

Meeting Notes: Residents' Liaison Group Steering Group & BMHC - 17 February 2025

Attendees:

- Nasar Mahmood (BMHC)
 - Kamran Hussain (BMHC)
 - AN Other 1 (BMHC)
 - AN Other 2 (BMHC)
 - Jim Donohue (RBDLG)
 - Claire Elford Hewitt (RBDLG)
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PLEASE NOTE: Some details in the notes still to be confirmed by BMHC.

Key Discussion Points:

Historical Context

- Generation (the design company) historically served as a step between Trustees and other stakeholders as consultants.
- They were present at previous meetings, but not at this meeting.

Development Plan & Community Concerns

- AN 1 emphasised the importance of understanding which parts of the development plan the neighbours will accept and identifying any red lines.
- The planning process will take approximately three to four months after submission.
- BMHC is consulting with Historic England and the Victorian Society to ensure alignment before submitting plans to the council.
- Once plans are 95% complete, BMHC will consult RBDLG and other groups.
- Key community concerns include transport, biodiversity, and clean air; however, BMHC must finalise the plans before addressing these issues in detail.

Local Community Engagement

- AN 1 defined "local" as those who work, live, use the area, or pass by.
- The mosque is primarily used by local residents, larger events like weddings attract visitors from further afield.

- Attendance estimates for Friday prayers: 800-900 people, with approximately 150 cars.
- Two Open Days are planned: one on a Friday and one on a Saturday (March and early April).

Biodiversity & Space Utilisation

- A mandatory 10% biodiversity increase is required for planning approval.
- Current facilities are inadequate for all activities (e.g., children's activities like Scouts and physical education require different spaces).
- Office spaces are used by charities, and all refurbished bedrooms accommodate homeless people.
- BMHC/ AN 1 offered to showcase space utilisation and invite those currently sceptical about the need for more space for a tour.

Planning Process & Open Day Feedback

- After the three-month consultation, a council planning meeting will occur, where only one individual can speak against the proposal for a maximum of three minutes.
- Issues arose during the recent Open Day due to undelivered invitation letters.
- Questionnaire results from the Open Day:
 - **1,000 in favour** of development
 - **26 against**
 - **24 undecided**
 - 10% of respondents were not centre users:
 - 5% of those are in favour
 - 5% against
 - 2% neutral [these figures need checking by BMHC; don't look right to JD]
- There was extensive discussion on sharing Open Day data; AN 1 clarified that sharing the data from any future events, even anonymously, wouldn't happen as it would require sharing with three other groups, which JD and CEF found disappointing.

Major Changes to the Development Plan:

- **Front driveway removed, turned into a pedestrian entrance**

- Road down the side removed
- One-way traffic system introduced (College Road exit only)
- 10% biodiversity increase on-site
- Green roof on mosque
- Dome reduced
- Minaret removed
- GP practice relocated away from the BMHC site
- Gym converted to a health & well-being centre
- Electric car charging points added
- £6.8 million allocated for internal and external building renovations
- Number of flats reduced from 150 to 66; (for older people & supported living, 10% designated social housing). Also reconfigured from one single block into several blocks (therefore, more expensive, less economical and harder to manage)

Total investment in the building to date: £9 million

Development Components:

- Mosque
- Venue for conferences & weddings
- Nursery (40 places for local residents)
- Office spaces
- Underground car park
- Health and Wellbeing centre (for the local community)
- Youth centre (for the local community)

Traffic & Transportation Considerations

- My notes are a little unclear on the numbers I wrote down initially I thought it was said that on a Friday there were 800 to 900 people, with normally 150 cars. [to be clarified]

- BMHC is already encouraging fewer people to drive, CEH raised a concern that this could push people into increased street parking, which is already an issue for residents during busier times at the BMHC.
- BMHC will be encouraging fewer people to drive (to large events like jumuah) by prioritising parking for the disabled, elderly and those car sharing. Car sharing will help to reduce cars on-site.
- Planned traffic management measures:
 - **College Rd entrance: One-way**
 - **Back gate: Two-way traffic**
 - **Dedicated gate for goods vehicles**
- Additional traffic surveys are required for Scouts, adult classes, and daily prayers.
- Traffic data will not be available before planning submission but will be prepared for council review.
- **Executive summary of traffic data may be shared with residents two weeks before submission. (Check with AN1)**
- Construction traffic will be regulated:
 - **Restricted heavy traffic during school months; moved to holidays**
 - **Materials delivered in bulk**
 - **Cement mixed on-site**
 - **Waste management to minimize off-site disposal**
 - **Electric vehicles and machinery used where possible**
 - **Van-sharing among builders encouraged/expected**
 - **Application for parking restrictions on Clarendon Rd in front of the wall to accommodate works traffic**

Building Schedule & Phases

- **Year 1 - 1.5:** Drawings & planning
- **Year 1.5 - 2:** Foundations & concrete pouring
- **Years 3 - 5:** Construction

Order of Construction:

1. Marquee
2. Prayer hall & conference centre
3. Housing
4. Side buildings

Construction Start Date: 2027

Funding

- Funding sources: **Community contributions & grants**
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Next Steps

- Two additional Open Days:
 - One in March (Friday)
 - One in April (Saturday)
- BMHC will meet with the liaison group two weeks before each Open Day and provide exact dates.
- AN 1 to provide a date for a tour of the existing building, focusing on how the space is used.