



Little Brickhill Parish Council

Update from your Unitary Councillor – July 2025



A5 etc.

Highways England are still waiting for final funding approval, and they have confirmed that the signs behind the barrier will be replaced as part of the project.

Likely start date TBA probably September.

From Phil Jeffs – MK City Council Highways

I've been given approval by Murray to progress with the design (see attached file to this Unitary Councillors report) – details of the scheme are provided below. I will let you know when the scheme is likely to be installed later.

- New SID on Gt Brickhill Lane
- New gateway signs
- New Local Advanced direction sign
- Removal of national speed limit sign

No guard railing at the junction of Gt Brickhill Lane/Watling St was possible due to the number of utilities in the footway. I also don't think that even if we had installed the railing this would have left enough width on the footway for pedestrians.

Phil Jeffs - Senior Highways Engineer

M: 07586551322

Milton Keynes City Council | Civic Offices | 1 Saxon Gate East | Central Milton Keynes | MK9 3EJ

<http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/>

Roadworks

Phil Jeffs (Highways at MKCC) also reports that he has received a target cost from the MKCC contractors for a small package of works in the village to address a number of the issues raised - and Murray Woodburn (Highways Manager) have approved these works and the spend.

He reports that he will publish the full list of the works and a likely programme as soon as they are to hand.

There were two live jobs for Little Brickhill in June - one having a planned date of 2 July for a patch to repair a pothole on Watling Street/Great Brickhill Lane.

A job has also been raised by MKCC for some lining works on Watling Street however there is no set date for this yet. Lining works are compiled in a lot and given to the crew to carry out when they have capacity, and the weather conditions are dry. If a road closure is required they'll also need to get a permit but it will go on Causeway one.
<https://one.network/public>

The New Towns Taskforce was established quickly after the 2024 General Election with the chair and deputy chair, Sir Michael Lyons and Dame Kate Barker respectively, being announced and the government publishing a policy statement during July 2025.

The Taskforce is expected to report to the government in July with MK and/or its surrounds seeming to be a favourite site for consideration - and meanwhile the House of Lords has created a Select Committee on the issues

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/518/built-environment-committee/news/205902/new-towns-inquiry-launched-by-lords-built-environment-committee/>



Healthwatch - A statement from Maxine

Taffetani, CEO

We are deeply saddened and concerned to hear the Government intends to abolish Healthwatch England and all local Healthwatch's including Healthwatch Milton Keynes.

In his announcement, Wes Streeting, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care said: "We are putting a megaphone to the mouths of patients so the NHS listens to them, and responds."

Healthwatch Milton Keynes is the trusted, independent mechanism through which local patients and residents have their voices heard, and their feedback acted upon. If implemented, these Government proposals will result in the erosion of any meaningful independent patient voices in

NHS services. This is devastating for patients and service users. The consequences will be far reaching, and profoundly damaging.

In place of Healthwatch Milton Keynes, 'Patients will be encouraged to leave feedback on the NHS app', using a 'star rating system'. Replacing patient conversations with star ratings will not keep patients safe. It will not improve care. It is reductive and harmful. For those who have access to smartphones and tablets, digital apps are a useful tool but they are not a solution in themselves. And what about those who are digitally excluded?

We are urging Government and our local MPs to remember the widespread systemic failures – notably the mid-Staffordshire NHS Trust scandal - that led to the creation of Healthwatch in the first place. The national inquiry that followed in 2012 is a clear reminder that when patients have no voice, when services aren't held accountable, and when there is no robust, independent scrutiny of those services, patient safety and quality of care will undoubtedly suffer.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank people for the outpouring of support we've received in the last few days. The emails, messages and phone calls mean the world to us. From NHS professionals to MK City Council, to partner organisations and residents, your support is testament to the strong collaborative relationships that have made Healthwatch Milton Keynes so effective over the past 12 years. We are truly overwhelmed and thankful.

As we understand it, these proposals are not being implemented immediately. So, for now, we would urge residents to read the upcoming Dash Report when it's published on Thursday, to understand what comes next for patient and community voices in NHS care.

For as long we remain, our small but ambitious team will continue to work with tenacity and dedication. We're still here to listen to your experiences of health and care services, to help you navigate the healthcare challenges you have, and we'll seek to influence positive change wherever we can.

Maxine Taffetani, CEO Healthwatch Milton Keynes



Following an announcement on Friday 13 June 2025, BALC understands that following the 2025 spending review, the government has withdrawn all support for neighbourhood planning (grant funding and new technical support requests) for 2025 onwards. This includes new applications.

This includes both the support they provide to community groups (including town and parish councils) preparing or reviewing neighbourhood plans and local authorities to cover referendum and examination costs etc.

The Society of Local Council Clerks and NALC are working on updates and further information regarding the future of neighbourhood planning support.

National Highways
Overnight roadworks
Plan ahead



Long-running A5 roadworks set to end but five closures on M1 announced.

Long-running roadworks on the A5, which began at the end of January, are entering their last few days. The works on the A5 in both directions have been taking place between the Watling Street Roundabout and the A4146 junction for nearly five months.

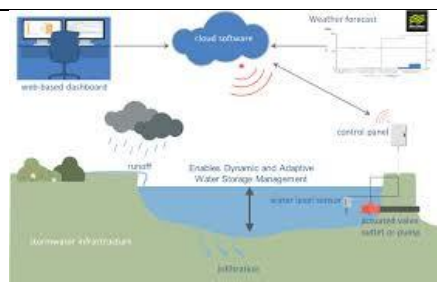
Carriageway and lane closures, plus two-way traffic signals and diversion routes have been in place to allow construction improvements and upgrades to take place on behalf of National Highways.

They continued to run from 8pm to 6am nightly and were scheduled to conclude on the morning of June 28, with delays of between 10 and 30 minutes expected.

The second long-running works on the A5, scheduled until August 31, is expected to cause delays of around 10 minutes, and is taking place nightly from midnight to 6am.

Lane closures will be in place for carriageway reconstruction and renewal on the A5 **southbound at Little Brickhill**, on behalf of National Highways.

A total of five closures have been announced on the M1, with the first of these ongoing overnight from 10pm to 5am nightly through until September 1.



Surface Water Management Group

I met in June with the Internal Drainage Board in Stewartby to discuss a plethora of local issues including Caldecotte South, SEMK and local issues in Woburn Sands (which experienced severe flooding last autumn) and the ongoing issues in Bow Brickhill.

My contact at the IDB is Trevor Skelding trevor.skelding@idbs.org.uk and I know residents are responding to his request (a request I forwarded to those who raised issues over the past few months) for more detailed information on Caldecotte South etc. The IDB has concerns over phase two of Caldecotte South and some proposals in Plan MK 2050.

We agreed that it would be very sensible (to say the least) to reinstate a meeting that went under the heading of the Surface Water Management Group and was hosted and then (for reasons I cannot fathom) discontinued by MKCC.

The meeting was attended by MKCC, The Environment Agency, Anglian Water and the Parks Trust, along with the IDB. This would enable decisions on who is responsible for what and follow up actions rather than the buck passing that seems to prevail at the moment.

I am however pleased to report that senior officers at MKCC have agreed that it should be reinstated.

Hello Councillor Hopkins,

Thank you for the email and yes, I agree that it was a useful meeting that Councillor McPake used to chair.

I am going to raise this with the Portfolio holder for a potential reintroduction to deliver so we can look to manage and facilitate with stakeholders including:

- *Environment Agency*
- *Highways*
- *Anglian Water*
- *The Parks Trust*

I will engage with the Internal Drainage Board about their attendance also.

Thank you for your time in this matter.

Best wishes,

Nicholas Hannon

Assistant Director - Environment, Waste and Commissioning

Milton Keynes City Council | Milton Keynes Waste Recovery Park, 9 Dickens Road | Milton Keynes | MK12 5QF

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk

Milton Keynes City Council | Milton Keynes Waste Recovery Park, 9 Dickens Road | Milton Keynes | MK12 5QF

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk

Read the
Neighbourhood
Plan



NALC reports that it is bitterly disappointed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) decision to stop funding for the neighbourhood planning support programme.

This decision is a significant setback for localism and the highly successful neighbourhood planning initiative, which saw parish and town councils at the heart of the 2,400 communities, with more than 1,000 plans approved at referendum.

Locality, the membership organisation commissioned by MHCLG to deliver the support programme, has published the statement below and issued information to bodies receiving support.

"MHCLG has informed us that, because of the spending review, they cannot proceed with commissioning new neighbourhood planning support services for 2025 onwards. Unfortunately, this means that we cannot receive applications for new grants or technical support. We will complete all technical support packages agreed by MHCLG by the end of March 2025, and we have until the end of March 2026 to do so, depending on the timetable for each package. We want to thank you for the role you have played as a neighbourhood planning champion in promoting the value of neighbourhood planning and supporting groups in developing neighbourhood development plans or thinking about what is right for them. Neighbourhood planning is an undeniable success, with over 2,400 communities having initiated neighbourhood plans and more than 1,000 plans having been successful at referendum. We are proud to have worked with you and supported so many groups through the process. We know it will be difficult for some groups to progress their plans in light of this news, and unfortunately, we are not able to support the Champions Network and other learning and development opportunities from now on. We wish you all the best for the future and again thank you for everything you have done. If you have any more questions about this, please can you submit them via the neighbourhood planning advice service so I can then allocate out to chartered planner colleagues accordingly."

We are currently engaging with Locality and other organisations involved in supporting neighbourhood planning. We will provide further information as it becomes available and will continue making representations to the government. We are bitterly disappointed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) decision to stop funding for the neighbourhood planning support programme.



Presentations from the recent MK City Council, Parishes

Forum meeting.

1. Jo Payne, item pdf
2. MK City Plan 2050 - Andrew Turner, item pdf
3. Planning Enforcement - Pav Hira, item pdf
4. The Armed Forces Covenant - Johanna Hyrcak, item
5. S106 / Planning Obligations - James Williamson, item pdf
6. Landfill Communities Fund - Luke Gledhill, item pdf icon
7. Our Community Our vision - Eirwen Tagg, item pdf icon
8. Constitutional Changes - Cllr Wilson-Marklew, item pdf



Defra has launched a public consultation on Reforming the approach to floods funding.

As part of the government's Plan for Change, the consultation seeks views on their proposed approach to reforming their funding framework, including the partnership formula and ensuring that floods funding is distributed effectively. Defra is also opening Calls for Evidence on Alternative Sources of Funding and opportunities for English devolution to support flood resilience.

https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/flood-and-coastal-erosion-funding-reform?utm_source=Dynamics%20365%20Customer%20Insights%20-%20Journeys&utm_medium=email&utm_term=N%2FA&utm_campaign=Safer%20stronger%20communities%20bulletin%3A%20June%202025&utm_content=Safer%20stronger%20communities%20bulletin%3A%20June%202025#msdynmkt_trackingcontext=0d668012-868f-4d72-b6f7-12a42f3f0300

The consultation will run from Tuesday 3 June 2025 to Tuesday 29 July 2025.

Should you have any questions, you can contact the team at flood.reports@defra.gov.uk



MKCC Standards Committee is looking to fill a vacancy for a Co-opted Parish representative.

It's the Committee's job to promote and maintain high standards of conduct for elected members in Milton Keynes, and Parish Co-optees help the Committee to understand the issues faced by Parish, Town and Community Councils. The committee is particularly interested to receive applications from Parish Councillors who represent more urban areas of the City.

The time requirement is 4 Committee meetings per year, with the possibility of additional working group and sub-committee dates. A co-optees allowance of £720 plus expenses is payable. More information and application form are available on the Council's website or by contacting Sian Lloyd. Sian Lloyd is at Sian.Lloyd@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Note: The closing date for applications is 7 July.

Raising the Flag for Armed Forces Week

On Monday 23 June, I attend the flag raising at MKCC. We were joined in the Civic garden by members of the Armed Forces community including the Sea Cadets, Royal Logistic Corps and military charity Walking with the Wounded to raise the official flag and mark the beginning of Armed Forces Week.

We are proud at MKCC to hold the Gold Award in the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme





Keeping MK Green and Tidy

MK City Council maintains 10 million square meters of grassland, cutting it regularly from March to October.

We put safety first and the grass is cut where it impacts road visibility. We're also boosting biodiversity by leaving some grass uncut to encourage wildflowers. Litter is collected before mowing (where safe), and sweepers will remove debris after. On our high-speed roads, central reservations and narrow verges may not be cleared first due to safety constraints. Cutting cycles vary with weather, ground conditions, and growth rates, so timings may shift.

You can track our progress by clicking here. <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/environment-parks-and-open-spaces/landscape-maintenance/grass-cutting>

For all landscaping questions contact Euan Darling, Landscaping Client Manager.
euan.darling@milton-keynes.gov.uk

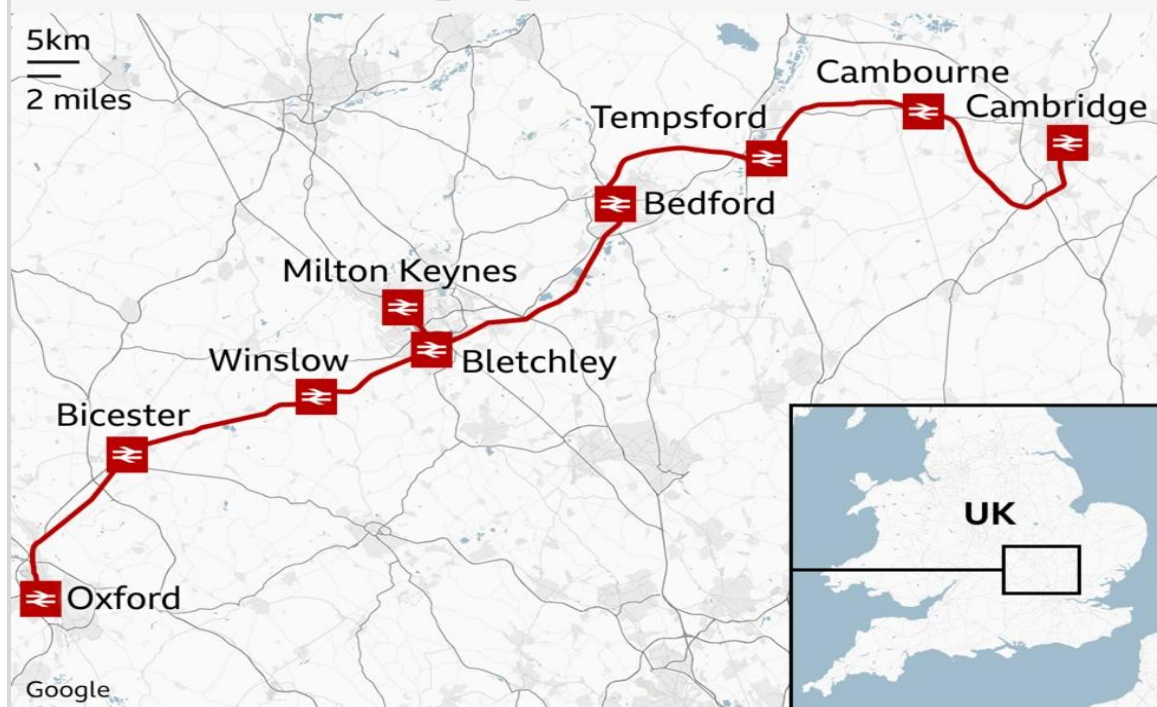
East West Rail



Infrastructure developments locally

The government and private companies have said they plan to spend billions of pounds on huge projects across the East of England.

Main stations on proposed East West Rail route



Source: East West Rail

BBC

The £6bn East West Rail (EWR) project is being developed in three sections.

Trains should start running between Oxford and Milton Keynes, via Bletchley, by the end of 2025.

Work is already under way to upgrade the line between Bletchley and Bedford, which will be the second section.

Finally, a wholly new track is being planned between Bedford and Cambridge, which could see new stations at Tempsford and Cambourne.

EWR said it could take one hour and 35 minutes to travel on its route from Oxford to Cambridge, about an hour less than the current fastest service, external.

The chancellor committed £2.5bn to the project in the 2025 spending review and said she did so "to back Milton Keynes' leading tech sector". The project is also expected to unlock land for thousands of new homes.

A statutory consultation is being planned for 2026 and EWR could apply to the government for a development consent order - giving overall planning permission - in 2027.

Critics of the scheme have said it would damage the countryside between Bedford and Cambridge. Houses in Bedford could also be knocked down to make way for new tracks.

Trains could be running along the whole route by the mid-2030s.

Universal theme park



In April, the government confirmed that Universal Studios owner Comcast planned to transform the former Kempston Hardwick brickworks south of Bedford into a 476-acre (193 hectares) theme park.

The plans would create 20,000 jobs during construction and another 8,000 when the park opens.

It is thought the park could attract 8.5 million visitors in its first year and boost the economy by £50bn by 2055.

According to Universal's plans, there will be a 500-room hotel and retail complex on the site.

Two train stations could serve the theme park - one on the Thameslink line at Wixams and another on the Marston Vale Line, which is becoming East West Rail.

**Community
Governance
Review**

PDR & CGR Consultation is Open

The public consultation on our draft recommendations for both the Community Governance and Polling District / Polling Places Reviews opened last week and will run for 12 weeks from 19 June till 11 September 2025.

You can access the consultation using the links below. Please help MKCC to publicise the consultation using your notice boards, websites and any appropriate engagement you have with residents.

- Community Governance Review (CGR) consultation can be accessed by clicking [here](#). Further information on the CGR is available on our webpages including how you can respond.
- Polling District Review (PDR) consultation can be accessed clicking [here](#). Further information on the PDR is available on our webpages including how you can respond. An interactive map which allows users to compare current CGR/PDR geography and proposed changes can also be accessed here: MKCC Democracy Consultation Map at....

[https://miltonkeynes.statmap.co.uk/map/map.html?map=\)B2uB0zl1AtmT5hJrIKiWiZfBIETxlXyxvki5akgpWNLBj52IKkkEJUoEDa1khH8EyS4pExER3Nr5e1ueFAxLw2b9T3mZNEd%2BIPC DNNfoJ8%3D&login=\)kg04MOENDSadDDfYpm2g%2FQ%3D%3D](https://miltonkeynes.statmap.co.uk/map/map.html?map=)B2uB0zl1AtmT5hJrIKiWiZfBIETxlXyxvki5akgpWNLBj52IKkkEJUoEDa1khH8EyS4pExER3Nr5e1ueFAxLw2b9T3mZNEd%2BIPC DNNfoJ8%3D&login=)kg04MOENDSadDDfYpm2g%2FQ%3D%3D)

Please contact electoralreviews@milton-keynes.gov.uk if you have any questions about either review.



Sir Michael Lyons Report – The New Towns Taskforce

Report from the Town & Country Planning Association

We are still waiting for this report, recently promised for publication in June. However, one of its contributing consultancies has published to the following....

New towns policy statement

The Government set out its vision for new towns in a short policy statement announcing that:

- New towns will include large new communities on greenfield land (separate from other settlements), urban extensions and urban regeneration schemes;
- A new town will contain at least 10,000 homes, though some will be considerably bigger. Collectively, new towns are expected to provide hundreds of thousands more homes;
- New towns must be well-connected, well-designed, sustainable and attractive places which include infrastructure and amenities;

- A 'New Towns Code' will ensure high standards of development are delivered including targeting 40% affordable housing with a focus on social rented homes; and
- A taskforce, chaired by Sir Michael Lyons, will advise Government on appropriate locations for new towns reporting within a year.

Source: www.gov.uk/government/publications/policy-statement-on-new-towns/policy-statement-on-new-town

A new WPI Strategy report outlines the local authority districts (LADs) with the highest potential for New Town development, and advocates for a partnership approach between government and the private sector to deliver the developments.

The report identifies 12 "trailblazer" locations, in line with official plans to identify sites for 10,000 homes or more, using a unique methodology based on spatial, economic and needs-based tests. Public polling was also used to identify where acceptability for new development would be highest.

The work was authored by two former senior MHCLG economists: Paul Chamberlain and David Morris. We are also grateful for the support and expertise provided by our two sponsors for the work: Pension Insurance Corporation and the National House Building Council.

The report has been shared with government and submitted to the New Towns Taskforce to aid their own forthcoming recommendations.

Methodology:

LADs with potential for New Town development were identified using an index based on five key measurable indicators: housing supply gap, land availability, proximity to economic hubs, housing affordability, and development viability. This produced a top 20 LADs where viable new towns could be created.

This was then overlaid by an analysis of FocalData MRP polling of public attitudes to new housebuilding development in the top 20 LADs, to identify 12 LADs (see below) where support for a New Town is likely to be highest.

Key recommendations:

New Town Development Corporations (NTDCs) should be established to deliver new towns in these 12 LADs, which are ranked in order of public acceptability:

- *Milton Keynes*
- *Leeds*
- *South Gloucestershire*

- *Central Bedfordshire*
- *Wiltshire*
- *Huntingdonshire*
- *West Northamptonshire*
- *Mid Devon*
- *South Cambridgeshire*
- *Winchester*
- *East Hertfordshire, and*
- *Northumberland.*

Developing a New Town in each of these 12 areas would result in at least 120,000 new homes and substantial benefits for jobs and growth.

Based on our tests, Milton Keynes should be the 'trailblazer town' built first: it has 59% public acceptability for new development, the highest in the country.

To overcome practical barriers there should be a more flexible Growth and Skills Levy, an expansion of modular construction, and a Pipeline Fund for greater planning capacity.

We estimate the cost of building a New Town and associated infrastructure to be around £3.5 - £4bn, which should be funded primarily through a combination of government borrowing and private sector patient capital. This would then be repaid with interest from the resulting development over time.

Milton Keynes City Council is providing more than 25,000 activity sessions for children, young people and their families this summer.

<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/children-young-people-and-families/holiday-activities-and-food-programme-2025>

The Holiday Fun and Food programme is aimed at local families with children in receipt of benefit-related free school meals.

It's designed to be a welcome boost to families who would otherwise be struggling during the extended school break.

Hundreds of different activities for all ages, ranging from music and cooking to rock climbing and outdoor adventures, will be on offer between 28 July and 21 August.



Each session includes free food and at least four hours of activities and events will run across 53 locations in Milton Keynes. <https://eequ.org/hafmiltonkeynes>

All sessions welcome children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and more than 1,000 tickets have been set aside for SEND specific activities.

Eligible families will receive an e-voucher via email on Sunday 29 June. This will enable them to book up to 16 sessions per child via the online booking system here.

<https://eequ.org/hafmiltonkeynes>

This year, the council worked with 27 local clubs, charities, schools and organisations to provide activities alongside its own Family Centres and Music Hub.



I attended this event on behalf of WSTC but the slides will be of interest to all local parishes.

We can now access the BMKALC Place Shaping 2025 post event page here [Conference 2025 – BMKALC](https://bucksalc.gov.uk/conference-2025-post-event/) and the available slide decks can be accessed in the speaker accordions on the page.

<https://bucksalc.gov.uk/conference-2025-post-event/>

The Speakers were;

- 'Community Safety' - Matthew Barber, (PCC) Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley Police
- 'Know Your Place – How heritage has shaped our settlements and can inform regeneration' - 'Eliza Alqassar, Historic and Built Environment Manager Planning, Growth and Sustainability at Buckinghamshire Council and Lucy Lawrence
- 'Regeneration of the Lakes Estate' - Will Rysdale – Head of Housing Delivery and Regeneration Milton Keynes City Council
- 'Place shaping for an ageing population: the role of age-friendly policy and practice' - Bianca Rossetti, Strategic Partnership Manager , Centre For Aging Better
- 'Neurodiversity and the Planned Environment' - Matthew Harmsworth, Principal Social Value and Town Planning Consultant Arcadis
- 'Place Shaping Through Powerful Communication' - Dan Purchase, Breakthrough Communications
- Mark Tomkins, Aubergine - 'Shaping Places, Online and Offline: Digital Tools for Modern Councils'
- ' Understanding place to plan positive change' Brendan O'Neill, Director, ONH (oneillhomer)
- 'How The Mayor's Bear is helping create the next generation of local councillors' - Cllr Jon Harvey, Town Councillor and former Mayor of Buckingham
- 'To Build A Home' - Tom Sykes, Common Works Architecture



Milton Keynes committed to combined authority with Bedfordshire after motion passed at council meeting.

Milton Keynes is committed to a combined authority with Bedford, Luton and Central Bedfordshire after a motion passed at a full council meeting.

The motion on devolution was voted through at a full council meeting on Wednesday June 18.

Under the motion, a Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) Strategic Mayoral Combined Authority was agreed as Milton Keynes City Council's preferred devolution option.

It also states that the Cabinet will not enter discussions with any other combination of authorities unless the Government says so formally that a BLMK region will not be agreed.

The motion was put forward by Council leader Pete Marland who set out what he believed was "a huge opportunity" for the city in the form of a Strategic Combined Authority.

In setting out the motion Marland said that "the BLMK area comprising of Bedford Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, Luton Borough Council and Milton Keynes City Council offers the best opportunity to enable the greatest potential benefits to our city and region."

Meanwhile, in Central Beds

"It's not a choice on whether they do it - it's how they do it" Central Beds Council leader on devolution plans.

The leader of Central Bedfordshire Council has said the government appears committed to creating new mayor-led authorities — and councils will have little say over whether it happens.

Speaking to the Local Democracy Reporting Service, councilor Adam Zerny (The Independent Alliance, Potton) said: "I do not believe the government is in any mind to give residents the opportunity to say no to the principle of mayoral strategic authorities.

"It is a question of how local authorities want to do this, and while there will likely be public consultations, residents should not be surprised if there is relatively little choice as has been the case elsewhere."

He added that while the government is currently focusing on six "priority programme" areas, the intention is clear.

"If you read carefully the consultations going on elsewhere, it is very, very clear — this isn't a choice on whether they actually do it. It's about how they do it," he said.

The government's devolution agenda involves creating larger strategic areas, often led by elected mayors. In some cases, this has gone hand-in-hand with replacing existing district councils.

While Central Bedfordshire is not yet part of one of those priority areas, it has previously been linked to a wider strategic zone that could include Bedford, Luton, Milton Keynes, and councils in Northamptonshire.

Asked about previous tensions — such as when Luton and Milton Keynes pushed to exclude Northamptonshire councils — councillor Zerny said the focus now should be on looking forward.

He said: “Whatever has gone on in the past, we are going to need to move forward as neighbouring local authorities and work out what happens next.

“I want to work not just with Bedford, Luton, Milton Keynes, but other neighbouring local authorities like Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire, with whom we have much in common”.

Councillor Zerny said he remains focused on securing the best outcome for residents if devolution moves forward.

“I want to make sure that whatever happens in terms of devolution in our area, we’re doing this for the benefit of the residents and no one else,” he said.

Meanwhile, in Luton ...

Luton council faces criticism over lack of consultation as it backs devolution plan for Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes.

A devolved strategic authority covering Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes, run by an elected mayor, "won't have a role in making decisions at a local level", according to Luton Borough Council.

The devolution White Paper was published last month, setting out details of the Labour Party’s plans. Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) could be in the first wave of the new strategic authorities to be created by May 2026.

LBC's chief executive Robin Porter and Labour council leader Hazel Simmons had been criticised by the Liberal Democrat opposition group for not consulting the council first, before backing a BLMK model.

But in a statement today, the council stressed the combined authority is intended to be a strategic body, taking powers from Whitehall. This could also cover some of the surrounding area, such as Milton Keynes and parts of Northamptonshire.

“We're still very much at the beginning of this process," explained a council spokesman. "The timings set out in the Labour government's White Paper to be one of the initial authorities were very tight.

"At this stage, the four councils (LBC, Central Bedfordshire, Bedford Borough and MK) are submitting an expression of interest. Once there's a view from government on whether to proceed or not, a report will be brought to executive.

"Consultation will then happen with the public, led by central government in the Spring. Full council will be asked to make a final decision in the Autumn.

"To be clear, the combined authority is intended to be a strategic body taking powers from Whitehall and won't have a role in making decisions at a local level."

Councillor Simmons wrote in a letter to her LBC colleagues: "After careful consideration of the English devolution White Paper, the council believes we should be entering talks with the government to establish the full benefits of a strategic authority for BLMK.

"We understand our position will be challenging to some and not supported by all, for which we apologise. A BLMK footprint would seek to achieve the maximum overall benefit to our residents, with the best chance of delivering the improvements and progress they so badly need.

"We'll seek to work with government to devolve more powers to local people that will improve their lives. I'm therefore writing to confirm that LBC would only be prepared to take forward an expression of interest in a mayoral strategic authority on a BLMK footprint.

"BLMK is a cohesive single geographical and functional economic area, with alignment in several key business sectors, including aerospace, defence, logistics, high value engineering and advanced technology.

"The prospect of Universal Studios UK in Bedford and the expansion of London Luton Airport are huge opportunities for the regional economy, while also of national significance."

Mr Porter distributed the letter on behalf of councillor Simmons, confirming it has been shared with regional colleagues.

"Should the government decide to take BLMK forward as a priority area, there'll be a consultation through the Spring before this comes back to full council in September," he added.



Universal has formally submitted a planning permission request to the government for its first-ever UK theme park.

The company has asked the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for permission "to be granted by way of a Special Development Order (SDO)" at a site near Bedford, external.

A Universal spokesperson said the request was for "an entertainment resort complex featuring a world-class theme park with several themed lands, visitor accommodation, as well as a range of retail, dining and entertainment uses".

It added that the development would have a "transformative impact on Bedford and the UK economy" generating nearly "£50bn of economic benefit and create 28,000 jobs".

"At opening, the entertainment resort complex would be one of the largest employers in the region, with approximately 80% of employees expected to come from Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes," Universal said.

Rather than applying to the local planning authority, the company has submitted a Special Development Order directly to the government, sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

The order allows the MHCLG to be the planning decision maker, while seeking input and representations from various bodies.

Universal said it had included statements on environment, planning, and design and access in the submission.

It said the project would also "help deliver several long sought after transportation upgrades" including an expanded Wixams railway station, direct slip roads from the A421 and other local road improvements.

"The past year has enabled us to closely engage with Bedford Borough Council, neighbouring authorities, national government, transport and environmental bodies and local communities," it said.

Earlier this month, Universal launched an online form for people to register their interest in future job opportunities at the park.

It said thousands of residents had participated in its engagement in April 2024, with 92% expressing support for the plans, which, it said, "we appreciate and played a key role in us moving forward with the project".

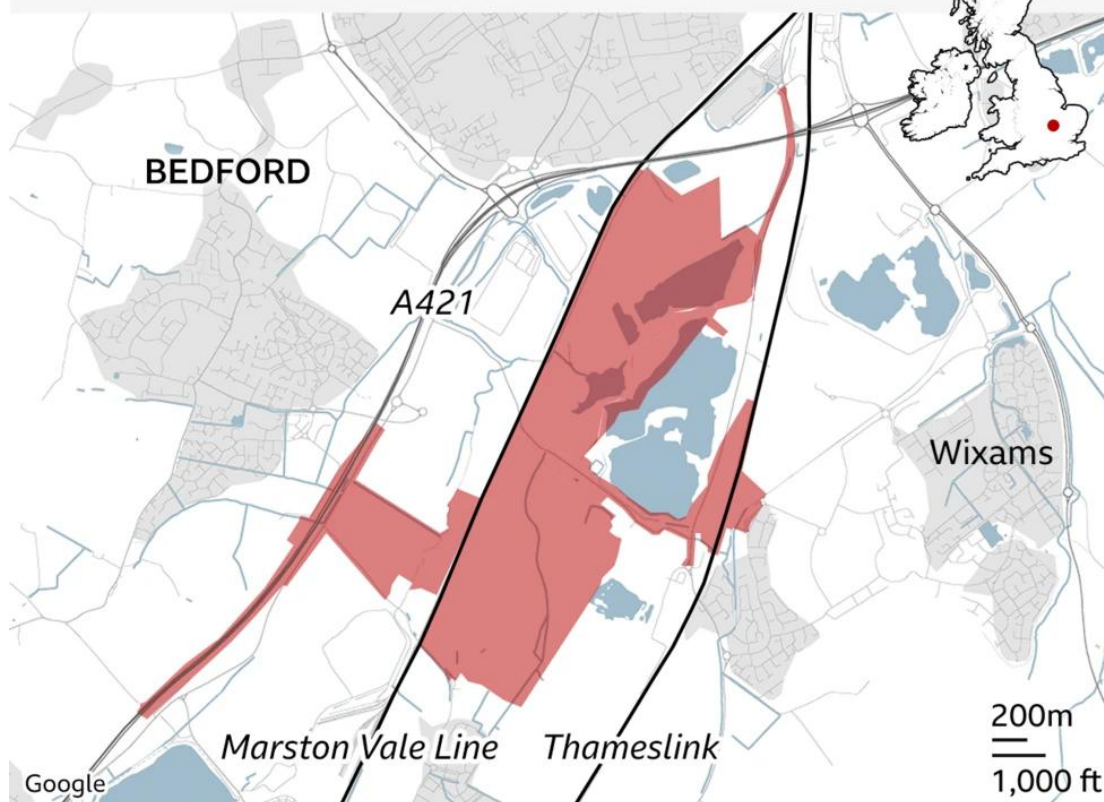
However, specific details about rides and activities will not be outlined yet, as "it is still too early in the process to know the possibilities of featured attractions and experiences", the company said.

Details of where the plans can be seen and how to make a representation would be available in due course, it added.

Subject to planning consent, Universal said it aimed to start construction in 2026.

Universal's planned Bedford development

■ Potential site size: 700 acres (2.8sq km)



Source: Universal Destinations & Experiences

BBC



The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has issued an amber heat-health alert for our area.

<https://ukhsa-dashboard.data.gov.uk/weather-health-alerts/heat/south-east>

Alert active: from midday on Friday 27 June until 6pm on Tuesday 1 July.

While many of us enjoy the sunshine, hot weather can pose serious health risks, especially for:

- older adults with health conditions

- babies and young children
- people taking multiple medications

How to stay safe in the heat:

- drink plenty of water and avoid excess alcohol
- keep cool with light clothing, shade, and fans
- stay indoors between 11am and 3pm where possible
- use SPF 30+ sunscreen with high UVA protection
- stay in the shade, wear a hat and loose, light clothing
- **avoid intense exercise during the hottest parts of the day**
- **keep prams shaded and well ventilated**
- **check in on vulnerable neighbours or relatives**

For official advice, visit **beat the heat (GOV.UK)**

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/beat-the-heat-hot-weather-advice/beat-the-heat-staying-safe-in-hot-weather?utm_source=e-shot&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Amber+heat-health+alert+-+June%2fJuly+2025&es_c=964CBD7CE6844A57264241A81C8AA302&es_cl=07F939E29B02AE16E2D1E50467CABB28&es_id=p48%c2%a340

Section 106

I know you are interested in seeing what section 106 money the community council may have to spend.

To find out what section 106 money is available follow this link.

<https://pfm.exacom.co.uk/miltonkeynes/index.php>

- This first page gives an explanation
- click on the 's106' in the menu top left of the page
- then click either parish or town on the left of the page
- and choose Walton from the drop down link on the right of the page

You should then see a list of all the funds received, spent, and available. Please note this is not all money that Walton CC can spend, for example, if it says 'primary education' then

the education authority can apply on behalf of our catchment primary school but as the community council has no authority here we cannot apply for this money.

As you know it is usually out of our remit as a parish it is not money we can apply for. However, we can make requests to the relevant service, for example, where it says 'Highways' we might make requests to Highways on how money is spent in Walton

Planning - Planning Applications and Notifications

Application Number: PLN/2025/1151 - Notification of proposed works to trees in a conservation area

Location: Mulberry Cottage, Watling Street, Little Brickhill, Milton Keynes, MK17 9LS

Proposal: The removal of Cherry tree (T1) approximately 7m in height and Spruce tree (T2) approximately 3.5m in height

Case Officer: Patrick Coll

Consultation Expiry: 2025-07-09

Enforcement Notices Served

Notice Served: ENF/2024/0490 - A-2953 - PCN - Planning Contravention Notice Served

Location: D Moseley And Son, George Farm Close, Little Brickhill, Milton Keynes, MK17 9LT

Alleged Breach Erection of a stable building in conservation area

Case Officer: Thomas Halsey



MK Plan 2050

The next Planning Cabinet Advisory Group meeting has been set to be held on the 23rd July 2025 at 6pm

Cllr David Hopkins - Representing Little Brickhill at MK City Council

July 2025