gates’ on front doors of Council properties.

08  Date Of Next Public Meeting

The next meeting will be on October 12th 2016.

Meeting Action points

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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tr>
<td>None recorded</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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Items for Future Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Date discussed and added to list</th>
<th>Date of possible inclusion</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Met Police present to discuss resident crime and safety fears across Barking estates.</td>
<td>25/05/2016</td>
<td>At the next meeting</td>
<td>Met Police to be contacted</td>
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