



**Minutes of Customer Committee Meeting held on 26 February 2025 at
Diamond House**

MEMBERS:	Charlotte Haines (Chair) Ahmed Abdulmalek (AA) Gareth Evans (GE) John Beattie (JBe) Keri Muldoon (KM) Rashidah Owoseni (RO)
OFFICERS:	Liam Turner, Executive Director of Asset, Growth and Sustainability (EDAGS) Glenn Martin, Director of Investment, Development and Sustainability (DIDS) Carla Watson, Housing Manager – North, (HM) Jamie Cockerham, Governance and Policy Officer (GPO) minutes
ATTENDEES:	Salford City Council (SCC): Kurt Partington, Head of Development (KP-SCC) Sarah Heslop, Group Leader for Development (SH-SCC) Bhav Chauhan, Senior Group Leader, Property Services (BC-SCC)
APOLOGIES:	Jack Buckley (JBU) Marta Diaz (MD) Cynthia (Bethel) Alloyda (CA)

The meeting commenced at 18:14.

ITEM	
1.	Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest
	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Jack Buckley (JBU), Marta Diaz (MD) and Cynthia Alloyda (CA).</p> <p>JBe declared his employment with Salford City Council.</p> <p>KM declared her residency within the Cambridge area covered by the SRF.</p>
2.	Cambridge and Strangeways – Strategic Regeneration Framework
	<p>The EDAGS and DIDS provided an introduction to the item, noting that the representatives from Salford City Council (SCC) had previously attended the Board meeting on 28 January. It had been agreed at Board that an ad hoc Customer Committee meeting would be arranged for SCC to present the approach to communications and engagement regarding the Cambridge and Strangeways Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) to members.</p> <p>During initial discussions the following observations were noted:</p>

- DIDS noted that SCC had engaged with Salix early in the process of developing the SRF and would need to seek formal approval prior to beginning formal public consultation. He commented that SCC were seeking guidance from the Committee on how to understand and engage with the Salix customer-base.
- The Chair noted that Salix would likely receive a high level of engagement from customers if the consultation is undertaken, and that SCC would need to be clear on how they could engage with customers in the most effective ways.
- Members agreed on the importance of effective communication with customers from SCC and Salix in order to ease anticipated concerns towards the planned consultation.
- GE questioned if the implication of the SRF could be that residents may be displaced from their homes in the future. The Chair noted that this is a potential outcome, but that SCC had not provided a timeline for this. The DIDS highlighted that the SRF does not propose this in the immediate future, and that Salix's and SCC's letters to customers would emphasise that there would be no immediate changes.

The Chair welcomed the following attendees from Salford City Council to the meeting at 18:33:

Kurt Partington, Head of Development (KP-SCC)

Sarah Heslop, Group Leader for Development (SH-SCC)

Bhav Chauhan, Senior Group Leader, Property Services (BC-SCC)

SH-SCC presented an overview of the SRF report and proposed consultation process.

The following key points were noted for members' attention:

- SCC needs to understand issues in the area, especially in regard to flood risk, in order to plan for the future in the area. The SRF itself does not propose any new development but would set out the vision for acceptable development in the area across the next 20-30 years.
- Salix owns 89 properties within the area covered by the SRF.
- Operation Vulcan, led by Greater Manchester Police, has tackled criminal counterfeiting operations in the area but this has left behind a number of run-down buildings. SCC and MCC are jointly looking at how best to put things back into these areas.
- SCC have worked with Avison Young consultancy and the Environment Agency (EA) to investigate current and future flood risk based on climate-change scenarios. The SRF does not propose any new development in the Salford area based on the high flood risk.
- The SRF process would need formal approval from both City Councils, which is expected in early March. If approved, the consultation process would begin towards the end of March and take place online and across a series of events in Salford and Manchester. Responses to the consultation would then feed into the overall SRF document.
- KP-SCC commented that flood risk would be present in the area with or without the SRF in place, and that the SRF was designed to manage this flood risk into the future in a proactive way.
- SCC requested guidance from members on how to engage with Salix customers, including on the tone of letters, community groups to engage with and how to ensure all customers were reached, should the SRF process be approved.

During discussions the following comments were raised by members:

- JBe commented that the receipt of letters on the proposed consultation would

understandably panic Salix customers and other local residents in the area. He suggested that SCC needs to be upfront with residents throughout the process to manage these concerns.

- KM queried if SCC were aware of the showmen's site in the Cambridge estate area and the need to engage with all residents there. BC-SCC responded that SCC are engaging with the site and wanted to speak to the people there individually.
- KM questioned whether adaptations to buildings would enable development in the area. KP-SCC responded that investigation had suggested that the water table in the area is such that sufficient adaptations could not be made to ensure that the same amount of water could be absorbed. He also noted that consideration would need to be given to the promotion of development in areas of high flood risk, even if technology made it possible.
- The Chair commended SCC for using plain English in their draft letter to residents and suggested providing more information to residents on the issues behind the SRF, such as the impact of Operation Vulcan.
- The Chair questioned whether SCC had a designated person for residents to contact regarding the SRF. SH-SCC responded that a shared email inbox would be monitored by a number of staff with knowledge of the SRF. KP-SCC commented that SCC would look into having a monitored phone number at certain times for calls about the SRF. The DIDS noted that Salix's frontline staff would also be briefed on the SRF consultation process.
- It was noted that a number of proposed consultation events would be attended by representatives from Salix, SCC, MCC and the EA to help link communications between the organisations and ensure targeted information could be provided for residents.
- Members suggested that language interpretation information and reading support be included in the SCC letter to residents, to improve accessibility. AA suggested that this support could include providing BSL interpretation at one of the consultation events.
- KM noted that she runs a flood group in the affected area, and that consideration would need to be given to affected properties but also to neighbouring areas such as Spike Island. KP-SCC responded that SCC could put together a post for social media to engage residents and signpost them to the consultation.
- AA noted the timing of Ramadan and potential impact this could have on customer's ability to engage with the consultation. He made suggestions for increasing engagement levels through the consultation, including: holding events at local schools; going out to community events where residents are comfortable such as places of worship; avoiding school-run timings for consultation events; providing catering for attendees and providing a mailing group for interested parties to sign up to.
- KM noted that other community buildings such as the Broughton Trust building could be used for consultation events.
- JBe suggested that an online Q&A could be held for people who were unable to attend in-person consultation events. He noted that this could be advertised through social media, such as the flood group supported by KM.
- AA suggested that the consultation could be advertised on the Salford Home Search website in order to include the views of potential future residents of the area.
- GE questioned whether the SRF had been costed. KP-SCC responded that it had not been costed as the SRF represented the initial plan and vision which could then be used to attract investment in future.

- Members commented that the SRF may be subject to amendment in future due to changing Council priorities or advancements in flood-defence technology.
- KM questioned why the SRF had not focused on the Spike Island area where flood breaches had occurred. KP-SCC commented that the initial focus had been on the Cambridge area as evidence shows that this is where flood waters are the deepest, but that this did not rule out a later focus on other areas.
- RO questioned whether the SRF would be open to amendment in future. SH-SCC commented that the implementation of the SRF would not be a closed process and would be subject to development over time in terms of timescales and processes.
- KM raised a question in regard to the development of the Lidl store in the SRF area despite the flood risk. KP-SCC noted that, while he was not specifically involved in this, the planning authority had considered the development in the context of the whole Lower Broughton area's flood risk.
- The EDAGS recommended that SCC provide a written update to residents following the consultation to summarise the feedback that had been received.

Members agreed that SCC should be open and honest with residents throughout the proposed SRF consultation process to ensure that meaningful feedback from residents is gathered. Members discussed the potential for the SRF to be perceived as a form of gentrification by residents, and the need to manage these concerns with reference to the evidence of flood risk and other issues highlighted in the area.

The Chair thanked Salford City Council attendees for their time and attendance at the Committee. The Chair noted that the Board would receive the minutes from the meeting, to support them in their oversight of the SRF consultation process.

The Committee resolved to note the contents of the presentation delivered by Salford City Council.

3.	Any Other Business
	No other business was discussed.
4.	Date of Next Meeting
	Customer Committee Meeting – 11 March 2025 (Virtual) Strategy Day – 04 April 2025 (Diamond House)

The meeting closed at 19:54