



WATCH LIVE
on MK Council's YouTube channel
www.youtube.com/MiltonKeynesCouncil



Minutes of the meeting of the CABINET held on TUESDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2021 at 6.30pm.

Present: Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)
Councillors R Bradburn, Carr, Middleton, Z Nolan, Townsend, Trendall and Wilson-Marklew

Apologies: Councillor Darlington

Officers: M Bracey (Chief Executive), T Aldworth (Deputy Chief Executive), S Bridglalsingh (Director of Law and Governance), S Richardson (Director Finance & Resources, L Wheaton (Senior Finance Manager) and R Tidman (Committee Services Manager).

Also Present: Councillors M Bradburn, Brown, Crooks, Ferrans, D Hopkins, Rankine and Walker and 4 members of the public

C49 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Cabinet member for Tackling Inequalities and Child Poverty made announcements in respect of the Women's Euros 2022. The Cabinet member for Climate & Sustainability made an announcement in respect of the award of £16 million to electrify the Arriva bus fleet in Milton Keynes.

C50 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7 September 2021 be approved and signed by the Leader of the Council as a correct record.

C51 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

None.

C52 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Councillor Marland outlined that a number of written questions had been submitted on the matter of the Delegated Decision that was due to be taken on the 30 November 2021 which was to consider the adoption of the South East Milton Keynes Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document. The questions and written responses are set out below and those members of the public present at the meeting were informed they would be able to ask a supplementary question if they wished.

(a) Question from Paul Green to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Paul Green asked Councillor Marland what measures would be taken to prevent the vastly increased number of vehicles in the locality from choosing Station Road, Bow Brickhill as a cut-through thoroughfare instead of a bypass

Councillor Marland indicated that the detailed design of highways interventions was a matter for the detailed planning application stages.

The developer would produce a Transport Assessment which would identify any mitigation measures required in response to the traffic generated by the site. These measures could vary depending on the detailed design and layout of the development proposals, which would come through the submission of a planning application.

As a supplementary question, Paul Green asked Councillor Marland, was there a readiness to provide some sort of firm indication at the next planning stage that the village would not be used as a cut through route and that Station Road would be properly protected to deter vehicles from using it as a thoroughfare.

Councillor Marland indicated that firstly it would be remiss and misleading to say that what is now a predominately rural area would continue to be predominately a rural area. There were 3,000 houses to be built in the allocation of land between Bow Brickhill, Old Farm Park, Wavendon and Newport Road. The planning process can never mitigate all of those impacts it was there to mitigate 'as far as possible'. Within the Supplementary Planning Document and Plan:MK there was very clear transport and highways guidance around the impact of new development on rural areas. Therefore as the planning application was made there will be due process and proper consideration given as to how traffic is mitigated as best as possible. The reality was that it was not at the SPD stage to make clear what those precise mitigations were but to highlight that they are necessary. Any application would need to have a clear outline of what mitigation would be in place before it could be considered by the planning committee.

- (b) Question from Julie Godden (Parish Clerk, Bow Brickhill Parish Council) to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Julie Godden asked Councillor Marland why had Bow Brickhill been chosen as the site for a Travellers and Gypsy site by the railway station when hardly any of the main criteria for these sites would be met? It was understood that the travelling community would prefer to have their existing sites in Calverton and Willen extended and any money would be better spent there.

Councillor Marland indicated that Plan:MK identified the need for the Council to accommodate 19 households in culturally suitable housing for Gypsies and Travellers up to 2031. Extra capacity was already allocated to be provided at a new site at Newton Leys and as part of an extension to the existing Calverton Lane site.

Further pitches were still required to meet our legal obligation.

The council had assessed the possibility of extending the existing sites further and it was not feasible that they could be used to accommodate the additional capacity identified as required through PlanMK and allocated in South East Milton Keynes. The Supplementary Planning Document was therefore required to make a provision for this site allocation.

A number of best practice criteria were used to review possible locations within SEMK. These included, amongst others, the availability of a range of transport links. Further detail on the assessment criteria used had been published on the council's webpage for the South East Milton Keynes Strategic Urban Extension.

The draft Supplementary Planning Document contained 3 locations for the Gypsy and Traveller site which were selected considering the relevant best practice and available guidance. The final location was selected following a review of feedback from the consultation responses in addition to this best practice and guidance.

As part of the final CAG meeting the phasing of the site, including the Gypsy and Traveller pitches, was discussed and it was agreed to seek to require the Gypsy and Traveller site to be delivered in an early phase of the development.

- (c) Question from Lesley Sung (Council Manager, Walton Community Council) to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Lesley Sung asked Councillor Marland, considering MKC's well-publicised planning errors made in relation to Blakelands and Hindhead Knoll, **And** given that SE:MK ties into East West Rail, the 5 year housing supply, future transport such as MRT and more - then does Councillor Marland really believe that the SE:MK SPD should be signed off by him alone as a delegated decision? Whist the Cabinet Advisory Group might

have had input into the SPD, and if that input in anything like we have seen before, where planning decisions have been made by those who do not reside in the area, or have an understanding of that area or in some cases, not even having visited the area, then this could very well end up in another planning disaster. SE:MK will have a massive impact on those living in the new development and those residing in the surrounding areas. Milton Keynes residents deserve better, more open democracy so will he re-think his course of action by ensuring that the SE:MK SPD proposals are now properly scrutinised and deliberated by the Cabinet.

Councillor Marland indicated that the issues related to the planning decisions at Blakelands and Hindhead Knoll had been the subject of considerable discussion and while making no comment on the allegations within the question, they are not analogous to the forthcoming Delegated Decision given the decisions were made by quasi-judicial committees of elected members. It seemed illogical to claim that alleged errors made by committees would be less likely to take place if decisions were made by a committee.

The Supplementary Planning Document had been through many stages, including public consultation and Cabinet Advisory Group sessions.

It may also be helpful to explain that the Supplementary Planning Document was a planning guide that compliments Plan:MK and that final decisions on planning matters would be for the Planning Committee.

The use of a Delegated Decision for Supplementary Planning Documents is reasonable and proportionate, as it was for previous Supplementary Planning Documents including MK East. The Supplementary Planning Document had generated significant public awareness and would be subject to full transparency and the final paper will be subject to rigorous public, member and officer review as highlighted this evening.

- (d) Question from Trevor Hutton to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Trevor Hutton asked Councillor Marland, in respect of SEMK SUE SPD: It is important to protect all existing residents of Wavendon village, Wavendon Fields apartments and the north side of the upcoming Church Farm development from the negative pollution/noise impact of an extended H10 grid road. We can see some additions in the new SPD which is welcome, but there is no additional buffer protection for the Wavendon Fields apartments nor the east side across the Church Farm development. Can MKC confirm that vegetation/tree planting on the northern flanks of the H10 corridors will be of a sufficient scale to provide green buffering for these areas both in the short term as a

single-carriageway 40mph road and also in the medium/longer term if H10 becomes a more major road carrying higher volumes and faster traffic?

Councillor Marland indicated that the detailed design of highways interventions, including any landscaping proposals, would be prepared and reviewed at the planning application stage and would be a matter for the Planning Committee to determine in accordance with proper material considerations.

The developer would produce a Transport Assessment which identified any mitigation measures required in response to the traffic generated by the site. The Council are unable to comment in relation to a hypothetical change of speed on the road in the future, nor is the Council able to predict what measures may be required or sufficient in the future if such a change takes place.

The SEMK Development Framework identifies the H10 Grid Road corridor within the site, which was expected to be designed to established grid road standards, to be in accordance with policy as set out in Plan:MK. The detailed design, such as the landscaping and bunding, will be a matter that was assessed through consideration of any planning application.

Any environmental impacts of a proposal would be assessed against the policies of Plan:MK, national policy and any other material planning considerations considered at that time.

As a supplementary question, Trevor Hutton asked Councillor Marland, with regard to the H10 extension, the concern of the residents of Wavendon was that this could eventually become a dual carriageway, the residents were asking for early planting of sufficient trees to form a buffer particularly to the north side of the grid road to ensure that they were mature enough to protect against the full impact that would come from a dual carriage way grid road.

Councillor Marland indicated that the details of landscaping would come through the planning application process. It was helpful to hear the comments as during the preapplication and planning process this could be highlighted as a request and could be attached as a condition of approval. Councillor Marland indicated that he would make a note of this and hold it on file so that they could seek to ensure that this could be considered as a condition by the planning committee.

- (e) Question from Julian Price (Chairman, Bow Brickhill Parish Council) to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Julian Price asked Councillor Marland, what noise and pollution reduction measures are to be taken in order to reduce the environmental impact of a grid road standard relief road in Bow Brickhill?

Councillor Marland indicated that the detailed design of highways interventions, including any landscaping proposals or mitigation measures to address environmental impacts, would be prepared and reviewed at the planning application stage and would be a matter for the Planning Committee to determine in accordance with proper material considerations.

Any environmental impacts of a proposal would be assessed against the policies of Plan:MK, national policy and any other material planning considerations considered at that time.

- (f) Question from Yogini Thakker to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Yogini Thakker asked Councillor Marland, what are MKC's plans for undertaking a comprehensive traffic modelling review and in particular considering these two major aspects a) completing the overdue phase 2 modelling study for assessing the impact on the volume of traffic along the existing roads in Wavendon b) the outcome of the East /West Railway line consultation?

Councillor Marland indicated that a comprehensive traffic modelling study of the planned growth in the area can only be undertaken when the EWR Co have clarified their preferred level crossing closure options. This would need to include the significant highway network interventions required to support delivery of the East West Rail project, as well as reflecting changes in travel demand associated with the EWR/Marston Vale line rail stations. EWR Co are paying for the Council's Strategic Transport Model to be updated with all this information. It will comprise an updated reference case (assuming no EWR changes), alongside future forecast years to represent the construction, opening and operational phases of East West Rail. EWR Co are doing this to inform their Transport Assessment, which will accompany their Development Consent Order application.

This modelling and accompanying analysis will identify impacts and inform any required mitigations.

The delay in East-West Rail's decision-making and how it relates to the SE:MK development and SPD have been acknowledged throughout the process, but it is not a reason to delay the SPD as applications for the site have already commenced and indications are this will continue.

Any planning applications being made in advance of decisions by EWR it would be incumbent on the rail company to make any objections known for consideration.

- (g) Question from Beverley Thompson to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Beverley Thompson asked Councillor Marland, one of the reasons given for the proposed location of the Gypsy and Travellers site is that it is “in close proximity to Bow Brickhill Rail Station.” Why is this considered to be an advantage given that the station is more than likely to close once East-West Rail is completed, whereas Woburn Sands station will definitely remain open?

Councillor Marland indicated that a number of best practice criteria were used to review possible locations within SEMK. This included, amongst others, the availability of a range of transport links.

The draft SPD contained three locations for the Gypsy and Traveller site which were selected considering the relevant best practice and available guidance. The final location was selected following a review of feedback from the consultation responses in addition to this best practice and guidance. The proximity of Bow Brickhill Station was not the only reason for the positioning of the site. Further detail on the assessment criteria used has been published on the council’s webpage for the South East Milton Keynes Strategic Urban Extension.

As part of the final CAG meeting the phasing of the site, including the Gypsy and Traveller pitches, was discussed and it was agreed to seek to require the Gypsy and Traveller site to be delivered in an early phase of the development.

As a supplementary question Beverley Thompson asked Councillor Marland, there were three possible sites identified in the draft and the site to the north east seemed to meet the criteria so why wasn’t that site chosen over the Bow Brickhill site?

Councillor Marland indicated that originally there were six possible sites identified which had been narrowed down to the one preferred site including the proximity to a traditional Gypsy and Traveller road link. Councillor Marland advised that he would forward the evidence base that was used in making the decision. Ultimately any detailed answers related to the siting of the Gypsy and Traveller site were a matter for the consultation and the Delegated Decision.

- (h) Question from Roger Penfound to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Roger Penfound asked Councillor Marland, in respect of SEMK SUE SPD: Residents of Wavendon are pleased to see the significant addition to the 'Indicative concept plan' of 'potential wider linear open space network' through the village, which will go some way towards compensation for lost environmental open space within the SUE. However as it lies outside the SEMK SUE can the Council clarify how this can be carried forward as a positive plan for delivery.

Councillor Marland indicated that the indicative concept plan was provided to show possible future connections into the wider linear open space around the SEMK site. It is expected that developers, as they bring proposals forward, would seek to comply with the Development Framework and deliver the open spaces that were going to be of key importance for any new residents. However, the Council can only require developers to meet the needs generated by the new residents.

- (i) Question from Philip Ball to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Philip Ball asked Councillor Marland, who is paying for the improvements required to the section of the V10 between the A5 roundabout and Bow Brickhill station?

Councillor Marland indicated that part of the section of this road would be upgraded to grid road status, as a result of the South Caldecotte development, which had already been granted planning permission and would be funded by developer contributions in line with legislation and policy.

Any work related to a new bridge over the railway in this location would be predominantly funded by EWR.

The South Caldecotte development and, to an extent, the SEMK site were expected to provide funds to upgrade Bow Brickhill Road to the A5. Any additional funding that may be required would be determined through consideration of transport assessments that would be submitted alongside any planning application for the SEMK site.

C53 COUNCILLORS' ITEMS

None received

C54 COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS

- (a) Question from Councillor D Hopkins to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Referring to the question he raised at the CAG meeting on 13 October 2021, that no traffic data associated with SEMK site had yet been obtained, Councillor D Hopkins asked Councillor Marland when is it now intended to carry out this work?

Councillor Marland indicated that the transport strategy reflected in the Development Framework for South East Milton Keynes was informed by various scenario modelling in the Council's strategic transport model. This was an evidence base appropriate for the allocation of the site in Plan:MK and had been used to inform the Development Framework. Various scenarios had been modelled with different bridge crossings or the H10 being extended, or not. As part of the future planning applications the developer would produce a transport assessment which would identify any mitigation measures required in response for the traffic generated by the site. This would be informed by the Council's traffic model and if necessary local data collection. Further modelling of the planned growth in the area can only be carried out when the East West Rail Company had clarified their preferred level crossing option. The South East Milton Keynes Supplementary Planning Document had been prepared in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements and was based on the appropriate transport model and local policies. This included evidence which formed the allocation of the site in Plan:MK and would be supplemented by the developers transport assessment.

As a supplementary question Councillor D Hopkins asked Councillor Marland had Milton Keynes Council signed a non-disclosure agreement with East West Rail and if so why?

Councillor Marland indicated that officers had signed a non-disclosure agreement with East West Rail Company regarding the various options for crossing the V11 and V10 and they had done so as it had been requested by East West Rail Co in order to access the information to be able to guide the Council policies. This had taken place due to the sensitive and commercial nature of the options being discussed and was standard practice in these situations. Councillor Marland indicated that he believed that obtaining the details of what East West Rail Co were thinking about offset the risks involved in signing the non-disclosure agreement.

- (b) Question from Councillor D Hopkins to Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council)

Councillor D Hopkins indicated that he understood that the Council was trying to protect residents from blight but there was enormous uncertainty generated by the East West Rail consultation and this was only adding to that uncertainty. The sooner the Council and the East West Rail Co could come together to work out jointly a Master Plan for South East Milton Keynes the better for everyone.

Councillor Marland indicated that the Council would continue to push for the East West Rail options to be in the public domain as quickly as possible.

- (c) Question from Councillor Walker to Councillor Townsend (Cabinet member for Public Realm)

Referring to missed waste collections, Councillor Walker indicated that he had counted 25 estates with missed collections and asked Councillor Townsend what had changed since October Council that things seemed to be getting worse and was the Council planning to suspend green bin collections for the third time this year?

Councillor Townsend indicated that there had been some over runs where food and garden waste was not collected on the designated day however, these were overruns rather than missed collections. This was due to the impact of Covid with two crews having been affected. The Council was not currently engaged in conversations about suspending food and garden waste and would continue to review this and keep people updated. If change was needed due to rising Covid infections the Council would have to prioritise black residual waste and clear recycling.

As a supplementary question Councillor Walker indicated that it was getting frustrating not understanding what the Councils plan was to manage waste collection in the winter months and therefore could the Cabinet member provide assurances as to what the plan was to keep the service operational over the winter and to provide value for money.

Councillor Marland indicated that Milton Keynes was surrounded by other local authorities who had suspended garden waste collections since the summer. It was therefore odd to say that there should be a plan for winter to keep the services running when the services delivered by Milton Keynes Council were well in excess of what other Councils were delivering. The plan for winter was to continue to deliver the services as they are and tribute should be paid to officers and operational staff for the high level of services that continued to be provided.

C55-58 REFERENCES FROM OTHER BODIES

- (a) Referral from the Community & Housing Scrutiny Committee –
20 July 2021

The referral was introduced by Councillor Ferrans, the Chair of the Committee who summarised the content of the referral.

On behalf of Councillor Darlington, Councillor Marland noted that there had been a slightly opaque process as to how land had been allocated for the delivery of Council housing and the pipeline of allocated sites would take a number of years to be delivered.

Councillor Ferrans identified that the concerns of the Committee were not about site allocation they were about the development of the plans and the issues that arise as part of that process. She indicated that she did not feel that the written response addressed these concerns and more thought was needed before the next phase.

As part of the referral response Councillor Darlington undertook to:

- write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the MPs for Milton Keynes in order to raise the Council's concerns about the lifting of the current ban on Section 21 evictions; and
- write to Government to request that a more favourable borrowing rate specific to house building and the HRA was considered.

RESOLVED:

That the referral and the written response provided, be noted.

- (b) Referral from the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee –
15 July 2021

The referral was introduced by Councillor M Bradburn, the Chair of the Committee.

The written response from Councillor Townsend was noted.

RESOLVED:

That the referral and the written response provided, be noted.

- (c) Referral from the Regeneration & Renewal Scrutiny Committee –
24 June 2021

The referral was introduced by Councillor Crooks, the Chair of the Committee who welcomed the written response particularly the commitment to 36% affordable housing on sites owned by the Council but noted that there was a general concern of the Committee that regeneration and renewal, particularly estate renewal, were slipping down the Cabinets agenda and that health and education was just as

important as housing redevelopment.

Councillor Middleton noted his appreciation for the Committees interest in the Agora project and the lessons that could be learnt from that in terms of engaging with the community.

Councillor Marland indicated that regeneration was a core priority for the Progressive Alliance administration and the way the Cabinet was structured reflected that.

RESOLVED:

That the referral and the written response provided, be noted.

- (d) Referral from the Budget & Resources Scrutiny Committee –
20 July 2021

The referral was introduced by Councillor Brown, the Chair of the Committee who summarised that the Committee were interested in any changes in trends and risks in how the public access the waste and recycling services and impact this may have on the budget.

The written response from Councillor Townsend was note

RESOLVED:

That the referral and the written response provided, be noted.

C59 BLETCHLEY AND FENNY TOWN DEAL

Councillor Marland introduced the item and indicated that there was fantastic work being done as part of the successful bid for £27 million Town Deal Fund and thanked officers, board members and other partners for their involvement. The regeneration of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford was key and the nine projects which form the core of the Town Investment Plan were progressing.

Councillor Rankine indicated that it was good to see some movement on projects and supported the decision to give the S151 Officer the powers to sign off the projects. There was a good discussion at Council about the potential for the centre of Bletchley. The potential for the station area was critical to the whole regeneration of Bletchley and it was hoped the Supplementary Planning Document would go much further than what the Town's Fund were suggesting. Councillor Rankine would also encourage engagement with East West Rail and Network Rail as critical partners to make sure this work happened. Councillor Rankine asked Councillor Marland if there could be more frequent updates provided to ward councillors and other interested parties who were not part of the Town Deal Board.

Councillor Marland indicated that he would add an additional recommendation that a briefing was held for ward and parish councillors on a more regular basis.

RESOLVED:

- 1 That the latest progress of the programme as set out in the report and the governance arrangements for the Town Deal projects, be noted.
- 2 That the Council's Section 151 Officer be authorised to formally sign off the business cases on behalf of the Council.
- 3 That a report back on the progress of the Towns Deal programme be provided to Cabinet in 6 months time.
- 4 That regular briefings are held to update ward councillors and other interested parties on progress of the Towns Deal programme.

C60 COUNCIL TAX BASE 2022/23

Councillor Middleton introduced the item setting out that as part of setting out the draft budget the Council has a number of technical obligations including setting the Council Tax base and agreeing the funding contribution to parish and town councils. Councillor Middleton thanked officers for all the work they had done on preparing the information on the Council Tax Base.

RESOLVED:

1. That the 2022/23 Tax Base be set at 90,364.51 Band D equivalent properties.
2. That the provision for uncollectable amounts of Council Tax for 2022/23 be set at 1.60% producing an expected collection rate of 98.4%.
3. That the proposed 2022/23 funding contribution to parish and town councils of £0.325m, as set out in Annex D, be noted and recommended to Council for approval as part of the final Budget in February 2022.

C61 UPDATE ON DELIVERY OF COUNCIL PLAN

Councillor Marland introduced the item setting out that what is in the Council Plan were the priorities of the political administration of the Council. There were a number of good things to note including the programme of local high street support, that work was due to start on improvements to CMK Market, there had been a drop in flytipping since May 2021, continued opposition to the Bletchley Landfill site, funding agreed for the Agora Centre and consultation on banning poor quality office conversions.

Councillor R Bradburn noted that the Economy team were working hard with the partners in the six local high street areas to deliver assistance from the Economic Recovery Fund, the Welcome Back Fund and the Additional Restrictions Grant.

Councillor Nolan noted the good progress on the Council's commitments to children and young people including the Summer of Play, half term free school meals and setting the goal for every school in Milton Keynes to be rated Good or Outstanding. Councillor Nolan wanted to draw particular attention to the priority support for Looked After Children and that she was able to speak to

the lead Ofsted inspector and draw their attention to the fact that this Council places children and young people and particularly children in care at the centre of what we do.

RESOLVED:

That the progress being made on the Council Plan 2016-2022, be noted.

C62 UPDATE ON PROGRESS ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CHILD POVERTY COMMISSION

Councillor Carr introduced the item noting her thanks to officers for their time and energy they have committed to the 21 for 2021 programme and embedding it into policy. Councillor Carr noted that 'in-employment' poverty was an increasing concern as these families opportunity to prove income and to keep a sustainable income within the household was constantly under threat.

Councillor Carr indicated the areas where real embedded change had been made included the work on the Community Larders, 'Summer of Play' and the deposit scheme for childcare. Councillor Carr noted that she was looking forward to working with the Community Foundation to host an open event that would showcase the third sector and highlight what is available across the borough.

RESOLVED:

That the actions and priorities arising from implementation of the 21 for 2021 recommendations in Annex A, be noted.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7.49 PM.