



Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Full Council of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council held at Sports Hall at Newton Leys Pavilion, Furzey Way, Newton Leys on Tuesday, 21st November, 2023 commencing at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllrs E Kelly-Wilson, R Graham, G Bedford, S Browne, E Hume, U Osumili, A Segebrecht, T Stephens, M Wymer, A Khanom and I Hussein

Absent: Cllrs L Campbell and E O'Rourke

Apologies: Cllrs Ely and Palmer

In attendance: John Fairclough (Support Services Manager) and Delia Shephard (Town Clerk) (Clerk)

Min Ref

- FC23/24-79 **Councillors' apologies for absence**
The chair welcomed the members of the public and explained the arrangements for the meeting. Members of the public were reminded that the meeting would be recorded and webcast on the Town Council's YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1F9npBt1wJw&t=792s>).

It was RESOLVED to note the apologies for absence and the absences without apologies as listed above.
- FC23/24-80 **Councillors' declarations of interest in matters on the agenda**
There were no declarations of interests.
- FC23/24-81 **Minutes of the last meeting of full council on Tuesday, 26 September 2023**
It was RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the last meeting of full council be approved as a correct record of proceedings.
- FC23/24-82 **Public Speaking**
No members of the public had asked to speak at the meeting but a prepared list of residents' questions had been collated for discussion after/during the presentation on the Brunel Centre Development Brief and the chair explained that there could be time for questions later during the meeting.
- FC23/24-83 **Presentation from representatives of Milton Keynes City Council and Milton Keynes Development Partnership on the draft Brunel Centre Development Brief**
The Chair introduced David Blandamer, Senior Urban Designer from Milton Keynes City Council (MKCC) and Adam Sciberras, Special Projects Director from Milton Keynes Development Partnership (MKDP) who delivered a presentation and answered questions on the draft Brunel Centre Development Brief which was out to public consultation.

The presentation delivered by the Senior Urban Designer covered the nature and purpose of the brief and explained the key aspects of the planning policy guidance contained within the brief and the policy context for this.

In summary it was noted that the design principles for the proposed mixed used development on the site were drawn from the Central Bletchley Urban Framework SPD and Plan:MK. Opportunities from development of the site included creation of



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active frontages around the edge of the site, improvements to pedestrian permeability and the reconnection of Queensway and Buckingham Road (visually and for pedestrians/cyclists not vehicles) as well as the marking the key focal points and gateways to the town. Constraints included the need to manage level differences, to take account of existing two storey housing nearby and to manage servicing of any new developments. The design principles for the mixed use development included housing, ground floor retail frontages, outward facing developments and the insertion of new streets together with other complementary town centre uses such as retail and nighttime economy facilities as well as the possibility of a health hub, public space etc.

The public consultation on the brief was scheduled to finish on 23 November 2023 and it was anticipated that the brief would be approved by MKCC in early 2024.

On behalf of MKDP, the Special Projects Director, noted that the Development Brief was quite a technical planning document and most residents would be interested in the details of any proposed scheme. However there would be no scheme or details for some time. Once the brief was approved in early 2024 MKDP would seek a development partner to deliver the scheme and this procurement would likely take all of 2024. Design and planning applications would follow in 2025 and MKDP was working towards development starting on site in 2026. The tenants currently in the Brunel Centre were aware of this timetable and vacation point and the only activity anticipated earlier than 2026 (assuming the Brunel and Wilko site continued as at present) was the demolition of the former Sainsburys shopping unit which was scheduled in early 2024.

The chair raised a number of questions which had either been put forward by residents in advance of the meeting or arose from councillors. In response to questions the following points were made on behalf of MKDP.

- i Heritage – As part of the Town Deal programme MKCC was already working on creating a narrative for Bletchley's brand identity as well as undertaking active marketing of sites and the Turing public art commission currently being procured could potentially be located in the public realm associated with this development. The former fire station site was due to be actively marketed after Christmas and this included potential for hotel development. The identity of Bletchley was being taken into consideration in these ways and would be included in consideration of any development scheme that came forward.
- ii S106 – Obtaining planning gain via S106 agreements with developers can be very difficult but the fact that this site was owned by MKDP meant it could be easier to secure planning gain from the development partner. The scale of the site meant some civic and social gains could potentially be delivered physically on site eg a potential health hub.
- iii Nighttime economy – The reference to nightclubs and casinos in the brief was drawn from the NPPF and the brief is not promoting those uses, possibly the brief could be changed to make it clearer that these are not preferred uses of the site.
- iv Green infrastructure and maintenance – MKDP and MKCC agreed low maintenance green infrastructure was important even though high density flatted residential development was anticipated. MKDP was not supportive of excessive service charges and had been successful in avoiding these in other schemes elsewhere in Milton Keynes.
- v Carbon Net Zero Aspirations – There would inevitably be trade offs between affordability, parking and net zero aspirations. MKDP want to deliver affordable homes as well as sustainable homes.



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- vi Reasonable shop rents – In MKDP’s experience it was not high rents which were causing retailers to leave the town centre as evidenced by low rents available in the Brunel Centre and low demand. Footfall through the centre had not changed much and MKDP was open to talking to any potential retailers. The spaces were being advertised via a retail agent, advertising etc.
- vii Public WCs – MKDP is supportive of public toilet provision because they increase dwell times though current toilets probably not in the right place. This issue was not likely to be forgotten by MKDP or the Town Deal.
- viii Disruption – There will be no grants or compensation available for this, there will be a long process of engagement to go through which MKCC will work on with retailers. The site is quite self-contained so work can go on behind the hoardings but as a large scale development there will inevitably be disruption which MKDP will seek to minimize. There will not be a seamless transition of businesses from the Brunel Centre to the new retail units.

On behalf of MKCC the Senior Urban Designer noted that the section on the Neighbourhood Plan could be strengthened to reflect the current position of the developing Neighbourhood Plan.

Discussion followed on parking and it was agreed that the draft brief did not have a definitive number of parking spaces in part because work was going on with a parking study commissioned by MKCC. The results of the study would be available in early 2024 and the development would respond to the parking strategy which emerges from the study.

It was acknowledged on behalf of MKDP that substantial affordable housing could not come forward without a partnership with a developer with a lot of funding. The most obvious was Homes England who were interested in brownfield sites and had visited Bletchley. Representations should be put in now about the type and scale of affordable housing wanted.

It had been agreed that the consultation period would be extended to ensure additional consultation with the community living around Duncombe Street.

In response to questions it was noted that there was no plan for vehicular traffic to be routed from Queensway directly to Buckingham Road (ie through the Brunel site). Also that many buildings in Bletchley were in private ownership (eg former job centre) and neither the city nor the town council could control what is done on these sites. It was RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting for a few minutes to allow residents to leave if they wished to do so.

FC23/24-84

Response to the public consultation on the development brief from Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

Following discussion it was RESOLVED that the clerk would seek permission for an extension to submission of the town council’s formal response to the public consultation so that a draft response could be prepared for approval by the full council on Tuesday 28 November 2023.

It was RESOLVED that the draft response would include the following topics:

- i Items which the town council supports eg the Eastern entrance for the station, the opening up of Queensway, the transport hub
- also
- ii Nighttime economy should not be limited but not promote the idea of nightclubs or casinos



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- iii Service charges and green space maintenance – want to protect residents from excessive service charges
- iv Net Zero insufficiently prominent but need to recognise mix of priorities
- v Public toilets
- vi Affordable housing needs and importance of it being truly affordable
- vii Neighbourhood Plan and emerging policies
- viii Parking and parking strategy, Duncombe Street and Oliver Road issues
- ix S106 must be invested in Bletchley
- x Heritage and unique identity of Bletchley should be referenced somehow

FC23/24-85 **Draft minutes of committee meetings held since the last meeting of council and to consider any recommendations therein**

FC23/24-85.i **Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 10 October 2023 of Community Committee**

It was RESOLVED that the draft minutes be noted.

It was RESOLVED that the recommendation that £50,000 be added to the 2024-25 budget for community events (Minute reference CC23/24-32) be considered at full council on 28 November 2023 as part of the consideration of the draft budget.

FC23/24-85.ii **Minutes of meeting Tuesday 7 November 2023 Employment Policy Committee**

It was RESOLVED that the draft minutes be noted.

It was RESOLVED that the recommendation that a staffing budget for events be added to the budget for 2024-25 (minute reference EMPC23-24/62) be considered at full council on 28 November 2023 as part of the budget discussions.

FC23/24-85.iii **Minutes of meeting Tuesday 14 November 2023 Environment and Planning Committee**

It was RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the meeting be noted.

FC23/24-85.iv **Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 24 October 2023 of Finance and Governance Committee**

It was RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the meeting be noted.

It was RESOLVED that the recommendation to approve the internal audit report completed on behalf of the town council by Auditing Solutions and dated 11 October 2023 be accepted (minute reference FC23/24-67). It was noted that there were no matters brought to the attention of the council in the report.

It was RESOLVED that the recommendation to approve the existing investment policy with no changes be accepted (minute reference FC23/24-69).

It was RESOLVED that the recommendation to approve the existing procurement policy with no changed be accepted (minute reference FC23/24-70).

It was RESOLVED that the recommendation to add £2,500 to the 2024-2025 budget to allow for increased frequency of waste collection from the 15 dog bins on the Newton Leys Estate be accepted. (Minute reference FC23/24-73.)

FC23/24-86 **Proposal to amend the Finance and Governance Committee's recommendations on proposed changes to hire charges at Newton Leys Pavilion and Fenny Stratford Community Centre following market testing and research by officers**

At the last meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee it had been recommended that several changes be made to the scale of charges for 2024-2025



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(Minute reference 2023/24-72). Subsequently officers had undertaken further market research on local hall hire fees and therefore requested that the recommended increases to weekend hire rates at Newton Leys Pavilion and Fenny Stratford Community Centre be reconsidered.

It was RESOLVED that the recommendation for changes to the hire charges at Newton Leys Pavilion and Fenny Stratford Community Centre be deferred to the next meeting of full council on 28 November 2023.

It was RESOLVED that a recommendation that charges for photocopying be increased by 5p per sheet be approved.

It was RESOLVED that a recommendation that all other charges should be increased by CPI (July 2023) at a rate of 6.8% with effect from 1 April 2024 be approved.

The meeting closed at 9.08 pm