

# Minutes of the meeting

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May at 7pm  
in St John's Community Centre.  
With Jehan, OH MD



## Present:

Candida, Arthur, Jill, Jackie, Tracy, Jenny, Daniel, Lesley, Maureen, Mike (via Teams)

## Apologies:

Peter, Pam, Maggie, Kim, Eliza

## OH/Riverside Representatives:

Jehan Weerasinghe, Paul Handley

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## 1. Welcome

- Welcome to Jehan Weerasinghe.

## 2. Regeneration Updates:

- **Bellamy and Byng:** On-site.
- **Tiller Rd:** Board approval and sign-off completed.
- **Financial Commitments:** Discussion on how committed Riverside can be, considering cladding remediation pressures.
- **IOD Regeneration:** Paul Dolan, new CEO, is committed and has visited all IOD sites.
- **Master-planning:** Suggested for Kingsbridge, ASO, and Samuda. Potential future inclusion of St John's and Barkantine.
- **Leasehold Buyback:** Financing discussions ongoing, to be shared with the developer.
- **Samuda Communication:** Residents need updates to prevent rumours. Resources and resident advisor (Ray) status unclear.
- **Action Items:**
  - Samuda SG plans – Paul
  - Contact details for Mt Anvil – Paul and Daniel
  - Contact details of the Steering Group – Paul

## 3. Merger Updates:

- **Regen Teams:** Merged into a streamlined section.
- **Service Management:** Repairs, building safety, etc., to move to Riverside in June. Jehan's role will focus on regeneration and managing London area.

- **Resident Engagement:** Discussion on improving local service, possibly reintroducing housing/estate officers.
- **Action Items:**
  - Will estate officers need to go through the call centre? – Jehan to follow up.

#### 4. Planned Maintenance:

- Need for a program involving residents to address estate issues on Samuda and Kingsbridge.
- **Phil Pemberton** to be invited to the July meeting.

#### 5. Damp and Mould Issues:

- Noted as an area needing improvement.
- **OH Staff Concerns:** Morale is low; Jehan is working on changing the culture.
- **Timeline for Change:** Expected to take a year to address repairs effectively.

#### 6. Next Steps:

- A timetable for changes would help build trust.
- Jehan confident in ongoing changes.
- Jehan to provide plans and investment programs for Samuda.
- List of Jehan's priorities for the next few months requested.

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#### Next Meeting:

- **Date:** Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> July
- **Time:** 7pm
- **Location:** St John's Community Centre

**Meeting adjourned.**

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## Report of the Independent Advisor

31<sup>st</sup> May 2024

### Kedge House, Starboard Way & Winch House

- Summary
  - Ballot date – May 2021
  - Ballot result – 88% in favour, turnout 94%
  - Architect – PRP
  - Developer – Mount Anvil
  - Homes to be demolished – 72 homes
  - Homes to be built – 341 homes
  - Planning application outcome due – 2025
  - Anticipated start on site – 2026
  - Anticipated completion of phase one – 2028
  - Overall anticipated completion date – 2031/2
- One Housing Officers
  - Jessica Caruth – Regeneration Manager
  - Mynul Islam – Project Manager
  - Ayla Cakirca – Regeneration Officer
- There are now 8 out of 12 properties in Winch House that are empty. There are 16 out of 40 properties in Kedge House that are empty, with 2 more tenants under offer. There is 1 out of 20 properties in Starboard Way that is empty. 9 adult children have also been rehoused.
- As a result of the dampness and leaks issue at Kedge House, Riverside have asked the Common Housing Register Forum to move Kedge households on floors 7 to 9, into band 1a from band 1b. This is being considered at the June meeting of the Common Housing Register Forum. In the meantime, Riverside are offering temp decants in their stock for the worst cases.
- The full survey on the works to keep Kedge House habitable requested by the Director of Assets, Phil Pemberton is being weighed up along with the cost of the 24 hour waking watch, against the cost of seeding up the decant. I have urged Riverside that they should consider using the “Cityside Style” properties that they own on the 4 Estates.
- The negotiations with Mount Anvil for their formal appointment as the JV partners were concluded at the end of last month. Mount Anvil attended this month’s RSG. A re-launch event to recommence consultation with residents leading up to submitting a formal planning application is pencilled in for Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024.
- The drop in venue is at 4 Winch House every Wednesday with a session between 4 and 6pm where the ITLA is available for advice.
- The next RSG will be on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

## Alice Shepherd House & Oak House

- Summary
  - Ballot date – March 2022
  - Ballot result – 82% in favour, turnout 88%
  - Architect – PRP
  - Developer – To be confirmed – April 2024
  - Homes to be demolished – 84 homes
  - Homes to be built – 347 homes
  - Planning application outcome due – Late 2025
  - Anticipated start on site – 2027
  - Overall anticipated completion date – 2032
- One Housing Officers
  - Paula Huzjak – Regeneration Manager
  - Rhys Jones – Project Manager
  - Shaun Simpson – Regeneration Officer
- Phase One will be on the site of Oak House. Tenants from Oak House have decant priority to move and so far two tenants have moved and an adult child has moved.
- The drop in venue is at 31 Alice Shepherd House every Wednesday with a session between 1.30 and 3pm in the afternoon and 6.30 and 8pm in the evening where the ITLA is available for advice.
- You will recall that has there has been a delay in the scheme, I have asked Riverside whether they will be able to use any vacant properties for overcrowded tenants in phase 2. I have still not had a response to this request.
- The final three candidates for the JV partners are:
  - Hills
  - Lovells
  - Countryside
- Resident interviews for the 3 short listed JV partners took place on 4 and 5 July 2023. The interviews were scored by the residents and subsequently residents have visited schemes completed by the developers. The appointment has still not been completed as it was held up by the financial review and despite being advised that the outcome will be known about by the end of the financial year, this is still unclear as the negotiations with the bidders has not concluded. We have been advised that this will be discussed at the internal officer pan-nel in Jine.
- In the current market climate, once a bidder has been appointed, there are the negotiations to be concluded. Other schemes have taken a year to conclude the negotiations to sign the JV contract, and if the appointed JV partner will not work “at risk” it will mean further delays in delivering the scheme and a quiet period for residents on design.
- The RSG will not meet until this is known.

## **Kingsbridge**

- Summary
  - Ballot date – November 2022
  - Ballot result – 85% in favour, turnout 76%
  - Architect – Haworth Tompkins
  - Developer – To be confirmed
  - Homes to be demolished – 134 homes
  - Homes to be built – 323 homes
  - Planning application outcome due – 2026
  - Anticipated start on site – 2028
  - Anticipated completion date – 2034
- The Riverside Officers that were working on this scheme have now been moved to other projects.
- The scheme will be delayed until 2025, but there will be some events in 2024 which will involve 3 site visits and 2 interactive design workshops. The first site visit went ahead on 3rd February 2024 to a scheme in the Millenium Village in Greenwich. The aim of the visits is to get a sense of the sizes and quality of newly built homes and environment. The design workshops will look at what residents liked and disliked of what they saw, such as home layouts, sizes and the overall estates.
- I have asked Riverside about using vacant properties for overcrowded tenants in phase 2 and 3, given the delays and still awaiting a response.

## **Samuda**

- The project has been expanded to include all nine blocks but the recommencement of the consultation is postponed. Riverside have promised it with start again by the end of the 2024/5 financial year.
- Summary
  - Developing a vision – 2025
  - Developing Options – 2026
  - Ballot date – 2027
  - Ballot result – Not applicable
  - Architect – BPTW
  - Developer – To be confirmed
- The Riverside Officers that were working on this scheme have now been moved to other projects.
- The Resident Steering Group has not met since July and the dates for early 2024 have been cancelled. The ITLA and myself have asked that we meet with the Steering Groip without Riverside being present.

## **Interesting Article from Inside Housing this week on yet another Housing Association cutting back on development**

## Southern Housing confirms redundancies due to pause in new development commitments

- Southern Housing has confirmed that it has “made the difficult decision” to make a number of roles in its development team redundant as it prioritises spending on existing homes.
- *Inside Housing* understands that as many as 10 roles have been lost within the new business part of the development team as the 77,000-home landlord has reduced new development commitments as its annual surplus fell 93%.
- The landlord told *Inside Housing*: “[We] made the difficult decision to reduce new development commitments to prioritise investment in our existing homes. Along with many of our peers the financial pressures faced by the sector have led to this decision.
- “Regrettably, this has meant a reduction in the size of our development team, with some roles becoming redundant. We’re continuing with the pipeline of owned and on-site new development as well as regeneration projects.
- “We’ll also be working in partnership to deliver affordable housing with local authorities. The scale and expertise of the teams delivering these projects leaves us well placed to commit to new development schemes when the time is right.”
- The association’s latest financial statement reported a surplus of just £3m in the year to the end of March 2024, compared to £40m in the year previous.
- Like many in the sector, it is not the only landlord making difficult choices as the sector grapples with the need to spend money on its existing homes on issues such as damp and mould, retrofit and post-Grenfell building safety.
- The group still increased its spend on major repairs and capitalised repairs to £114m, up from £78m, and spending on planned and routine maintenance increased more than £30m to £168m.
- Earlier this week, Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing reported a pre-tax loss of £80.2m for the last financial year due to the cost of fire safety provisions and the write-down of decommissioned high-rise blocks.
- The impact of these costs is being felt in development pipelines, and the G15 warned earlier this year that starts of affordable homes in the current financial year are expected to have fallen by 76%, to 1,769, in London, compared with 7,363 the previous year.
- *Inside Housing* understands that many in the sector are left facing similar choices that could lead to more redundancies at a time when the sector really needs to attract and retain the best talent into the sector.
- It is part of the reason why *Inside Housing*’s Housing Hires campaign was recently launched.
- For Southern, a big impact came from its sales division where revenue from open market property transactions dropped from £67m to £4m.
- In her foreword to the latest unaudited accounts, Sarah Smith, chief financial officer at Southern, explained how the landlord had been hit by cost rises and delays on “many” of its sites after some of its contractors fell into administration.
- The slowdown in sales and development, including a fall in first tranche shared ownership sales from £60m to £40m, meant Southern had paused

“new development activity” in order to “constrain debt balances”, Ms Smith explained.

- The landlord still has 3,256 homes to build that are in contract and it completed a drop in completions by around a third year-on-year to 776, and starts fell nearly double that to 349.
- The recent economic uncertainty and slowdown in housebuilding is why *Inside Housing* launched its Build Social campaign, which is calling for all political parties to insert a commitment to build 90,000 social rent homes a year into their manifestos during this general election.
- Southern’s total debt rose to nearly £3.2bn, compared to around £2.9bn the year before.
- The landlord came under increased scrutiny earlier this month after the Housing Ombudsman released its special investigation report, which found a “lack of ownership within the landlord’s complaint-handling culture”.
- In its learning statement to the report, Southern Housing said: “We’re truly sorry to all residents who’ve experienced service failures, including the 67 residents that this report shows we let down. “Throughout this investigation process, we’ve worked proactively and collaboratively with the ombudsman and his team, and we welcome the learning from this report.”

## Website

- The statistics from the website show the number of visitors as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024:

2024	VISITORS
January 2024	726
February 2024	971
March 2024	1030
April 2024	709
May 2024	1323
<b>Total</b>	<b>4759</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>952</b>

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