



Update from your City Councillor, Cllr David Hopkins (March 2026) Representing Little Brickhill at MKCC

This month's report reflects the major issue residents have been speaking to me about when I visit the village, namely the Levante Gate planning application and all that surrounds it.

However, I do make mention in the report below of

- Litter and fly tipping in the village and our meeting with Pete Roberts (the MKCC Environmental Crime Manager)
- Gallaghers reporting that they have arranged a public meeting at Bletchley Rugby Club regarding the Levante Gate proposals - *Gallaghers are planning the public exhibition on the 16 March 2026 at Bletchley Rugby Club to commence from 2.00 pm - 3.00 pm (for Local Councillors) and from 3.00 pm -7.30 pm for the public.*
- Headings for a response to the Local Transport Policy Consultation 5 (LTPs) remembering that Murray Woodburn (MKCC Transport & Highways Manager) is attending the PC meeting on 2 March in the village
- MKCC adopts new guidance regarding Dog Fouling legislation
- MKCC finally adopting the Bucks and MK Nature Recovery Strategy (that was adopted by Bucks Council on 21 October last year)
- Snippets regarding East West Rail
- Decision on scoping Review (Levante Gate) see below - Issued 18/2/26

Conclusions of the Planning Officer to the scoping review

- *The Local Planning Authority agrees that the matters listed and detailed within the Scoping Report are appropriate for being scoped into the ES as described above. The applicant should note the additional technical advice above setting out details to be included within any future planning application, which can be discussed further under pre-application advice.*

If you have any queries about the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Lakeisha Peacock - Principal Planning Officer – West Team

Free entry for MK Dons vs Harrogate Town

Milton Keynes Dons Football Club is holding a Community Day on 7 March for its next home match vs. Harrogate Town and is kindly offering free entry to local people. If you live in Milton Keynes (or if you don't but have previously bought a ticket at MK Dons) you can claim your free ticket here.

<https://www.mkdons.com/news/2026/february/18/community-day-2026-the-gift-of-football/>

Levante Gate



The initial consideration has to be the prematurity of the likely outline planning application. Whilst the site can be considered to be emerging as part of the MK Local Plan MK2050 there is still the review of responses to the Regulation 19 consultation to be undertaken and then for the plan to be placed before the Planning Inspector at a public enquiry before adoption. The earliest might have expected to see any form of formal application would be early in 2027. The issues, in my mind and at this stage in the Plan MK2050 process, remain as I have set them out below.

Cllr David Hopkin Response to MK City Council MK2050 Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation

I wish to respond to the city council proposals for development proposal policy GS17 South of Bow Brickhill and GS18 Levante Gate impacting our local community. In addition, impacts of MK City Council policy GS23, the further expansion of the Caldecotte South warehouse employment site. I sit as a city council ward member for Danesborough & Walton, the area includes Little Brickhill and Bow Brickhill.

Overall

This relates to my representation to the Regulation 19 consultation, specifically in relation to Policies GS17, GS18 and GS 23 – land South of Bow Brickhill and Levante Gate Strategic City Extensions plus policy GD23 South Caldecotte Employment site. Regarding the detail contained within this policy, I do not consider the emerging Local Plan to be sound, based on the tests contained in the NPPF. In this regard I consider that the Local Plan cannot be adopted in its current form.

More specifically, I do not consider that the South of Bow Brickhill and Levante Gate allocation has been properly justified with the Council seemingly ignoring or giving undue weight to much of the relevant evidence contained in the Sustainability Appraisal and related documents, particularly the Council commissioned landscape focused reports.

Cllr David Hopkins further considers that the City Council has not properly explored Reasonable Alternatives, with the choices made resulting in unsustainable forms of development that simply won't be deliverable within the timeframe of the Local Plan. Furthermore, Cllr Hopkins has serious concerns relating to the effectiveness of the draft Local Plan in bringing forward sustainable development.

Local Parish Councils submitted detailed representations in respect of the 2024 Regulation 18 consultation, addressing the above points, but appear not to have received acknowledgment or responses to the objections made at that time. I therefore consider that Policies GS17, GS18 and

GS23 are not sound being inconsistent with the conclusions of the City Council's own evidence base, which has largely been ignored, and the aims and objectives of the NPPF.

Landscape Impact

The robust and compelling evidence base relating to the importance of the site and wider area, in landscape terms, has been well documented albeit ignored by the Council. The former Area of Attractive Landscape Value, within the Milton Keynes border, included land between Station Road, Bow Brickhill and the A5 as well as land south of the A5, to the east of the A4146, sensibly incorporating the area covered by the draft allocation.

As part of the City Council's evidence base, the Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2016 provides an important overview of this character type, which the Character Assessment confirms as spreading across the Central Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes borders. The document correctly states that the settlement character is closely linked to that of the Greensand Ridge, with the strong agricultural feel, evident in surviving historic field boundaries, farmsteads and agricultural buildings, further linking this area to the character of the Greensand Ridge. The assessment goes on to state that this effectively acts as a clear buffer zone between the ridge and more suburban development beyond. The Greensand Ridge and the lower field patterns therefore form a key part of its overall landscape character and value.

The 2016 Landscape Character Assessment further identifies the Special Landscape Area as a priority for areas in which landscape character is at risk of erosion, with the following threats being identified:

- Development pressure from urban areas creating a spread of suburbanisation at the foot of the scarp and potential coalescence of distinct village settlements; (our underlining)
- Loss of tranquillity through increased noise and pollution
- Loss of views to distinctive local landmarks through increased tree cover, which will attempt to buffer new development, in historically open areas.

It is hoped that the Inspector will recognise that development at Levante Gate and land South of Bow Brickhill will destroy the above established landscape qualities that have historically led to the previous Area of Attractive Landscape designation (AAL) as well as the proposed Special Landscape Area (SLA) designation.

I note that in the MK City Council's Review of Local Landscape Designations in May 2024, the existing landscape designations were reassessed, including the Area of Attractive Landscape designation at Land south of Bow Brickhill and Levante Gate, falling within the Brickhill Greensand Ridge which is described in the review as a distinctive feature, creating a strong sense of place, as follows:

“A highly distinctive landscape which forms part of a wider ridge extending beyond Milton Keynes. The steep escarpment which rises to a woodland plateau is distinctive in its geology, topography and its strong visual character as a wooded backdrop to Milton Keynes city. The patchwork of pastoral and arable fields on the lower slopes also creates a strong sense of place”.

In terms of the report's Evaluation, the area is proposed for designation as an SLA in the emerging Development Plan, with the supporting text stating:

“The land south of the A5 is recommended to be retained in the candidate SLA. Although the A5 cuts through the ridge and is a modern influence on the landscape, the village of Little Brickhill, which is

located immediately south of the trunk road, provides some depth and scenic quality to the landscape.

The proposed boundaries of the candidate SLA follow Bow Brickhill Road, Brickhill Road and the A4146 to include the shallower slopes of the ridge due to their importance as a rural setting to the wider ridgeline".

The report goes onto describe important characteristics of the area that should be retained:

- A relatively remote elevated area, with long distance views from the edge over MK City and the rest of the Borough. The wooded ridge forms a distinctive backdrop for views across the Borough and provides a unique setting to MK City.
- Open agricultural fields on the shallower slopes are an important factor.
- Limited development on the ridge and lower slopes is a key feature.

The report observes that the proximity to warehousing on Brickhill Road and residential development at Eaton Leys, and the associated A4146 and A5, reduces tranquillity and a sense of remoteness in parts. Further development at Levante Gate and Bow Brickhill would further exacerbate this.

The report further identifies future development pressures that will result in the encroachment of development into views across the valley. The advice to the City Council, in terms of their future development management regime, is fully endorsed by the two Parish Council's as follows:

- to maintain the general absence of development in the area, retaining the primary uses for agriculture and forestry; (our underlining)
- ensure that the long-term panoramic views across the valleys are retained and promoted.

These special landscape qualities are therefore important and numerous and should not be eroded at the expense of meeting aspirational housing numbers that can better be accommodated elsewhere. As documented, the Levante Gate site therefore forms part of the setting to the woodland ridge and Little Brickhill village. Likewise, the land south of Bow Brickhill. Once destroyed the substantial damage caused will be irreversible.

The City Council's approach is contrary to policy contained within the National Planning Policy Framework which, at paragraph 180, states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. Little Brickhill Parish Council and Bow Brickhill Parish Council considers that the proposed allocations of GS 18 and GS 17 have not therefore been properly justified in landscape terms and that the above landscape issues should be considered in more detail and the evidence base revisited. It is never enough to simply state that a landscape led scheme will properly address the significant environmental harm that will inevitably occur from new development.

Sustainability Appraisal

As documented in the City Council's Sustainability Appraisal, the South of Bow Brickhill and Levante Gate draft allocations do not perform well against the objectives set out. I consider this to be another significant factor that contributes to the allocation of the site being unjustified and unsound. Little Brickhill Parish Council, Bow Brickhill Parish Council and local residents are at a loss to understand why this key evidence has been ignored by the Council when there are more suitable alternatives available.

As the City Council have observed themselves, throughout the Local Plan review process, the Land south of Bow Brickhill and Levante Gate sites fall within open countryside and are isolated, being situated away from Milton Keynes and the established grid system and Redway network. Furthermore, there is poor connectivity across the A5 and the already busy A4146, with walking and cycling routes being limited. The proposed Mass Rapid Transport system won't reach Levante Gate nor land South of Bow Brickhill with a key issue being the provision of suitable alternative transport infrastructure to enable the site to function.

The Parish Council consider that addressing the provision and maintenance burden of existing infrastructure, before new development proposals are even considered, will cause a significant barrier to growth and deliverability impacting on the effectiveness of the plan. For example, the A4146 and existing McDonalds roundabout (known as the Kelly's Kitchen Roundabout locally) and associated junctions are currently difficult to navigate and are operating at a stressed capacity resulting in congestion at certain times of the day. Allowing more large-scale development will significantly impact on highway safety and require the development of major new infrastructure before residential development can begin. This will cause delay and raise significant viability issues for any developer.

In my view the proposed scale of development does not have a sufficient critical mass to support the proposed local services and facilities endorsed in the draft Local Plan, resulting in an inevitable reliance on facilities elsewhere. I reiterate that both land South of Bow Brickhill and Levante Gate are remote, unsustainable locations, being entirely contrary to the objectives set out in the Sustainability Appraisal and national planning guidance.

Both Bow Brickhill and Little Brickhill Parish Council's interpretation of how poorly the Levante Gate development performs against the Council's Sustainability objectives, very much mirror the City Council's own interpretation, which has seemingly been ignored.

It is important that the Inspector is made aware of these as follows:

Objective 1: High quality homes and neighbourhoods; healthy places. Climate and environmental action

The site performs poorly being isolated and remote from existing facilities and is unsustainable. Furthermore, the site is not large enough to provide new facilities to encourage walkability, with poor connectivity to existing adjacent areas.

Objective 2: Healthy Places

The sites do not perform well in terms of creating improvements to physical and mental health. Both are greenfield sites which are not well connected to green infrastructure, being surrounded by arable fields. Furthermore, it is questionable whether sites the size of Levante Gate and land south of Bow Brickhill will have the critical mass to support new health facilities in what are peripheral locations.

Objective 3: Climate and environmental action

Neither the land south of Bow Brickhill nor the Levante Gate sites have good connectivity to existing public transport with residents relying on the car as the key mode of travel, leading to unsustainable travel patterns that will create further pressure on the existing highway infrastructure. The proposed Mass Rapid Transport system (MRT) is not intended to serve peripheral locations such as Levante Gate and the Land south of Bow Brickhill, creating the need for better public transport connections that currently don't exist and would be difficult to implement. Bow Brickhill, Fenny Stratford and

Bletchley train stations, although relatively close to the Levante Gate site, are characterised by their absence of public transport links and both Fenny Stratford and Bow Brickhill stations are scheduled for closure by the plans put forward for East West Rail.

Objective 4: High quality homes and neighbourhoods; healthy places

Both the land south of Bow Brickhill and the Levante Gate sites again performs poorly against this objective and will not provide the housing mix and affordable housing that is envisaged. Given the location and quantum of development being proposed it is difficult to envisage how quickly the site will come forward. The site does not lend itself to providing 40% affordable housing given its relatively small size, its isolated nature and peripheral location away from community facilities. This would make the provision of affordable housing unviable for most developers with larger sites or sites in more (sub)urban locations, close to existing facilities, being preferable in offering an appropriate mix of dwellings.

Objective 5 - Climate and environmental action; Healthy places.

There will be inevitable noise and air pollution from the busy A5 and A4146 which would be exacerbated with the introduction of new development to an already stressed highway infrastructure. An example of poor planning which did not take account of road noise being Eagle Farm South, built adjacent to the A421 and M1 in Wavendon Parish and for which a campaign for noise abatement has gained momentum since residents started to move into that area of Milton Keynes.

Objective 6 - Economic and Cultural Prosperity

The land south of Bow Brickhill and the Levante Gate sites have historically been located within the Brickhill SLA, which should rule out any form of strategic development due to landscape impact and loss of views. The Council's observation that housing numbers could potentially be reduced for the site and a "landscape led" approach to development specified, will not mitigate against the substantial landscape impact of development on this area which is characterised by its openness and general absence of development. Furthermore, the site is characterised by the presence of Grade 3 and 4 Agricultural Land across the site, with Grade 3 being protected. Clearly any reduction in the developable area, resulting from a landscape led approach, will also have a significant impact on the delivery of infrastructure and further erode viability.

Objective 7 and 8 - Climate and environmental action

As detailed in the Council's Sustainability Appraisal, developments such as the land south of Bow Brickhill and Levante Gate are required to be delivered in line with water efficiency measures as well as supporting the creation of a zero-waste economy.

Objective 9 - Economic and cultural prosperity

The land south of Bow Brickhill and the Levante Gate sites are not close to a variety of accessible employment areas apart from the recently developed extensive B8 (GS23) development, close or adjacent to the roundabout, which will focus on warehouse and storage provision, requiring a relatively small employment offer. The sites offer poor connectivity to Bletchley and the surrounding area, as well as poor connections to other employment nodes, District Centres and CMK, which in the absence of strong links would typically be reached by car.

Reasonable Alternatives

Sustainability Appraisal Growth Scenarios

Having regard to the evidence base, both Bow Brickhill and Little Brickhill Parish Councils note that the City Council have sought to consider Reasonable Alternatives, in line with the NPPF, to identify a package of sites to meet the growth target contained in the Plan. The Reasonable Alternatives have been tested against the Sustainability Appraisal objectives as a package to meet growth targets and sustainability objectives. I consider the City Council's approach to the consideration of Reasonable Alternatives to be significantly flawed and therefore unsound, with the absence of any sound justification for the choices made.

In terms of the Council's assessment of reasonable alternatives, it is considered that freestanding settlement options should have been considered in more detail as being potentially suitable for development, especially in the light of the current Labour Government's pledge to significantly increase the rate of housebuilding by developing new freestanding settlements, some of which are likely to be concentrated on the M1 corridor. This approach would avoid the need to consider sites such as the land south of Bow Brickhill and the Levante Gate sites that are isolated, constrained and benefit from important landscape designations.

I understand that an authoritative industry research report "Start to Finish", produced by Lichfields in 2020, highlights the benefits of new settlements in terms of their ability to rapidly assemble infrastructure and deliver development quickly in appropriate locations, without the need to focus on overly constrained land or impact on valued landscapes.

The Lichfield research concludes that large sites of over 2,000 units can deliver more homes per year over a longer period, with this seeming to ramp up beyond year five of the development trajectory. I would therefore urge the City Council and the appointed Inspector to consider potential new settlement options in more detail as being an effective strategy to delivering new development on existing brown field sites and transport nodes.

The Council's Reasonable Alternative 1 (RA1), which includes Levante Gate and Bow Brickhill Strategic City Extensions, is expected to deliver 62,825 dwellings by 2050. However, as addressed, the options listed do not perform well when assessed against the Sustainability Appraisal objectives, with the inclusion of Levante Gate and land south of Bow Brickhill having a detrimental impact on the Brickhill's Greensand Ridge SLA.

Both the Bow Brickhill and the Little Brickhill Parish Councils consider it unreasonable to include these sites, as the City Council's preferred option, simply, or so it appears, to enable them to meet the high end of their housing target.

Notwithstanding the need to consider new settlement options, some of the remaining reasonable alternatives listed would deliver an appropriate quantum of development by 2050 without the need to destroy key landscapes or to use sites where there will clearly be land assembly and deliverability issues.

Reasonable Alternative 2 (RA2) removes sites affected by the Special Landscape Area (SLA), including both the Bow Brickhill and Levante Gate sites, with the Council's expected delivery quantum being 59,075 dwellings by 2050. As documented in the Sustainability Appraisal, RA2 scores more positively against the SA framework and is a far more logical alternative, preserving the SLA designation and delivering the appropriate quantum of housing.

Reasonable Alternative 3 (RA3) also removes the sites affected by the SLA, and includes land West of Olney, with the expected delivery of 60,075 dwellings in the plan period. The allocation of strategic

development at Olney should result in much needed bypass improvement works to solve the existing congestion problems within the town.

Reasonable Alternative 4 (RA4) is the same as RA1 but removes East of Wavendon and adds West of Olney, with an expected delivery of 60,825 dwellings by 2050. Again, the focus on a more dispersed approach, with development concentrated on Olney, is supported and should be considered by the City Council and appointed Inspector.

It is also noted that the governments list of 12 new town sites (New Towns Commission Report) includes Milton Keynes which would bring into doubt the need to develop the Brickhill sites given likelihood of 60,000 or more new dwellings being constructed in north and east Milton Keynes possibly under a Development Corporation.

In my opinion the City Council's decision to select RA1 as the preferred option is not sound, with the Council's evidence base having been largely ignored in their decision-making process. The other alternatives, that exclude Levante Gate and South of Bow Brickhill, offer more sustainable options that are deliverable, being well connected to existing facilities. These options support walking and are self-contained, providing mixed use communities that will enable the delivery of new community facilities with good connections to public transport, health facilities and green space.

The City Council's overall aim to concentrate development in the urban area, which has been largely ignored in the detail of the plan, is supported by both Bow Brickhill and Little Brickhill Parish Councils and aligns with Government policy to provide sustainable opportunities for renewal and regeneration, supporting walkable, people friendly, healthy places with less carbon emissions.

Conversely, allowing piecemeal development in rural areas such as south of Bow Brickhill and Levante Gate, will result in further congestion, higher cumulative carbon emissions, the need for significant infrastructure to overcome site constraints, resulting in viability issues and slow delivery. The approach adopted in the Regulation 19 plan is therefore not adequately justified or sound, is contrary to national planning guidance and should be reconsidered before the adoption of the Local Plan.

East -West Rail

The planning powers enjoyed by the East West Rail company will, in effect, trump any planning powers resulting from the adopted Local Plan with the exact alignment of the route, east of Bletchley, currently not fixed. Development of the final route are very likely to result in new roads, bypass routes, bridges and the creation of nearby transport interchange hubs. Whilst the western section is operational, or near operational, the full link from Milton Keynes to Cambridge is not expected until the mid to late 2030's.

This uncertainty throws considerable doubt on any plans MK City Council produce and provides a logical reason to delay the Local Plan process until there is more certainty regarding the future of East West Rail to the east of Bletchley. This major infrastructure project could have significant implications on the allocation of certain sites and their deliverability

Conclusion

For the reasons detailed above, Cllr David Hopkins considers that the Regulation 19 Local Plan, relating to Policies GS17, GS 18 and GS23 – South of Bow Brickhill and Levante Gate Strategic City Extensions and employment extension with the allocation of around 2,800 dwellings and associated infrastructure and community facilities, has not been positively prepared and is not sound or

adequately justified. In this respect I would ask the Inspector not to support the adoption of the Local Plan in its current state.

Whilst it is good practice to plan above the OAN figure, to create a buffer, it is vitally important to choose the best sites. Choosing appropriate, unconstrained and deliverable sites is the most important consideration in relation to the current plan, with the opportunity to review the development trajectory within five years after adoption, by which time the political climate may have changed and major infrastructure projects, such as East West Rail, have more certainty.

Cllr Hopkins reiterates that the land South of Bow Brickhill and Levante Gate do not perform well when tested against the SA framework. They do not work as part of a package of sites and won't deliver benefits in combination with other nearby sites that will suffer the same constraints to development in terms of deliverability and viability.

Notwithstanding the many negative aspects of developing on the SLA, smaller sites such as land south of Bow Brickhill and Levante Gate will not bring sufficient growth benefits to overcome the many landscape concerns, or make landscape led development viable. It will not enable the delivery of sustainable development being contrary to the key aims of the NPPF.

The standalone South of Bow Brickhill and Levante Gate sites therefore both perform poorly against the SA framework, as acknowledged by the City Council. They are both unsound and unsustainable locations and a significant distance from Milton Keynes with Brickhill Street and the A4146 separating the sites from the city, with the closet points of connection being South Caldecotte and Eaton Leys, which are still undeveloped. This standalone and peripheral option won't support significant new services and will destroy a valued landscape, the loss of which will be significant.

With regards to GS23 I also make the case that no further warehousing sites be allocated in MK given the city councils total refusal to allocate land for a lorry (HGV) park with the associated welfare facilities for drivers.

Cllr David Hopkins therefore respectfully requests that Policies GS17, GS18 and GS23 – South of Bow Brickhill and the Levante Gate Strategic City Expansions plus the expansion of the South Caldecotte warehouse (employment) sites be deleted from the emerging plan and that other more sensible options be (re)considered by the Inspector.

Cllr David Hopkins

Submitted 9 February 2026

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Local Transport Strategy 5 – Response headings

These are the headings relating to my personal response to the current LTP5 Consultation being undertaken by MK City Council.

Response to LTP 5

General

- General comments on rail, road, bus transport
- Regionalism and link LTP5 to MK2050 strategy
- Older persons needs
- Redways definition
- Kingston Roundabout
- Rural roads supporting urban sprawl
- Getting to school safely – school streets
- MRT – Belfast Glider
- Pods
- Universal
- EWR and link to trains coming from the north EWR cord
- Use of school minibuses when not being used by schools
- Parish or town council managed transport schemes
- Goods Movement Strategy
- Changing working patters – life/work patters

MK - The 15-Minute City: A highly popular model where the city redesigned urban spaces, so all daily necessities (work, school, amenities) are within a 15-minute walking or cycling radius, prioritising pedestrian infrastructure.

Little Brickhill

- Bus link
- Traffic Management
- Planning gain from Levante Gate Development
- Road Safety on A5 (National Highways joint working)
- MRT
- Speed limits

Bow Brickhill

- EWR and loss of BB Railway Station
- Bow Brickhill bypass
- Bus Services (The loop)
- MRT
- Speed limits



Woburn Sands

- EWR

- Station and Station hub
- MRT
- Working with CBC
- Cycling and e-bikes
- Safe access to schools
- 20mph limits
- The loop

Wavendon

- The loop
- Bus stops and shelters
- Redway links and joining up
- EWR
- H10 extension
- Kingston Roundabout
- Walton Road



Monitoring Progress

Nine key metrics aligned to the six strategic objectives will be measured against a 2026 baseline and an annual report delivered to MK City Council by the leader of the Council or appropriate Cabinet Member:

- Carbon emissions from transport - Reduction in total and per-capita CO₂e.
- Air quality – Annual mean concentrations of NO₂, PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀.
- Levels of walking, wheeling and cycling – Counts at continuous and selected sites.
- Access to services, employment and leisure – Share of households within 30 minutes of a town/neighbourhood centre by public transport.
- Road casualties – Annual collision and casualty statistics.
- Network resilience – Journey-time reliability, traffic volumes (automated counts) and average delays on A-roads.
- Highway condition – Surveyed condition grades of principal, non-principal and unclassified roads and size of maintenance backlog.
- Public transport patronage and user satisfaction – Annual bus and rail passenger numbers; National Highways & Transport Survey results.
- Reliability of public transport services – Percentage of bus journeys arriving on time (real-time data vs timetables).



Snippets

Reported: Fly Tipping

Meeting with Environmental Crime Manager - Environmental Crime Unit

I along with the clerk and two local residents met with Pete Roberts (MKCC Environmental Crime Manager) in the village on 11 February. Pete provided advice of fly tipping and suggested that the Parish Council could look into installing a camera. There was some confusion on the number of instances being report to him as it looked like that when issues are reported to MKCC they are simply collecting the rubbish and not always notifying him of the reported incident(s).

Pete Roberts suggested that any evidence provided would help.

The clerk has been in touch with Crimewave and will report back on this initiative at the PC meeting on Monday.



Dog Fouling Legislation

As part of the legal process, Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) last for three years and can be renewed for a further three years, if required. MKCC's dog fouling PSPO was extended in 2023 and was due to expire on 18 February 2026. A public consultation exercise has taken place, concluding on 15 October 2025. However, the numbers responding were extremely small, with just 20 responses being received, primarily from Parish Councils.

There was widespread agreement that the PSPO, creating an offence of failing to clear up after a dog has fouled on public land, should be renewed. Many comments were made regarding further dog control in specific areas. There is, currently, no process for outside agencies to apply to MKCC for a local PSPO in relation to further dog control measures, such as banning dogs from an area or keeping dogs on leads.

There is no longer an offence of failing to clear up after a dog has fouled - the previous legislation, Dogs Fouling of Land Act 1996, was repealed and replaced by S.59 Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, which gives Local Authorities the power to create PSPOs if they are satisfied, on reasonable grounds that:

- activities carried out in a public place have had, or is likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality;
- the effect, or likely effect, of the activities are, or are likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature and;
- the activities are unreasonable and justifies the restrictions imposed by the Order

Dog faeces left on public land is a form of Anti-Social Behaviour and has always been high on the agenda of our community. Between the 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2025, there have been 5083 reports relating to dog fouling in Milton Keynes. It continues to be an issue in Milton Keynes, as it is nationwide, and a PSPO is a necessary, and appropriate, tool to help tackle this anti-social behaviour.

PSPOs apply to public spaces which, for the purpose of this Order, means any place to which the public, or any section of the public, has access to on payment or otherwise as of right or by virtue of express or implied permission.

Breaching a PSPO is a criminal offence, punishable at Magistrates Court by a fine of up to £1,000. Local Authorities have the power to deal with offences by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice set, by this Council, at £100, reduced to £75 if paid within 14 days.

A public consultation exercise was carried out between August and October 2025 and included interested parties such as Thames Valley Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner, The Parks Trust, The Kennel Club, Town and Parish Councils and local veterinary practices. It was also published on the MK City Council's Website.

Two questions were asked as part of the consultation - Should the Dog Fouling PSPO be renewed? And should further dog control measures be considered?

While MKCC can evidence that dog fouling remains an issue that requires a PSPO, it would be disproportionate to impose further restrictions around the whole of Milton Keynes for issues that occur in small pockets of land.

It is recognised that there is no process for Town and Parish Councils to bring localised issues relating to dog control issues to MKCC for consideration of creating a PSPO.

It is, therefore, proposed that MKCC provide a platform for public landowners and land managers to present evidence of the issues and the restrictions that could control it. The application would be considered at Officer level, by the Environmental Crime Manager, in consultation with the Council's legal team, to see if the evidence meets the three tests and justifies the restrictions. Section 59 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 empowers local authorities to make PSPOs. These are orders designed to prevent or reduce activities in public places that have a detrimental effect on the quality of life of the local community.

MK City Council, Civic, 1 Saxon Gate East, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ. Failure to comply with a PSPO without reasonable excuse constitutes a criminal offence, with consequences including a FPN or prosecution with fines up to £1000 on the standard scale.

To approve the PSPO for dog fouling but dismiss the need for a process for localised PSPOs. This would maintain the Council's ability to tackle the issue of dog fouling and not allow Town and Parish Councils to apply for PSPOs where they can evidence the need for further dog control

measures. This option would not satisfy or support the responses received in the consultation from Parishes who wish for there to be a process for potential local PSPOs related to dog and animal control.

To not approve the PSPO. If the Order is not renewed, it will lapse and MKCC will not be able to take enforcement action against those that fail to pick up after their dog has fouled.

Timetable moving forward

- Implementation of new PSPO - 5 March 2026
- Commencement of Application Process for Localised PSPOs for Dog Control - 1 June 2026
- Commencement of Decision-Making Process for Localised PSPOs for Dog Control - 1 October 2026

Good News

MK City Council has appointed Ewa Gullinska as its new Highways Road Safety Officer

Ewa Gulinska Ewa.Gulinska@milton-keynes.gov.uk



Share your views in this year's Community Safety Survey.

Resident feedback has already made a real difference. In previous years, resident comments helped MKCC secure almost £750,000 in external funding to improve street lighting, increase CCTV and make other upgrades that help people feel safer in the city centre.

This work sits alongside MK city councils ongoing partnership with Thames Valley Police, including joint enforcement to help reduce violent crime and action to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Taking part in the survey helps set future priorities to keep Milton Keynes safe. It only takes a few minutes, have your say here: MK Together Safeguarding Partnership - Community Safety Survey 2026.

<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=APc1dKKd0aPljbhwlL6diqRzlsnJBxKvA4CO5lcK6BUNUMxSFhGRjdJWFk1RktSRDRBUFNHQjBOUSQJQCNO0PWcu&route=shorturl>



East West Rail

East West Rail (EWR) is expected to become part of the new state-run railway structure, with discussions underway as of late 2025 for it to be incorporated into Network Rail, which is forming the foundation of Great British Railways (GBR). EWR Co leadership supports this, noting significant delivery involvement by Network Rail.

Key Details Regarding EWR and GBR:

- **Incorporation Plans:** Network Rail board minutes from September 2025 indicated a move to bring EWR under their umbrella, with a formal plan requested by the end of 2025.
- **Nationalisation Trend:** The government is creating GBR to bring infrastructure and train operation under one body, with all remaining franchises set to be under public ownership by 2027.
- **Current Status:** EWR is currently a separate entity, but it aims to connect Oxford, Milton Keynes, Bedford, and Cambridge, with services already running to Bletchley/Milton Keynes as of 2024/2025.
- **Role of Network Rail:** About half of the EWR project by value is delivered by Network Rail, facilitating its likely integration into the GBR structure.

As GBR becomes the central authority for UK rail, EWR is expected to function as a key, integrated part of this nationalised network.



Bin Collections in Little Brickhill

Collection date	Bin/sack collection
Wednesday 4 March	Black, blue and green
Wednesday 11 March	Black, red and green
Wednesday 18 March	Black, blue and green
Wednesday 25 March	Black, red and green



MK City Council adopts Bucks and MK

Nature Recovery Strategy

<https://bucksmknep.co.uk/nature-strategy/>

<https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=337&MIId=19220>

What is a Local Nature Recovery Strategy

3.1 Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) are new spatial strategies for nature and are required to be produced by the Environment Act 2021, as one of the key policies to support nature’s recovery. Their purpose is to agree a local shortlist of priorities and measures for nature’s recovery and the wider environment and to map where best to take action.

3.2 There will be 48 LNRS areas covering the whole of England. The aim is for LNRSs to join together to form a national “nature recovery network” to boost nature’s recovery at scale. Collectively, the LNRSs are intended to help achieve the overarching goal of the national Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) by halting the decline in biodiversity and achieving thriving plants and wildlife. The government is urging final publication of all LNRSs as soon as possible and no later than December 25.

3.3 The production of LNRSs is being locally led by designated ‘Responsible Authorities’.

In 2022 Buckinghamshire Council was designated the Responsible Authority for producing the LNRS for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. As a Responsible Authority we were required to work with other organisations and partners in our area to agree what should be included in our LNRS. That approach was essential to ensure the LNRS is a shared creation which encourages local organisations, land managers/farmers, local councils and individuals to work together to deliver the final wider vision for nature's recovery.

What does the LNRS consist of?

3.4 Every LNRS is required to produce two outputs. Each output includes an element which relates to the current state of nature, and an element which looks to what is needed for nature recovery in future. Together they set out what the strategy is aiming to achieve and what practical actions will help do this. The two outputs of the LNRS are:

1. A statement of biodiversity priorities

This describes the area's important landscapes, habitats and species as well as the pressures on nature and opportunities for nature recovery. Looking to the future, it also includes a shortlist of priorities for nature recovery and potential measures (actions) to achieve those priorities.

2. A local habitat map

The mapping element of the LNRS contains two maps. The first is a baseline map to show areas of particular biodiversity importance at the moment - the "Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity" (APIB). The second map is a targeted map showing future nature recovery opportunities, known as the "Areas that Could Become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity" (ACB) map. This shows where the measures for achieving the area's shortlisted nature recovery priorities would be best located to make the most difference to nature.



Bucks Council progresses development of new Local Plan following Government imposition of 95,000 new homes target in Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire Council is advancing work on a new Local Plan that will provide a framework for how the county grows and develops over the next twenty years.

The emerging plan, a legal requirement – which must demonstrate how Buckinghamshire can accommodate 95,000 new homes to meet Government targets - will set out how it meets future needs for housing, the economy, community facilities and essential infrastructure, while also protecting the county’s precious natural and historic environment.

Steven Broadbent, Leader of Buckinghamshire Council said: “Developing a plan that meets the housing target for Buckinghamshire puts real pressure on our county as 95,000 new homes is 43% higher than requirements under the previous Government’s needs-based methodology. The impact of such development on Buckinghamshire is immense but doing nothing is not an option as having an up-to-date plan is essential to prevent speculative development and ensure infrastructure is properly planned.

“It is a major concern is that these imposed housing numbers do not come with any Government funding for the infrastructure that would be needed to support such growth. While developers will contribute to some of the required investment, this will cover only a fraction of the multibillion-pound costs associated with new roads, transport links, schools, healthcare provision, sewerage systems and energy infrastructure. Central Government will need to step up and plug the gaps if their development targets are to be met.

“The Council remains committed to doing all it can to protect our precious Green Belt and AONB (National Landscapes) and we are adopting a ‘brownfield before greenfield’ approach outside of the Green Belt. In addition, our town centres will have to develop and grow, using current Government methodologies for density, placing even more reliance on existing infrastructure and exacerbating the need for further funding and investment.

To date, over 1,300 residents and stakeholders have taken part in the plan-making process through formal consultation, and a detailed technical assessment of potential development sites has been completed. Of the 1,400 sites identified across Buckinghamshire, approximately 400 are now being published for further engagement and assessment. This next stage of work involves assessing the availability, suitability and viability of these sites with landowners and infrastructure providers.

No decisions on site allocations will be made until this full technical assessment has been completed.

The Council will publish the draft Local Plan this summer for further public consultation. Residents, landowners, infrastructure providers and other partners who would like to provide input in this part of the plan-making process can participate in the council’s site survey <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/sites-survey>

before 11:59pm on 16 March 2026.

Bucks Council Press Release



About my campaign for an Age Friendly MK

I am campaigning for Milton Keynes to become part of the national Network of Age Friendly Communities.

The Network is supported by the Centre for Ageing Better, and the Age Friendly Communities framework which was developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2007.

It proposes eight interconnected domains that can help to identify and address barriers to the well-being and participation of older people.

In Milton Keynes, we should incorporate all eight of the WHO domains as our main themes:

- outdoor space and buildings
- transport
- housing
- participating in society
- volunteering and employment
- communication and information
- community support for health and wellbeing
- The eighth domain: respect and social inclusion is an important aspect throughout this work

I am campaigning within the MK city council to establish a true partnership of public, private, and voluntary organisations to oversee the Healthy Ageing Strategy for the whole of the city area.

Healthy Ageing Strategy

The Council should underpin its commitment to helping older people in MK live healthy, active, and independent lives as set out in a stand-alone, reflective Healthy Ageing Strategy.

That document sets out the vision for how MK might aspire to be a place for all residents to enjoy growing older in an age-friendly community. The strategy should include an action plan of how the vision will be achieved.

In the first year, the focus for MK should be based upon two priorities - outdoor spaces and buildings and participating in society.

I have put forward plans as to how 'participating in society' and 'outdoor spaces and buildings' should be the city councils' key priorities for year one.

Looking ahead to year two, I would like to understand what's most important for people 40 years and over who live, work, and/or study in MK to live well as they grow older. My campaigning work on Lifelong learning underpins much of that thinking.



Planning permission has been granted to build the first Universal Studios theme park in the UK.

Key Project Highlights

- Bedford will become home to the first Universal-branded theme park and resort in the United Kingdom and Europe.
- Universal's theme park and resort will be a major boost to the tourism and creative industries as well as the UK economy overall, with an estimated £50bn of direct and indirect economic benefit.
- Universal is poised to become one of the region's largest employers, creating 20,000 construction jobs and 8,000 permanent positions once operational, with approximately 80% of all jobs going to local workers.
- The project will help deliver key transportation upgrades, including an expanded Wixams railway station and new direct slip roads from the A421.

Gidon Freeman has been appointed Universal Destinations & Experiences Vice-President of External Affairs



Vital Signs MK

13th Edition <https://www.mkcommunityfoundation.co.uk/vital-signs-mk/>

The concept of Vital Signs was first developed by Community Foundations of Canada as a way to provide community foundations with robust, evidence-based data to guide local giving and identify areas of need.

By shining a spotlight on the issues affecting our communities, this publication serves as a vital resource; not only for community foundations, but also for the voluntary sector, policymakers, and local businesses seeking to ensure their support reaches the areas where it is needed most.



East West Rail outlines new rolling stock and service plans

- EWR has submitted the proposal to safeguard the capacity needed for the line, and it has no intention on operating the services itself with Chiltern Railways or its successor operator once Great British Railways is established, expected to run them. Chiltern Railways is due to begin operating services between Oxford and Milton Keynes in 2026 as part of the first phase of EWR. The service introduction has been beset by problems and subsequently delayed, with both Chiltern Railways and the trade unions RMT and ASLEF currently in dispute over Driver Only Operated services.
- The BEMUs ordered by EWR are also expected to transfer to an operator once procurement has been confirmed.
- As part of the track access application, EWR has said that enough capacity exists on the line and surrounding infrastructure for the services to operate alongside other proposed services, including any future Cowley branch line services, an estimated two freight paths between Oxford and Cambridge and 10 additional freight paths between Oxford and the West Coast Main line.
- Regarding the Cowley Branch line service, EWR is anticipating that bay platforms 1 and 2 at Oxford station will become available once the Oxford – London Marylebone services are extended to Cowley.
- As part of the second phase and the introduction of services, EWR is proposing a series of enhancements including a new passing loop at Islip, double tracking sections between Bletchley station and Caldecotte as well as building a new two-track line on the approach to Bedford station and a further two passing loops near Tempsford.
- Other works include multiple footbridge, viaduct and bridge enhancements on the existing Marston Vale line between Bletchley and Bedford and the construction of four new stations at Bedford St Johns, Tempsford, Cambourne and Cambridge South on a completely new line between Bedford and Cambridge.

Have Your Say : Thames Valley Police

Thames Valley Police (TVP) are hosting several "Have Your Say" and crime prevention events in the Danesborough and Walton area to engage with residents. Upcoming, confirmed sessions include crime prevention stands on February 9 and 23, and March 13, 2026, with a "Have Your Say" meeting scheduled for March 31, 2026.

Upcoming Events & Crime Prevention Stands

- Fri 13 March 2026 (2:30 PM - 4:00 PM): Crime Prevention Stand, Sainsburys Local, 1A Bolebec Avenue, Eagle Farm South, Milton Keynes.
- Tue 31 March 2026 (7:00 PM - 8:00 PM): "Have Your Say" Meeting, Location to be confirmed.

These meetings allow residents to discuss local concerns directly with their neighbourhood policing team, which focuses on crime reduction, visibility, and community engagement. For the most up-to-date information, residents can check the Thames Valley Police website.

Everyone is welcome and it would be great to see you there. For more information, please contact PCSO JONES - C9812 - tracey.jones@thamesvalley.police.uk



Welcome to The Grand Union Canal Transfer – a vital new scheme to bring water from the Midlands to the Southeast.

It's a joint water transfer project between two water companies, Affinity Water and Severn Trent, and the Canal & River Trust, the charity that owns and cares for the canal network in England & Wales.

Our Phase Two Public Consultation is now open and will run for seven weeks from the 11 February until the 2 April 2026. You can visit our Consultation page for more information about how to take part and provide your feedback on our proposals. <https://guctransfer.co.uk/consultation/>

We look forward to listening to your thoughts and opinions and sharing them with us to help shape the next stage of development of the scheme.

The need

Our water supply is under increasing pressure from population growth, more demand for water, the effects of climate change and the need to protect ecosystems. The canal network has transported people and goods for two centuries; it's busier now than ever before, with more boats, and people enjoying, visiting and living on or by the canals, and supporting waterway dependent businesses.

We want to use it to help transfer recycled water from the Midlands to the Southeast to supply those communities who have a deficit of water.

This scheme is key to delivering a sustainable and reliable water supply for the future and reducing our reliance on water from other sources, including unique chalk stream habitats. It will also secure future water availability for canal navigation.

We're still at an early stage in the scheme's development. Listening to and understanding the views of people living and working on and by the canals along the water transfer route as well as those using them for recreation, wellbeing, access to nature and travel, is fundamental to how the scheme will be designed, built, and maintained.

We ran our first public consultation in Autumn 2024 and used the feedback to further develop our proposals and inform our scheme's design. You can read about what we learned in our Phase One Public Consultation report [here](#).

We're now gathering feedback in our Phase Two Public Consultation which will run for seven weeks from the 11 February to the 2 April 2026. You can find out more about our proposals and how to take part to give your feedback on them [here](#).

Our Phase Two Public Consultation is open!

Our Phase Two Public Consultation for the Grand Union Canal Transfer is now open for seven weeks, from Wednesday 11 February until 23:59pm on Thursday 2 April 2026.

As part of the consultation, we're running a series of online and in-person events so we can hear and learn from your feedback to support the next stage of decision-making and development of the scheme.

Visit our Consultation events page to find out where our events are taking place near you so you can take part and help shape the next stage of the scheme's development!

<https://guctransfer.co.uk/community-consultation-events/>

Canal section pop up – Milton Keynes

Electra Welcome Centre, Unit 7, Campbell Wharf, Overgate, Milton Keynes, MK9 4BG

Thursday 19 March - 10:30am – 1:30pm

Summer Community Learning MK Courses Now Live



The MKCC adult learning service, Community Learning MK, have just released the schedule of courses they'll be running over the summer. There's lots on offer, from the help they give people

to learn basic English and maths, to creative learning like dress making. You can find the brochure here

<https://cmemailmarketing.co.uk/img/A56D78427/Milton%20Keynes%20City%20Council/One%20Council/Summer%202026%20Brochure.pdf>

and printed copies are in our libraries and family centres.

Cllr David Hopkins – Representing Little Brickhill at MKCC

March 2026