



## Update from your Unitary councillor, Cllr David Hopkins – March 2025

### HEADLINE .... The Local Plan – MK2050 ... comment .....

*Shows the Government's housing requirement has reduced from 53,245 homes to 48,261 homes over the period covered. This gives the City Council the opportunity to take out the ill-advised Levante Gate and Bow Brickhill developments without impacting the overall buffer capacity built into its growth aspirations.*

*The decision to build on Levante Gate and Bow Brickhill are political decisions not good planning ones so if you wish to protect our countryside let your local council administration and Cabinet member know they represent you not the developers !! see more below*

### One Liners

- Woburn Road - Kate Payne (Recycling Officer) at MKCC Environmental Crime team has been looking into the reported issues at Woburn Road - Mobile 07483125839 Milton Keynes City Council | Milton Keynes Waste Recovery Park, 9 Dickens Road |



Milton Keynes | MK12 5QF

Pete

Roberts Environmental Crime Manager, Environmental Crime Unit continues to be involved.

- Street Lighting I have had a positive response for new street light close to the George on Watling Street – see below
- I have spoken with the Leader of Buckinghamshire Council (Martin Tett) regarding the state of Great Brickhill lane in its area and he has asked their Highways team to investigate.

I have asked (again) for a health and safety assessment of the footpath on the pavement close to the flats on Great Brickhill lane (close to the junction with Wyness Ave.)

- <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/highways/our-policies-and-processes/policies-and-codes-practice-highways> I asked (again) that the large pothole near Springfield Farm be mended and will check before Monday evening to see if this has been done! MKCC reports .... 'Our inspector visited this location on 6 February and none

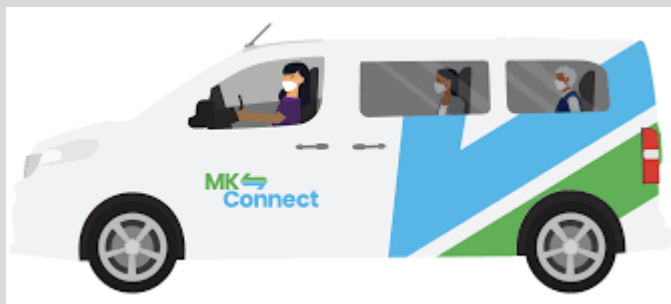
*of the defects met the criteria for repair however we will continue to monitor this location as part of our regular inspections’.*

- I met with Highways Managers on a series of ward matters and asked about the LADS sign suggestion which they’re now investigating as an option.



At the same meeting I raised the following issues;

- visibility at the turning junction of Watling Street into Great Brickhill Lane
- Speeding as an issue leaving the village
- Gateway feature to be constructed as you enter the village from the A5 heading north
- Informal crossing point on the Watling Street at the playground entrance and what additional signage or other measures might be considered.
- Install SID on Great Brickhill Lane heading east entering the village
- I have asked Murray Woodburn for an update (if any is available) on the A5 slip road and associated matters issues (National Highways)
- I have been chasing a date to meet with MKCC Housing regarding the High View issues



**MK Connect Contract Awarded**

Following the tender process to re-provide MK’s Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) for at least the next 2 years, Via have been successful.

The new contract retains as much of the original service benefits as possible within a reduced budget. Some of the key changes include:

- Services now available between 6.00 and 20.00 Monday to Saturday.
- No Sunday service.
- Maximum pick-up time will be 60 minutes for any user. Previously there was a difference between rural and urban area passengers.
- Accessibility improvements for passengers with mobility needs. New vehicles with tail lifts will be added to the MK Connect fleet. Passengers with mobility scooters can get a travel ‘passport’ so they will have a suitable vehicle sent to them and the drivers are aware of any specific requirements.

- Small fee for concessionary passholders. Affected users and are being contacted so they can have a say on how much this will be. As MK Connect is not part of the national concessionary scheme, MK City Council was previously fully funding concessionary trips.

Ward Councillors briefings will be held prior to go-live to update on the new contract and I will pass on that information as soon as it is to hand.



**Street Light on Watling Street**

Our Streetlighting team will be installing a new streetlight on this road later in the year. The new column will go roughly where the cross is on the image below.



**The MK Local Plan (MK2050)**

I attended a meeting of the MK City Council Cabinet Advisory Group on 13 February.

In brief, having analysed the responses to the Reg 18 consultation, MKCC is moving towards a Regulation 19 submission. The headline points being;

- Following change to government guidelines in relation to NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) the total housing numbers required in MK between now and 2050 have reduced from 1902 per annum to 1724. Thus, the total required under the plan has reduced from 53,000 to 48,000.
  - Despite a large number of objections and suggested amendments the Levante Gate Scheme close to Little Brickhill will go forward into the next stage of the plan (Reg 19). Still unsure if it is to be amended in any way.
  - There is a focus on social rent housing in the new NPPF.

**MKCC is now delaying submission of the new plan to December 2026.**

- The Universal Studios theme park proposals and changes to the guidelines on the Dury to Cooperate framework will also impact and delay the submission. For example, Universal will impact the responses to the Local transport Plan that will need to be prepared and the number and size of hotels built within the boundaries of MKCC
- The outcome of the informal East West Rail consultation will also have a bearing as will the governments announcement expected in August on the location and size of its proposed 'new towns' – should one be located in the city boundaries' or close to its borders. There are also urgent requirements for improvements to junction 13 of the M1.
- The expected Planning & Infrastructure Bill will also have an impact on the content of the MK2050 local plan.
- The responses to the spatial strategy showed a general support for growth in the city centre area and the proposed expansion areas identified in the Reg 18 consultation. However, developers responses majored on the proportion of numerous smaller sties cross the city area and rural areas in particular. Bucks Council were proposing meeting its unmet demand from within the MK area.
- There were identified numerous transport related, flood related and heritage related 'at risk' areas.
- The site east of Newport Road Wavendon received overwhelming support for the proposal that it be delayed until 2038 at the earliest. MKCC accept that possibly 3000 dwellings is excessive and 2400 is more realistic.
- Focus on CMK for office employment and for sites close to the M1 for logistics warehousing.
- Study into where and how a lorry park might be located to be taken forward.
- Protection for the Greensand Ridge would mean a reduction in numbers of dwellings on the expansion site suggested to be located in Bow Brickhill adjoining the Ridge.
- MKCC Planners are meeting monthly with a representative of the Planning Inspectorate to obtain advice and guidance on aspects of the plan. In particular sites for Gypsy & Traveller sites. The representative of the Inspectorate reportedly supports the thrust of the plan in general terms but has commented on Gypsy & Traveller site provision and 'the evidence base' used to justify that provision. In light of this MKCC will issue a new call for sites including MKCC owned land which will start in April. MKCC are advised that sites should be located away from the settled community.
- National Highways have been engaged for monthly advisory meetings.
- MKCC held a Delegated Decision by the responsible cabinet member on 25 February approving The New Local Development Scheme.

### **Timetable of Local Plan moving forward**

Work starts now on preparing the Regulation 19 Final Draft Plan with a six-week consultation planned for the summer (September). As part of this process MKCC planning officers will undertake further informal meetings with key stakeholder groups (e.g. Woburn Sands Futures Group). MKCC will also be seeking more evidence relating to the provision of affordable housing.

Following that the plan will be submitted for examination in March 2026.

It is proposed that the strategy will go forward largely unchanged although the Walton Hall site will either be removed or dramatically reduced in terms of housing numbers and the Bow Brickhill site see housing numbers reduced in line with the revised environmental classification on the Greensand Ridge.

A series of concept plans for each individual site will be released in September to accompany the consultation.

Land east of Newport Road will go forward with the 2038 condition attached – officers expect that to be challenged vigorously when the plan is before the planning inspectorate at public examination.



**Central Beds Council has voted to cut up to 100 job posts in the hope of saving more than £35m in its annual budget.**

Central Bedfordshire, which is run by the Independent Alliance group as a minority administration, also agreed to raise council tax by 4.99% for 2025-26, although the majority of councillors abstained from voting.

Plans were rejected to close Dunstable Library on Sundays and Mondays and reduce opening hours at recycling centres.

More than half of the job cuts are expected to come by not filling vacant positions, but leader Adam Zerny said: "Passing the budget is not a big cause for celebration as this has huge implications for jobs."

The unitary council employs about 3,000 staff and said it hoped the cuts would not have an impact on service delivery.

For council tax payers, the 4.99% rise means an extra £87.44 for a Band D property, resulting in a bill of £1,839.74 next year, external.

### Danesborough & Walton Parishes - 2025/26 TOTAL AMOUNT OF COUNCIL TAX

**NOTE: Amount of Council Tax includes Police, Fire Authority and parish precept**

Parish	Band A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Bow Brickhill (PC)	1,535.7 1	1,791.6 6	2,047.6 1	2,303.5 7	2,815.4 8	3,327.3 8	3,839.2 8	4,607.1 4
Little Brickhill (PC)	1,485.7 1	1,733.3 4	1,980.9 5	2,228.5 8	2,723.8 2	3,219.0 6	3,714.2 9	4,457.1 6
Walton (CC)	1,491.1 2	1,739.6 5	1,988.1 6	2,236.6 9	2,733.7 3	3,230.7 8	3,727.8 1	4,473.3 8
Wavendo n (PC)	1,462.6 1	1,706.3 9	1,950.1 5	2,193.9 3	2,681.4 7	3,169.0 1	3,656.5 4	4,387.8 6
Woburn Sands (TC)	1,502.2 9	1,752.6 8	2,003.0 6	2,253.4 5	2,754.2 2	3,254.9 9	3,755.7 4	4,506.9 0



Great Locality  
Proud Community

Congratulations to Great Linford Parish

#### Council

We are pleased to share that Great Linford Parish Council has been named Council of the Year at the prestigious National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Star Council Awards 2024. The Star Council Awards celebrate the best in local governance across England. The winners were announced at a parliamentary reception at the House of Lords on 25 February 2025, bringing together finalists and key figures in local government. More information on the awards and the finalists can be found here at Star Council Awards.

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/support/star-council-awards.html>



Click Start with the Open University

Click Start with The Open University is a digital skills programme offering UK residents aged 18–30 fully-funded opportunities to develop digital and professional skills.

Combining The Open University's educational expertise with real-world insights from employers, this programme equips learners with the knowledge, confidence, and employability support needed to enter digital roles, advance in their current job, or pursue further education.

#### The programme

- Offers pathways to support young adults to learn about cyber security, coding, or AI
- Runs until 30th September 2025 and there's no cost to participate
- Is flexible, allowing learners to start anytime, study at their own pace part-time, and follow a route tailored to their needs
- Further support is on offer via our subject matter experts in the forums and through regular webinars hosted by IT professionals, employers and career coaches
- Doesn't require any previous knowledge to join.

To find out more and to get started: [www.open.ac.uk/click-start](http://www.open.ac.uk/click-start)

Click Start with The Open University is part of the Click Start programme developed by the Institute of Coding (IoC) and funded by Nominet

**Celebrating Open University pioneer**



MKCC is using money from developers to create a new statue to celebrate Jennie Lee, the first Minister of State for the Arts in the 1960s and a driving force behind The Open University.

She's pictured with The Queen at the OU in 1979. Baroness Lee wanted education to be accessible to anyone regardless of their background or where they lived, and it's the 60th anniversary of her paper to government which led to the OU's creation.

Local artists are invited to submit proposals and should first email [culture@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:culture@milton-keynes.gov.uk).



### Support for Flood Avoidance from the Environment Agency

We can offer up to £1,800 in local levy funding for flood kit once a flood group has been established and an approved flood plan is in place. All our flood groups have taken advantage of this opportunity – please see the attached briefing note which provides further detail. I have also attached a flood kit brochure so that you can run through it as a group and see what would work best for Woburn Sands/Aspley Guise. We would advise that the HydroSacks and HydroSnakes are not for every individual property nor a long-term solution but are to be used in strategic locations in emergency situations. Most communities have them stored in a central location for the flood group to access when needed. We can also arrange for kit to be replenished following a flood event.

Please let us know if you would like any advice or support when putting together your community flood plan. I have attached a flood plan template which can be used to detail any actions you

would take before, during and after a flood. It is quite a basic template but will give you an idea of the type of information to include. . <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-flood-plan-template/community-flood-plan>

I have also attached the flood plan from the Alconbury flood group as an example of how a community has approached their plan. Yours need not be as detailed nor long. Every community creates a flood plan differently depending on their flood risk, actions taken and number of members involved so please create a flood plan that works for Woburn Sands/Aspley Guise and your risk. It is worth calling out that the flood plan for Alconbury focuses on flood risk from rivers whilst the flood risk for Woburn Sands/Aspley Guise largely relates to surface water. However, very similar principles apply for both. <https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/map?eastng=492950&northng=235597&map=SurfaceWater>

The flood plan for Alconbury also references the Environment Agency flood warning/alert that covers their area. A specific warning/alert does not exist for Woburn Sands/Aspley Guise as they are not on a statutory main river. The closest alert is for the River Ouzel in Central Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes and the closest warnings are for the River Ouzel at Simpson, Woolstone, Middleton and Willen and the River Ouzel at Bletchley and Caldecotte. Therefore, weather reports, rainfall totals, Met Office weather warnings, local river levels and local observations will be particularly important triggers for activating your plan.

I have also attached a working copy of a flood plan for Elsworth. Again, this is a detailed plan, but I hoped it would be useful given that Elsworth is a community affected mainly by surface water. I will work to obtain further flood plan examples in due course.

There is no right or wrong way to put a plan together but do let us know if you would like some help once you are underway. I can also provide maps for your plan and, once you have a draft, would be happy to provide any comments and improvements and then sign it off.

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### **Walk the Ridge during the Greensand Country Festival 2025**

The annual Greensand Country Festival returns this May. Our popular Greensand Ridge Walk is back too, giving everyone the chance to explore the Greensand Ridge route joining one, two or all three led walks.

The walk has been broken down into three manageable sections (no more than 14 miles each), will take place on Sundays in May and June and are open to all ages and abilities, who are willing and able to walk the stated distance.

If walking's not your thing though, there's plenty of other opportunities to get involved in this year's festival, from dancing up the sun with Golden Hare Morris and Hemlock Morris at sunrise



on May Day in Ampthill Great Park, to Airshows, craft days with local woodland business Wassledine, art demos at the RSPB, and children's activities.



The Greensand Country Festival's varied events programme will showcase the local landscape, from Leighton Buzzard to Gamlingay, encouraging people to discover more of the area, with its beautiful parks, woodlands, heritage sites, wildlife and attractions.

Daniel Bowles, Partnership Coordinator for the Greensand Country Landscape Partnership explains:

"We're delighted that our Greensand Ridge Walk returns for a second year. It's a great way to explore the heathland, woodland, and historic parkland dotted along the Greensand Ridge. We look forward to seeing new and existing walkers enjoy the route."

"Throughout May, there will be a whole host of activities for everyone to enjoy. They all have one thing in common, they highlight how important the local environment is.

"Thank you to all of the partners, organisations and individuals who are putting on events and activities this year, many of whom have supported us for a number of years, since the festival first started seven years ago. We can't wait for the Greensand Country Festival 2025!"

Book tickets to Walk the Ridge at <https://www.greensandtrust.org/Event/walk-the-ridge-led-greensand-ridge-walk>

Find out more about events taking place throughout the Greensand Country Festival 2025 at <https://www.greensandcountry.com/experience?interestedin=greensand-country-festival>

*Cllr David Hopkins*

*Representing Little Brickhill at MKCC*

*March 2025*