

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC: REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 25 JUNE 2020

Questions from the Public

| ITEM 5 | Speaker's Name | Question | Response |
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| Councillor Crooks | Submitted in writing on behalf of RoRE | <p><i>The Cabinet no longer has a member with a specific portfolio of Housing. The removal of the Cabinet Regeneration Committee reduces the opportunities for the public and councillors to ask questions; therefore will this committee be encouraging questions to be asked here as there is no alternative suitable forum?</i></p> | <p>The Cabinet Member responsible for Housing Matters is Councillor Darlington (Public Realm and Housing).</p> <p>Any questions concerning, the make-up of individual Cabinet Member portfolios should be addressed to the Cabinet for a response. Scrutiny Committees should only receive questions on the specific agenda items for that meeting. Scrutiny Committees are not in a position to answer questions on Council policy, which should be addressed to either the Cabinet or full Council.</p> |
| Councillor Baume | Submitted in writing on behalf of RoRE | <p><i>Progress reports on Serpentine Court and Fullers Slade are items to be noted, it appears that it is only under public questions that any points can be raised on these items.</i></p> <p><i>On Fullers Slade:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Is it true that the only progress made since November 2019 is to decide to spend £1.43 on consultants, which is the implication in the report?</i> | <p>Fullers Slade</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As you would expect, work has been ongoing to progress the Fullers Slade regeneration plans. Following the ballot, we have worked with the RSG to agree the design team approach, and with the council's procurement team to identify the best procurement approach that will enable us to engage with the most suitable contractors. As the report references, we have recently taken a Delegated Decision on how the next phase will be undertaken and are looking for another Delegated Decision in July in relation to financing the next phase. This work has been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, although the timeline for completion of the design work and submission to planning remains unchanged. |

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| Councillor Baume | Submitted in writing on behalf of RoRE | <p>2. Why is the Portacabin not available to support residents? Use of it was requested to assist with distribution of food parcels during lockdown and was declined by Michael Kelleher on 1 May 2020 with no reason being stated?</p> | <p>2. The statements behind these questions are not accurate. The portacabin is a community asset and will be used to support residents and the community with a focus on supporting the development of the regeneration plans. We have not allowed use of it during Covid-19 in line with Public Health England guidance but it will be accessible moving forward as plans to remobilise our services are implemented.</p> <p>The use of the portacabin to support food parcel distribution was not declined by the Director. Community Action MK coordinated the efforts and volunteering of local residents, and the distribution of food parcels on Fullers Slade was referred to them with a view to exploring potential locations. Community Action MK subsequently approached the council with a request to use the portacabin as there were no other viable options. This was agreed with the chairs of both the Residents Association and the RSG.</p> |
| Councillor Baume | Submitted in writing on behalf of RoRE | <p>On the Lakes:</p> <p>1. What measures are being taken to ensure the resident views from all of the estate are considered? The Steering group is still known as "SCSG", and much other documentation refers only to Serpentine Court. How can a democratically accountable voice of all estate residents be established?</p> <p>2. The report contains the line "people in Serpentine Court voted fully to redevelop the estate." This is confirming the long held concern that it is one section of the estate forcing their views on the rest of the estate,</p> | <p>Lakes Estate</p> <p>1. Work is underway to develop a more holistic stakeholder group as we progress to the next stages of the project. It is envisaged that this group, once formed, will be made up of a wide variety of members, ranging from but not limited to residents, the parish council, community groups, Thames Valley Police, faith groups and MKC.</p> <p>2. This was a mistake in terminology and Will apologises for this. Since coming into post, Will has been getting up to speed on a variety of schemes including regeneration of the Lakes Estate as a</p> |
| Councillor Baume | Submitted in writing on behalf of RoRE | | |

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| <p>whole. Both Will Rysdale and I have met with a wide group of stakeholders operating across the Lakes Estate and are looking forward to working more closely in partnership with the community as a whole.</p> | <p>and so the regeneration cannot be said to be genuinely "resident led", RoRe would like to thank Will Rysdale for that confirmation".</p> | | |
| <p>This committee is not an executive body of the Council, so it cannot make promises as to what will happen to resolve the issues you raise. However, as part of the scrutiny process, I can give a commitment that the Committee will want to be made aware of issues of engagement and communication as it is clear these have not worked to date. The Committee will scrutinise and encourage the Cabinet by telling them what needs to be improved very significantly over the next few months. Both Scrutiny and the Council, as a whole, are aware that regeneration is no longer about a limited number of estates with the possibility of demolition as an option. It is now about a much bigger role and wider issues across the whole of the borough. The key to effective estate renewal starts with those who live there, and their aspirations and vision need to feed upwards, rather than having schemes imposed from the top down and that I can promise.</p> | <p>Many people feel excluded from the regeneration process, particularly with the focus on Serpentine Court, people living on the wider Lakes Estate do not feel involved. This has become worse now that the official planning application process has started. The official letter about the planning application was difficult to understand; a lot of people did not know what it meant or whether it applied to their part of the estate. Not everyone can access the online information and those who have tried found it impossible to use as documents have to be downloaded before they can be viewed. There are about 300 documents, some as many as 300 pages long. No paper copies have been made available anywhere for residents to view as promised and expected. Is it too late to get copies and what can the committee do to ensure full participation by residents on things that affect them in the future?</p> | <p>Jeanette Marling (in person)</p> | |
| <p>The minutes of the Cabinet Regeneration Sub-committee from 14 November were not published because of an administrative oversight. Ordinarily, the draft minutes would be confirmed at the subsequent meeting of the Committee but given that meetings in January (lack of business) and April (Covid-19) were cancelled, they have not subsequently been agreed and signed.</p> | <p>Why have the minutes of the Cabinet Regeneration meeting of November 2019 still not been published on CMIS?</p> | <p>Submitted in writing on behalf of RoRE</p> | <p>Head of Democratic Services</p> |

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| | | | | <p>This will be resolved at the next available meeting of the Cabinet.</p> <p>The Decision Sheet from the November meeting of the Cabinet Regeneration Subcommittee was published on CMIS on 20 November 2019.</p> |
| ITEM 6 | Speaker's Name | Regeneration is More than Just Bricks and Mortar: Health and Wellbeing | | |
| Councillor O'Neill / Derys Pragnell | Submitted in writing on behalf of RoRE | <i>Page 3(19) 30 sleeping rough in May – during lockdown, when it should be a minimum. This slide highlights the importance of Housing, but the administration has, in the Cabinet, lowered the importance of housing?</i> | | <p>DP: I believe this figure is wrongly reported as May this year (2020). This presentation was produced last council year and this meeting has been delayed so I expect this is the figure for 2019. I am aware that all identified rough sleepers have been offered accommodation during COVID-19 and support is ongoing.</p> |
| Councillor O'Neill / Derys Pragnell | Submitted in writing on behalf of RoRE | <i>Page 4(20) Should this be partially addressed by planning permissions for outlets?</i> | | <p>DP: This would be one thing that could help, and we have worked closely with licensing of fast food vans for example, however there are also issues like affordability, understanding what foods are healthy, being able to physically get to larger supermarkets, having the time to cook and plan meals.</p> |
| Councillor O'Neill / Derys Pragnell | Submitted in writing on behalf of RoRE | <i>Page 5(21) MK weaknesses are, according to this slide, at year 11 and with adults. How should these be addressed? This explains 4 of the 11 years difference in life expectancy noted on slide 2?</i> | | <p>DP: Absolutely, education and skills are key. There needs to be consideration of how this can be addressed involving the community in these discussion and potential solutions.</p> |
| Councillor O'Neill | Submitted in writing on behalf of RoRE | <i>Page 6(22) The job market is supporting those who live outside of MK. The job of the councillors is to support the residents of MK, so how can this be addressed?</i> | | <p>Referred to the Cabinet Member for Economy and Culture</p> |
| Councillor O'Neill | Submitted in writing on behalf of RoRE | <i>Page 9(25) The 2015 IMD data was reviewed by residents in a meeting organised by MKC and found to bear little correlation with experiences and estates of the residents. What evidence is</i> | | <p>I don't think we are suggesting you use the IMD data to identify areas. We have included it as a piece of information that shows us the real difficulties some of our</p> |

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| Councillor O'Neill / Derys Pragnell | Submitted in writing on behalf of RoRE | <p><i>there that the 2019 data is for identifying areas in MK?</i></p> <p><i>Page 10(25) Life expectancy difference is here quoted as 7.5 years, but 11 years on slide 2. Why are the figures different?</i></p> | <p>communities have and therefore the knock-on impact to health outcomes.</p> <p>DP: They are referring to slightly different things. Slide 2 refers to Healthy Life Expectancy so this is the difference when taking into account living with disability and very poor health. Slide 10 refers to the difference in numbers of years expected to be lived generally.</p> |
| Councillor O'Neill | Submitted in writing on behalf of RoRE | <p><i>Page 11(27) there are considerable problems in some areas with getting GP appointments now and, although MK can make premises available, the staffing of these units is not controllable by MK. How is this being addressed?</i></p> | <p>There are clearly issues with access to some GPs and the CCG is responsible for this. However, they have set up the new Primary Care Networks and this slide is showing there is opportunity here to link up healthcare providers in localities and communities.</p> |
| Councillor O'Neill | Submitted in writing on behalf of RoRE | <p><i>Page 12(28) What, realistically, can be achieved in one year that changes the situation on the ground? Is this not heading to be an information survey only, which does not change practice, but just consumes resources?</i></p> | <p>We explained at length throughout the budget scrutiny process that we hoped this would not be one off money. We hope it can be used to leverage in subsequent funding from the wider health economy. We certainly don't foresee it being used to fund a survey.</p> |
| Councillor O'Neill / Derys Pragnell | Submitted in writing on behalf of RoRE | <p><i>Page 13(29) Anxiety stands out and has been a major result of the regeneration plans of this council, with residents in all 7 of the named estates feeling unable to plan and very uncertain of their future accommodation. The big complaint was poor communication. What evidence is there that the council has learnt from this and that good communication practice is always being followed?</i></p> | <p>DP: this is a question around communications with regards the regeneration I believe rather than this PowerPoint so will need to be redirected. Referred to the Cabinet Member for Economy and Culture</p> |

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| <p>ITEM 7</p> <p>Councillor Baume</p> | <p>Speaker's Name</p> <p>Submitted in writing on behalf of RoRE</p> | <p>Draft Community Led Regeneration and Estate Renewal Strategy</p> <p><i>The RoRE submission has argued that a regeneration strategy is not needed. Therefore, we see the proposed re-issuing of the strategy in October 2020 as a waste of time and resources that would be better used in improving the maintenance of the Council House stock. What evidence is available that this proposed re-issuing of the strategy is a good use of council resources?</i></p> | <p>The views of RoRE will be considered alongside the views of all other responders (total number of respondents to date is 137). Having a robust strategy which clearly sets the priorities for regeneration in Milton Keynes is essential for the coordination of public and private investment on the scale that is envisaged, and to ensure we get the best outcomes for local people. The cost of "re-issuing" the strategy is contained within existing budgets and so represents good value for money.</p> |
| <p>Councillor Baume</p> | <p>Submitted in writing on behalf of RoRE</p> | <p><i>"Their main concern is, if regeneration is to be genuinely community led, how we decide who speaks for the community and what happens if those groups don't represent the majority." Where there is a conflict between what the community wants and what resources are available, how will this be managed?</i></p> | <p>We will never be able keep everyone happy all of the time. The previous approach was criticised for not being democratic and "imposing" new structures (e.g. RSGs) on communities. The new approach speaks to this by putting local people and existing community groups and leaders, such as parish councils and residents' associations, at the heart of the process. New community stakeholder groups will be set up with representation from parish councils, residents associations and others, such as health providers, schools and nurseries, business leaders and key council services. The final decision will sit with the Council through the cabinet member and Cabinet advised by officers and informed by the local stakeholder groups.</p> |
| <p>ITEM 8</p> <p>Councillor Crooks</p> | <p>Speakers Name</p> <p>Submitted in writing on behalf of RoRE</p> | <p>Draft 2020/21 Work Programme</p> <p><i>On behalf of RORE and the affiliated Residents associations we would like to register our concerns regarding the disbandment of the</i></p> | <p>Scrutinising the number of council houses not meeting the Decent Homes Standard and the proposed Milton Keynes Decent</p> |

Cabinet Regeneration Committee. The residents of the regeneration estates have long held the view that the council do not fully listen to their concerns and by removing a public channel for engagement seems a retrograde step to public confidence. The removal of the Cabinet Regeneration meeting means less public input into the process and less accountability.

We understand that the new Cabinet model of decision making will involve the four members with overlapping responsibility for the delivery of regeneration having joint meetings to deliver and I quote "work together as a team to give a consistent and co-ordinated approach to Housing and Regeneration".

I am sure that this scrutiny committee can see as we do that any stifling of public involvement cannot be good for democracy.

We would therefore ask you, Chair, to ask on RORE's behalf how these new regeneration meetings will be conducted for example:

- How will decisions be communicated to the public?*
- Are they public or political meetings?*
- Will there be published minutes or will there just be a report to Cabinet to be rubber stamped?*
- What input will officers and other members have?*
- How will the scrutiny work plan tie in with the new model of delivery?*

Finally, RORE believes that the opportunity for the residents to hold the council to account will be diminished. Already trying to contact the right person to speak to is almost impossible unless you have inordinate time or patience, adding another level of uncertainty can only diminish the public confidence in the democratic process.

Homes Standard once it is published, more properly comes under the remit of the Community and Housing Scrutiny Committee. A request for the Community and Housing Committee to consider this issue as part of its Work Programme can be addressed to the Committee's Planning Group via the relevant Scrutiny Officer.

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Will the committee take, as a standing item, the monitoring of the percentage of council houses in Milton Keynes not meeting the Decent Homes Standard, and, when it is published, the proposed Milton Keynes Decent Homes Standard? Councillor O'Neill's presentation reminded us that 35% of MK council houses are below the decent homes standard, compared with a national average of 13%.