



Serpentine Court Steering Group

Tuesday 3rd August 2021

Minutes

Residents: Danielle Slaymaker (Chair), Joan Forsyth, Pauline Wright, Ronke Oludapo, Sebastian Power, Jean Wallace, Clive Wallace, Stacey Coleburt, John Pearce (observer), Mariee Wymer (observer – Locals of the Lakes Residents Association), Steve Hallett (observer – Chair, Lakes Estate Regeneration Forum), Jessica Gilsenan (Locals of the Lakes Residents Association)

Staff/Councillors: Rahul Mundry (Milton Keynes Council), Kevin Farrell (Tpas), Samantha Goodwin (Tpas/MKC), Ed Hume, Cllr Emily Darlington

Apologies: Shannon McCaul (Deputy Chair), Cassy Elliott (Deputy Chair)

1. **Welcome and introductions**

Danielle opened the meeting (via Teams) and welcomed everyone.

SCSG does not normally hold a meeting in August, but Danielle explained that she wanted to celebrate the big news about the funding approval for Phase A. She noted that it is a big project milestone, and the 'button' has been pressed that will eventually lead to the building of the new homes. Danielle spoke at both Council meetings and her speech has been printed in the latest Serpentine Court newsletter. SCSG had done a lot of work to get to this point and Danielle thanked the members for always believing that it was possible to get regeneration funding and for all their hard work. There is still much to do, and SCSG needs to get ready for another big push from September onwards.

Part of the push will be to get the Residents' Charter agreed. At the start of the project Councillor Nigel Long said he wanted it to be community-led and he promoted the Resident's Charter. At the Project Board on 14th July, Danielle pointed out that the latest draft of Residents' Charter has been on the table since the end of 2019. It hasn't been signed by the Council and the leaseholders still haven't been provided with options.

Now the funding has been approved, SCSG expects the Council to prioritise work on the Charter and put pen to paper. Danielle is particularly concerned to ensure that the offers made to residents at consultation events are honoured. For example, the Council has promised residents choices over kitchen unit doors, wall tiles and floor coverings. The current regeneration team didn't know about these promises when they were discussed at the last Project Board meeting.

It's important that the Council is on the same page as residents before it appoints a building contractor, or residents could miss out on choices. Rahul is aware of the issue and Kevin has shared the latest draft of the Resident Charter with him, so he can start looking at what the residents have asked for.

From September, SCSG's main task will be to get the Residents Charter signed off to protect Serpentine Court residents' interests.



Danielle finished by saying that the project took a massive step towards the eventual regeneration of Serpentine Court when the Full Council agreed the funding. There is still a lot to do and it's SCSG's job to make sure it gets the best for the community.

2. **Minutes of 6th July 2021**

Agreed as a true record.

Matters Arising – Samantha Goodwin to include an item about the next Housing Needs Assessment in the next Serpentine Court eUpd8 and quarterly newsletter. Completed.

Matters Arising – Rahul Munday to provide Margaret Prescott with the map of the escape routes used by gangs to evade the police. Completed. Matter referred to LERF for further discussion.

3. **Project update – Samantha Goodwin, Interim Community Engagement Officer, MKC**

The Lakes Estate eUpd8, August 2021, newsletter has been circulated. Samantha apologised for the short lead-in time for SCSG leadership team to comment and the slight delay in issuing the latest eUpd8, which was due to Communications Team staff shortages. Samantha thanked Sebastian for hand-delivering the hard copies.

Residents Charter: a standing item at Project Board, it will be discussed at every meeting. The Council is keen to make progress with the Charter and it is at the forefront of everyone's mind. The talks with the legal team are ongoing. Samantha has been in contact with the leaseholders about their current circumstances and the options are being reviewed.

Leaseholder consultation: Samantha is continuing to liaise with the 10 leaseholders affected by the plans to demolish Serpentine Court.

Wider Lakes environmental works: Serco are due to provide a fixed price for the works and an estimated time for completion.

Community Engagement Officer post for the Lakes Estate: the interviews for the post and the role of Community Partnership Manager have taken place and Samantha will provide an update once the results of the interviews are known.

LERF update (Steve Hallett): Steve congratulated everyone who had been involved in obtaining Council approval for the funding of Phase A. He added that it was a privilege to speak at the Cabinet and Full Council meetings. LERF continues to prioritise the green spaces and play areas and is still working on background issues such as fly-tipping. At the meeting in September, LERF will be reviewing the terms of reference.

4. **Project update – Rahul Munday, Development Manager, MKC**

Full Council, July 2021: The report on Phase A was submitted to the 13 July Cabinet, and was considered at a full Council meeting the following night. Funding of £64m was approved, which included the £2m spent to date on the project. The project will deliver 202 new homes which is more than the number of homes required to house existing secure tenants in Serpentine Court.



Ground investigations: MKC has agreed a management contract with WSP, and the contract for the site investigations themselves, has gone out to tender. The bids are expected back by mid-August, and it should be possible to appoint the winning contractor by early September. RM will keep SCSG and LERF updated.

HTA appointment: Permission to re-appoint HTA formed part of the Cabinet's permission to spend on Phase A. Permission was granted on 14 July and talks with HTA are ongoing, although they have been slowed by resourcing issues in the Council's Legal department. The Regeneration team has emphasised to Legal the need to prioritise the matter and Rahul expects to see progress in the next few days.

Procurement: In the report to July Cabinet and Full Council a recommendation was made to revise the decision to go out to open tender and make use of a national construction framework. The use of the framework (Pagabo) will save time as due diligence checks have already been carried out on the participating builders. Approval to use a specific framework has not been given and an internal paper needs to be drafted by the Regeneration team and submitted for Cabinet approval. If the winning bid is below the budgeted figure, then Cabinet will be asked to make a delegated decision. If the winning tender is higher than budgeted, then savings will have to be considered. Rahul is about to begin detailed work with the Council's Procurement team, and agreed to consult Danielle, Steve, and Kevin over developing a methodology for potentially involving residents from the Lakes Estate in the process as well as producing a definitive list of subjects on which residents would like to have an input. Kevin welcomed the invitation and informed the meeting that a colleague from the Procurement team (Mark Culley), had attended a previous SCSG meeting and discussed possible resident involvement. Kevin agreed to send Steve the presentation and minutes. **Action:**
KF

Councillor Darlington commented that she would be closely scrutinising the bids and testing the bidders' strategies to ensure that they are not paying lip service to such important Council objectives as economic regeneration. She also assured the meeting that work is continuing in the background on Phase B. There will be more community consultations and the Council is not starting from scratch. However, the plan to build a care home needs to be carefully considered as demand for this type of facility would appear to be reducing. The suitability of the tenures of the units in Phase B will also be re-examined. The Council will come back to the community with its thoughts on the subject.

Memorandum of Understanding: the lawyer representing the regeneration team is continuing negotiations with the lawyer representing the Planning department. Included in the negotiations will be an 'option agreement' on the land on the other side of Stoke Road. Rahul reported that at a meeting in July, the MKDP board had agreed to enter into the option agreement with MKC.

5. **Questions**

None.

6. **Any other business**

Councillor Darlington informed the meeting of the surgeries that the Council's Chief Executive will be holding in the former Cross Links shop unit from 10am to 3pm this week. She reminded the meeting that she holds her surgery at Spotlight every Thursday from 10.00-11.00am.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 7th September, 6.30pm – 8.00pm via Teams

