



Serpentine Court Steering Group

Tuesday 4th December 2018

Minutes

Residents: Danielle Slaymaker (Chair), Cassy Elliott (Deputy Chair), Sharon Jordan (Deputy Chair), Shannon McCaul (Deputy Chair), Pauline Wright, Mercy Zvenyika, Nasteexo Cabdi, Joan Forsyth, Ronke Oludapo, Laura Nash, John Pearce (observer)

Anne Bircham (MKC) Kevin Farrell (Tpas), Phil Chandler (MKC) Nick Hannon (MKC), Greg Shouler (MKC), Cllr Emily Darlington

Apologies: Sandra Mavunga, Nadia Hardi, Cllr Mohammed Rohim, Robyn Goodwin, Alicia Francis (MKC), Emma-Jane Flynn (Tpas)

1. Welcome, introductions and ground rules

The previous minutes were agreed as a true record.

Danielle noted that the Community & Housing Scrutiny Committee was being held on 6th December.

Matters arising:

Visits to other regeneration projects: Fullers Slade Steering Group's visit to Dollis Valley in Barnet went ahead on 24 October. There were no spaces for SCSG members. Alicia to organise a separate visit for SCSG in the new year. Carried forward.

AF

Home loss payments: Alicia will organise a workshop to look at the impact of home loss payments on social security benefits in the New Year. SCSG noted that the issue would be further complicated by the roll out of Universal Credit in Milton Keynes. Carried forward.

AF

SCSG met on Tuesday 20 November at the Warren to review the first version of the Resident Charter.

2. Project update

Anne reported the results of the ballot.

Anne circulated the latest Serpentine Court Regeneration & Engagement Timeline ([see appendix](#)).

The Timeline diagram highlights the tasks that have been achieved (ticked items) and the activities that will be taking place during 2019



and 2020. Anne highlighted the progress that had been made since September 2017.

Kevin pointed out that the latest newsletter (No.3) states that planning permission will be sought in Summer 2019, whereas previously MKC had stated it would happen in Spring 2019, and he asked for clarification.

Anne responded saying that Spring 2019 was an indicative timescale and it had slipped due to the delay in holding the ballot. The planning application will include the Serpentine Court development as well as the 5 opportunity sites.

Anne explained that HTA will be working with children and young people to gather their ideas for the Play and Leisure Strategy. This will include working with the Youth Forum at Sir Herbert Leon school and the youth clubs.

Housing Needs Assessments: there are still 35 outstanding and the Newman Francis team will be returning to complete them starting Saturday 8th December for up to 10 days. Newsletter Number 3, the Electoral Result Special: it has been delivered to 2,100 homes on the Lakes Estate between 26 and 28 November. Sharon had personally delivered copies to all the businesses. Kevin thanked everyone who had helped to produce the newsletter in a relatively short space of time.

Park Run: It is hoped that Junior Park Run can be started early next year at Sir Herbert Leon Academy.

Cross Links: Anne has been given permission to retain the keys and in order to re-open the unit, a constitution and named managers will be required. Anne proposed the formation of a sub-group to take the plans forward. SCSG were asked to contact Anne if they are interested in taking part and also supporting the idea of continuing Regenetea starting at Spotlight and possibly moving into Cross Links.

SCSG

Christmas Drop-in – 18 December: the event will take place at Spotlight between 3 – 7pm. There will be festive refreshments and a face painter and the event will provide an opportunity for MKC, HTA, SCSG and Tpas to provide the residents of Serpentine Court and the wider Lakes Estate with the plans for 2019. Anne shared the poster for the event with SCSG and she was asked to pass on a request to HTA to put the point about all residents being welcome, in bold. Pauline,

AB



Sharon and Cassy volunteered to help run the event once they had finished work.

Play & Recreation Strategy walkabout for all residents is taking place on Saturday 26 January 11.00 – 13.00 in order to capture ideas and opinions about Warren Park especially.

Post Office: a church charity is interested in using the unit for food bank storage. Cllr Darlington reported that MKC had received a commitment from Royal Mail that the post office will eventually be re-instated.

3. Economic Regeneration

Phil Chandler (NEP Operations Manager) reported on the work he has been doing to connect with local businesses on the Lakes Estate. 1000 emails were sent out inviting businesses to open discussions with MKC about the kind of support and workspaces they might benefit from, but only 1 reply was received. Phil has mapped the number of small businesses on the Lakes using Companies House information and there is a lot of self-employed activity. He will continue to reach out to the business community and asked for volunteers to help stuff envelopes. SCSG

The Job Club continues to run twice a week at Spotlight and third session is being introduced for the over-50's, as people in this age range can feel intimidated by the tasks involved in returning to work, and they often need additional support to take the necessary steps.

A skills audit has been carried out with residents who already access the service and it has identified issues with numeracy and literacy. Phil reported that there were regional skills gaps in construction, teaching and IT for example. The success of any programme would rely to some extent on sponsorship and partnership working with entrepreneurs and the Education sector. He confirmed that he already has links with MK College through the Community Learning programme.

SCSG suggested creating an information centre at Spotlight where residents could find out about education opportunities such as Open University courses that do not require formal qualifications. Phil supported the idea and explained that funding and eligibility are the main issues. He was encouraged by SCSG to use texting, emails and mail shots to promote job and education opportunities.



Other venues that could work well include the Art Room at Sir Herbert Leon Academy, which had been used for similar activities in the past, and Cross Links, once it has re-opened as a community hub.

Phil encouraged SCSG members to contact him with ideas and suggestions about how residents can be enabled to prosper.

4. Warren Park Walkabout

The walkabout organised by HTA and scheduled for 29 November was postponed due to bad weather. It will now be taking place on Thursday 6 December. Danielle, Shannon and Kevin will be attending.

5. Waste Management & Recycling

Nick Hannon and Greg Shouler from MKC Waste & Recycling attended the meeting to provide an update on the actions that arisen from the walkabout in September, and to take feedback from SCSG.

Nick accepted that Serco had not been meeting the standards expected by MKC. Therefore Greg had been monitoring the service closely over the last 2 months and had received just one complaint during that period.

SCSG was thanked for providing evidence of the various problems, and Nick confirmed that appropriate action had been taken to address the shortcomings.

There is an issue over the distance Serco operatives are expected to walk while carrying the refuse – they are not expected to walk more than 40-50 meters between the vehicle and the home. There also issues over the safety of the operatives in winter weather and the danger of slipping and falling.

It was confirmed that the bin cupboard is considered to be the boundary of the property. Nick explained that this was a unique situation within Milton Keynes and nationally, and was causing some tensions between Serco's central office and the local office.

SCSG members had observed that the service had improved while it was being monitored by Greg, but had deteriorated once he stopped. For example, bags were being thrown off the balconies and some were splitting.

NH

Every vehicle should carry a dustpan and brush, but SCSG members had observed that the mess was left for the Street Cleaner to pick up



hours later. Nick will contact Serco to make sure every vehicle is supplied with the right tools.

SCSG praised the Street Cleaner (Mick) for the work he does.

Greg reported that he would still prefer to experiment with Eurobins in an effort to overcome a number of issues including the distance that operatives have to walk with the refuse bags.

SCSG noted that when children see piles of rubbish they are less likely to take pride in their neighbourhood and will add to the litter. Nick agreed that the MKC strategy was to encourage positive behaviours. Cllr Darlington added that part of MKC's approach was to educate communities about handling waste and recycling.

Moving on to the problem of fly tipping, Nick reported that 25 tonnes of fly-tipped waste is being dumped on the wider Lakes every month. MKC believes that the offenders are travelling from outside the county to do the dumping. He is considering putting Serpentine Court on the 'Hot Spot' list and he has been in talks with the Environmental Crime team about the practical and legal measures that can be taken to catch and punish the offenders – this may involve the introduction of CCTV in certain places.

SCSG pointed out that residents cannot afford the cost of having their bulky waste collected. Greg pointed out that there is a free recycling centre near by. SCSG responded by pointing out that it can only be reached by car and asked that MKC review the charges.

A SCSG member asked why the tower block can't have recycling Biffa bins? Greg explained that the bins can't be monitored and they could easily become contaminated, which in turn, is illegal.

The suggestion was made that there could be a Skip Day every few months. Greg responded that there would be no way of knowing what had been put in the skip and it is a breach of the licence to transport waste unless the contents of the skip are known.

Nick and Greg agreed to visit the areas of the tower block where the old walkways had been blocked off, immediately after the meeting.

Nick asked SCSG members to continue to email with information and evidence, if there are problems with the service.



SCSG thanked Nick and Greg for the positive way they have responded to the complaints, and invited them to the next meeting to report on performance over the Christmas/New Year period.

DS

6. Neighbourhood management meeting

Mercy and Mohammed (R) attended the meeting organised by Councillor Darlington with MKC's senior management team on 28 November. Emma-Jane Flynn of Tpas also attended to support the residents.

The purpose of the meeting was to look at the action plan that has emerged from the estate walkabout that took place in September.

Mercy took the meeting through the list of subjects that had been covered at the meeting, including health & safety, the pigeon infestation, repairs, waste & recycling etc

MKC accepted that the services that Serpentine Court residents have been receiving are not up to standard.

Leaving aside the progress on waste and recycling which had just been discussed at this meeting, Mercy reported progress with the pigeon infestation works and some of the repairs. Anne reported on the planned works to clear the lofts of pigeon poo and seal the roofs. These works will involve building scaffolding over the top of the roofs. Anne agreed to get further details of the schedule of works; which crofts will be affected and how the works will be carried out and circulate the information via email as soon as possible.

AB

ClIrr Darlington confirmed that there would be a deep clean of the pigeon poo this week and asked SCSG members to contact her if it hadn't taken place by Friday.

It was reported by a SCSG member that some electrical wires are still exposed and the communal lights are coming on too late in the evenings. A query was raised over whether the timers could be adjusted. It was also suggested that light sensors would be a better and more efficient way of lighting the communal stairwells. There is real concern amongst SCSG members that residents could get injured in the dark.

The damaged substation is also on the action plan and dates for the works should be agreed next week.



SCSG agreed that it would be helpful for the two new Neighbourhood Management Officers to attend the next SCSG meeting to discuss their role and how they can work with the community to tackle anti-social behaviour and waste management. It was pointed out that Thames Valley Police had leafleted Serpentine Court in the last 2 weeks and provided a telephone number to call to report incidents.

Kevin requested that MKC produces an action plan which combines all the strands that came out of the walkabout, and allows SCSG to monitor delivery against target. Cllr Darlington agreed to take this action forward. ED

7. Resident Charter

Item carried forward.

8. Tpas Independent Advisor report

Item carried forward.

Any Other Business

None.

Date and times of next meeting

Tuesday 8th January - 6.30-8.30pm (coffee 6.00pm onwards) at Spotlight