

SERPENTINE COURT HOUSING OFFER

Introduction

Our housing offer will ensure that no resident suffers financially or has their housing situation made worse as a result of the redevelopment of Serpentine Court.

As part of housing offer to residents, and in line with good practice in regeneration, the Council will introduce a Local Lettings Policy for Serpentine Court.

Housing offer for council tenants living in Serpentine Court

The Council makes the following commitments to council tenants at Serpentine Court.

- a) We will provide a good range of truly affordable rehousing options on and off the estate to extend housing choice for existing tenants and their household members.
- b) Secure tenants will retain their secure tenancy and be given the absolute right to return to a new property as part of any Serpentine Court redevelopment.
- c) Alternatively they may choose to move into a council property elsewhere in Milton Keynes, including the new properties being built elsewhere on the Lakes estate and will be awarded priority within the Allocations Scheme for this.
- d) The rent of the new homes provided into which existing tenants from Serpentine move will be set at social rent levels.
- e) Tenants will be guaranteed a replacement property with same number of bedrooms as they currently have
- f) Tenants who are currently over crowded will be offered a replacement property that is suitable to their family size, in accordance with the current Housing Options and Allocations Policy.
- g) Tenants who wish to downsize to a smaller property will be able to do so.
- h) As a rule, tenants will only be expected to move once subject to individual circumstances and unavoidable requirements of the redevelopment programme. However, if tenants want to move

more than once to guarantee getting the property they want, then they may have the opportunity to do so.

- i) If it is necessary to move council tenants from their home temporarily to a property outside the Serpentine area, then they will have an automatic right to return to a new home in the Serpentine area when it is built.
- j) Council tenants moving to a new council property will retain their secure tenancy and all of the secure tenancy rights that goes with it (e.g. Right to Buy).
- k) Proper arrangements will be put in place to meet the housing needs of the adult children of council tenants and other 'hidden households' and this will include opportunities to be rehoused together or separately as secure council tenants where a housing need exists.
- l) A proper compensation package for home loss and disturbance, including compensation for any improvements carried out to the property by the tenant will be provided by the Council, and these will be at least in line with statutory entitlements.

Housing offer for council leaseholders in Serpentine Court

There are two categories of leaseholders on the estate: non-resident and resident leaseholds. The same issues of fairness, equity and expediency in the valuation and buy-back process apply equally to both category of leaseholder.

Therefore, the Council makes the following commitments to all leaseholds on Serpentine Court.

- a) We will discuss with each leaseholder individually a solution that best meets their needs and preferences
- b) The valuation and buy-back process will be open, equitable and transparent.
- c) All valuations will be based on open market values, and on the assumption that the redevelopment scheme is not taking place, that properties are properly maintained, and with disregard for the reasons for purchase. Valuations will be carried out by an independent RICS Registered Valuer.
- d) If the leaseholder is dissatisfied with the council's valuation, the council will meet any reasonable cost associated with the leaseholder obtaining a second valuation by an independent RICS Registered Valuer. Where these two valuations differ, the sales value will be determined by negotiation between the two valuers.

- e) Leaseholders will be encouraged to access appropriate independent professional and technical advice. We will provide additional support to resident leaseholders with specific needs.
- f) An early buy-back process will be agreed and put in place to avoid planning blight.
- g) Compulsory Purchase Orders will only be used as a last resort.

In addition, the council makes the following offer to resident leaseholders only.

- a) A range of affordable rehousing options will be provided on and off the estate for leaseholders and their household members. These will include
 - i. Open market purchase
 - ii. Shared ownership
 - iii. Shared equity
- b) All resident leaseholders who wish to remain home-owners in the area will be supported to do so. Their rehousing needs will be treated as a priority if they have to sell their homes before the new properties are built.
- c) A proper compensation package for home loss, any improvements carried out to the property by the resident leaseholder and disturbance allowances will be provided by the Council, and these will be at least in line with statutory entitlements.

Housing offer for private tenants

Private tenants do not receive the statutory rights enjoyed by council tenants and leaseholders in the redevelopment process. However, under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the council has a legal responsibility to prevent homelessness.

Therefore, the Council makes the following commitments to the private tenants on Serpentine Court.

- a) We will discuss with each private tenant individually a solution that best meets their needs and preferences.
- b) Private tenants will be awarded priority for rehousing on the Lakes estate.
- c) Private tenants will be encouraged to access support from the Council's Homelessness Prevention & Housing Access Team and other support services. Additional support will be provided where a private tenant has specific needs.
- d) Where a private sector tenant is served an eviction notice by their landlord, these properties will be prioritised within the buyback scheme to allow the tenant to remain. Where this happens, and the

Council buys back the property, the tenant will not become a secure tenant of the Council and will be issued with non-secure tenancy.

Local lettings and sales schemes

We are committed to residents staying within the Serpentine Court area if they wish to. We will establish a local lettings policy for the allocation of the new council homes and a local sales policy for the sale of new private homes built during the redevelopment. We will support residents to access the new housing opportunities

Offer to local businesses, community and other organisations

We know that a number of local businesses, community and other organisations currently operating within Serpentine Court are keen to remain in the area. The Council is committed to enabling and supporting them to remain where they choose to do so.

There will be different opportunities for re-provision depending on the option for redevelopment chosen by residents, businesses and local organisations at ballot. We will discuss with each of them individually a solution that best meets their needs and preferences.