

Minutes of the meeting of the STRATEGIC PLACEMAKING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE held on THURSDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2018 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Bint (Chair)
Councillors Khan, McPake, Minns and Rankine

Officers: P Simpson (Corporate Director Resources), T Blackburne-Maze (Service Director [Public Realm]), P Cummins (Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), D Taylor-Bond (Head of Highways), A Rulton (Strategic Finance Business Partner), R Trowse (Project Manager) and S Heap (Committee Services and Scrutiny Manager).

Also Present: Councillors Gowans (Cabinet member for Public Realm) and Walker (representing Councillors Brunning and Gilbert) and 3 members of the public

SPSSC04 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 23 August 2018 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

SPSSC05 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Councillor Bint advised the Sub-Committee that he was the Council's representative on MK Forum, which was referred to in a submission made by a member of the public.

SPSSC06 CALL-IN OF 28 AUGUST 2018 DELEGATED DECISION WESTERN EXPANSION AREA PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS (JUNCTION 26 OF THE V4, JUNCTION 24 OF THE H4, JUNCTION 4 OF THE V4)

The Sub Committee noted the following decision, made by Councillor Gowans on 28 August 2018, had been called-in for review by Councillors Brunning and Gilbert and by 20 members of the public:

- “1. That the fully funded developer approved design at Junction 26 of the V4 Watling Street be noted;
2. That all further matters, including the details of Junction 26 of the V4 (under the s278 agreement) be delegated to the Head of Highways for approval; and
3. That the update of the temporary crossings for junction 4 of the V4 and junction 24 of the H4 Dansteed Way be noted.”

The reasons for the call-in request from Councillors Brunning and Gilbert were as follows:

- “1. We do not believe adequate thought or consideration has been given to the possible funding options to construct an underpass at Junction 26;
2. As has been pointed out by a number of stakeholders at-grade crossings compromise the safety of both pedestrians and road users. It goes against the design of Milton Keynes’ roads and it is seemingly inconsistent with the decision to build an underpass at J25; and
3. Residents have significant concerns with the level of consultation that has gone on. Some have called it a ‘sham’.”

The reasons for the call-in request by the 20 members of the public were as follows:

- “1. At Grade crossings have been rejected by public consultation.
2. Milton Keynes Council’s planning for high throughput grid road schemes is being undermined by these proposed developments with at grade crossings.
3. Underpasses provide a safe means to separate motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. The Council should insist on their adoption for all developments.”

The Sub-Committee heard that mediation, held on 18 September 2018, had failed to identify any points of consensus.

Councillor Walker (representing Councillors Brunning and Gilbert) emphasised, with regard to the responses to the consultation undertaken, that 68% of respondents were in favour of an underpass, although the Committee was advised that the consultation had not been specific to just Junction 26.

The Sub-Committee heard from Councillor Gowans who outlined the history and reasoning behind his decision and addressed the individual points raised by the persons calling in the decision. Councillor Gowans emphasised that he had taken into account the outcome to the consultations when reaching his decision and that his primary concern was that a safe crossing was provided.

The Sub-Committee received a written submission from Councillors Marklew and C Wilson, Ward councillors who were unable to attend the meeting.

The Sub-Committee heard from three members of the public.

The Sub-Committee recognised that there had to be a balance between cost and safety and providing a safe crossing was the highest priority. However, the Sub-Committee did have concerns:

- (a) that funding options, particularly funding by the Developer, had not been fully explored

- (b) at the potential impact providing an at grade crossing would have in encouraging walking and cycling;
- (c) that a precedent would be created; and
- (d) the message allowing an at grade crossing would send to Developers who might see it as a way of saving money.

RESOLVED -

1. That the Sub-Committee notes the assurances of the Cabinet member that the Developer will be providing an at-grade crossing at Junction 26 of the V4 Watling Street.
2. That the Sub-Committee shares the concerns of the persons calling in the decision for review of the importance of having a grade separated crossing at Junction 26 of the V4 Watling Street for both pedestrians and cyclists.
3. That the Sub-Committee shares the concerns of the persons calling in the decision for review that the breath of funding options could be better explored for the provision of a grade separated crossing.
4. That the matter be referred back to the Cabinet member for consideration of the funding options.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 8.00 PM