

Milton Keynes Council

Cabinet

21 December 2015

RegenerationMK

Responses to questions submitted to the meeting of the MK Council Cabinet

Q1: We have 4 estates that will be affected by regeneration.

In terms of a minimum amount of development what (if anything) have the council promised its prospective partner in case after the consultation period residents of an estate say they do not want any major new development. And what would the repercussions be for the residents.

This comes from a booklet that was handed out to Parish Councillors that suggests how many spaces are available on each estate and how many properties could be built on them.

It just seems odd that companies would bid on such an unknown quantity. (Sue Smith)

Response: No decisions have been made about whether there will be redevelopment or the scale of that development if that is the case. We have always stated that the regeneration plans will be worked up with each community on a bespoke basis, not a one size fits all approach.

Paragraph 5.9 of the Cabinet paper states that, 'although the Dividend Policy allows for the distribution of dividends (profits), it is not anticipated that the programme will generate surpluses which could be used for distribution. Where there are individual developments which make a surplus, it is anticipated that this will remain in the Partnership to contribute to the costs of future developments, in order that the entire programme is deliverable.'

Mears will be contracted to deliver the repairs and maintenance of Council owned properties. They will receive a commercial return for this, independent of regeneration activity.

NB. All questions below have been sanctioned by the Tinkers Bridge Residents' Association and asked on behalf of the community of Tinkers Bridge.

Q2: Probably all of us in this room have seen the high density development of Ashlands, across the grid road from Tinkers Bridge and Netherfield. It is an estate with no community centre, no shops/post office – simply high density housing, with the accompanying problems and lack of social cohesion this kind of single minded building development brings about. The national average for housing density in UK in 2005 was 31 dwellings per hectare (DPH). We have been told, informally, that 40 DPH is envisioned after Regeneration for the seven Regeneration estates. Tinkers Bridge currently is 12 DPH. An increase of this degree will completely change the community. What density of housing is envisaged for regenerated estates? (Kathy Higgins)

Response: Annex C of the Cabinet Paper (Community Led Approach) states that the, 'full participation of residents and community stakeholders is fundamental to the successful design and delivery of RegenerationMK', and, 'activities will cover running public design workshops which will allow residents, designers and others to collaborate on a vision for development.'

Whilst density levels will potentially increase depending on what is detailed in the regeneration plan for each priority area, these plans will be developed with communities, covering all aspects of the plans, from housing development to community infrastructure.

Q3. Referring to Annex A in the public documentation, we are aware that Mears has been selected on the basis of submitting the Most Economically Advantageous Tender to the Council. The public has no access to the nature of the bids or the evaluation process. Given that Mears as a company, has access to more substantial legal resources and has a long experience in managing Council contracts in a range of cities, and makes substantial profits doing this, what legal resources and experience does the Regeneration team have available to monitor, manage and enforce the Contract in the original spirit of Regeneration, i.e. overall benefit to Council tenants and the seven affected communities, as distinct from the potential profit margins Mears will accrue? (Nicky Johnson)

Response: Residents were involved in the evaluation of the bids through 3 resident evaluation panels. This process has been viewed as best practice following a review of the procurement process by an independent organisation.

In order to support the Council in the procurement of a partner, expert external advice was secured in procurement, finance and law. The arrangements developed, outlined in the Cabinet paper, allow the Council the ability to manage and monitor the contract.

Paragraph 4.6 of the Cabinet paper states that, 'Governance (of the Partnership) will be provided through a Main Board' and, 'a committee of the Council can be established which is politically balanced and will recruit qualified individuals to represent the Council on the Main board; have the power to remove its representatives from the Board for poor performance or misconduct; have oversight of the annual Business Plan review process and report to Cabinet and Council on the performance against the Business Plan.'

The work of the Partnership will respond to the priorities laid out in the RegenerationMK strategy approved by Cabinet in July 2015. This strategy clearly outlines a focus on People, Place and Prosperity. Services already established by the RegenerationMK team that respond to these priorities, namely the Neighbourhood Employment Programme and the Community Partnership team, will continue, with development of these services supported through the Partnership. At a Partnership level the Key Performance Indicators (Annex F of the Cabinet paper) around which the success of the Partnership will be assessed, include both employment and social measures.

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which make a surplus, it is anticipated that this will remain in the Partnership to contribute to the costs of future developments, in order that the entire programme is deliverable.'

Regeneration will be undertaken to benefit all of MK not just Council tenants.

Q4. Annex D The Planned Works (Stock Investment) Contract section, states that Mears is expected to carry out planned investment works to the Council's housing stock. What form might we expect this to take in Tinkers Bridge? (John Orr)

Response: No decisions have been made about future work. In the first year of the Partnership, all Council owned stock across Milton Keynes will be subject to a detailed stock condition survey. The information from this will be used to inform the investment plan for every property that the Council owns.

Q5. If a street/s are demolished and some of the houses on the street are Council property and some now privately owned, what plans does the Council have to compensate/rehouse private property owners in the same street/community after Regeneration? (Dave Bootwright)

Response: RegenerationMK, in conjunction with communities, will develop a response for council tenants, owner occupiers, private tenants and landlords as and when a regeneration plan for each area is developed. If the programme involved redevelopment, replacing existing houses with new ones, the Partnership will meet with all residents impacted to individually determine the best outcome for them, within the limits of available funding.

There are statutory guidelines that have to be complied with in these matters and these will be strictly adhered to.

Q6. In Annex E (Business Plan Overview) we note that Key Task 5 in Year One is Identification of funding requirements to deliver Regeneration. Does this mean that in Year One Mears will have identified land, costed its development and profit to be accrued? Will the public have access to this exercise? How will it be managed and correlated with the Council's long term PlanMK initiative? (Lesley Berry)

Response: The Partnership will capture data relating to stock condition across all of MKC owned stock. This data will be analysed in detail to establish what makes best investment sense in terms of achieving value for money. It is necessary to complete this to understand what the likely funding requirement might be and if such funding could be raised before entering into meaningful detailed discussion with that community. Any proposals will be worked up in conjunction with the community and will comply with the requirements of Plan:MK and other legislative requirements.

Q7. If an estate is not selected for immediate regeneration, what measures will the partnership put in place to ensure that it is not neglected until it's time comes for Regeneration and what minimum standards can be expected for the houses in terms of being free from water ingress, mould and other issues which are causing deterioration to the property? (Dave Lee)

Response: The Partnership will deliver the repairs and maintenance of all Council owned properties, including those in priority areas not earmarked for immediate regeneration activity. In all cases this will ensure all properties are maintained to an acceptable standard. Planned investment decisions will reflect the needs identified in the detailed stock condition survey carried out in Year1, and Asset Management Plans derived from this.

Repairs will continue to be carried out as required. This will be unaffected by regeneration.

Services to support employment and community development, namely the Neighbourhood Employment Programme and Community Partnership programme, will continue in all priority areas regardless of any developing regeneration programme.