

- Continue work on Sustainability Appraisal to assess options, and produce a preferred spatial strategy for the MK City Plan
- Consultation on draft plan summer 2024

I've compared what MKCC provided before in the local briefing to this most recent one which is more detailed covering the whole area as it was prepared for the MKCC Cabinet Advisory Group.

It that MKCC are gradually providing better numbers for each area and now say they are looking to choose 30K houses out of options of around 80k. Where there were 12 broad locations there are now 14 - the two new ones come from breaking up what was City Infill into two, and more importantly they've also split apart what was "Newport Road East" in Wavendon (it's now called East of Woburn Sands") away from the Southern Options so Wavendon and Woburn Sands now has a separate designation rather than being bundled in with the rest. In Slide 20 there are a lot more negatives than positives and there's a comment that if it is included then it should be phased later into the planning period which implies more into the 2040s than the 2030s.

The other two new things that appear to be new were that MKCC has now provided an early indication of where things are likely to head and the good news is that we're not in the initial likely list although Danesborough might well end up being in the recommended Growth options should MKCC 'find it needs more housing' (and after the General Election that seems a fairly likely possibility to me). MKCC has included the rest of the Southern Expansion but not us which may be why they split it apart. That's all on Slide 25. The other thing I noticed was that there's a much lower emphasis on the impact of any future Multi Modal Rail Transport system. It's still mentioned on slide 6, but the slide showing potential lines has gone which is what was driving up the potential density if they chose our area and probably made it more likely they'd do so.

I'm sure what was discussed at the classification given to the Greensands Ridge is likely to have an impact on the rest of the Southern expansion, and certainly anything between Bow Brickhill and the A5.

So overall it's not quite such bad news although we're not out of the woods just yet. The consultation awaits.

Street Cleansing in Little Brickhill – update from Strategic Director

I will send an officer out for us to look at this. We could do a nice deep clean here I think.

I cannot cover off the commentary on the barrier but we could request that this gets a review from road safety if this is an MKCC issue to manage.

I have been liaising with Little Brickhill Parish Council on such matters and am trying to understand some of the unique street cleaning issues in locality in greater detail through them.

Thank you for sharing and I will review and engage with my street cleaning team accordingly.

Nicholas Hannon

Assistant Director - Environment, Waste and Commissioning

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www.milton-keynes.gov.uk



This being in response to the message

From Tantal on Watling Street Little Brickhill, there is meant to be a cycle route/footpath to the Shell Garage/Macdonalds Roundabout.

The footpath/cycle route is overgrown with brambles and moss, to such an extent that it's dangerous before it joins the A5D.

There are meant to be signs painted in white on the route indicating it's a cycle route. Only the back wheel of the cycle is visible on the route. The rest is obscured by overgrown bushes and moss.

The whole route needs addressing for moss growth, it's very precarious when the weather is poor.

Once you're alongside the A5D, there is no physical protection from the dual carriageway.

I suspect the responsibility for pre joining the A5D is MKC and alongside the A5D is National Highways, but I don't know.

The opposite side of Watling Street is much the same as you journey from the village towards the A5D, in some areas even more overgrown with broken pavement in areas.



HGV parking on Watling Street

From Murray Woodburn'

'Thank you for alerting us to this. Civil disobedience of this sort is a new development and may require us to escalate accordingly.

Thank you for retrieving the signs and dragging them to safety – and we'll make sure they are replaced shortly – but it is clear we may need to move towards a prohibition of some sort if this is the sort of behaviour we can expect. As has been stated, the situation will only deteriorate when other warehousing development opens, so it is important we get on top of this now.



Let me discuss this with colleagues again to come up with some options. A weight limit except for access remains an option, but unfortunately enforcement would be difficult without the assistance of cameras – which we do not have DfT permission to use yet.

Murray Woodburn



Good contact points in Highways at MKCC

Moses So
Highways Liaison Officer
To speak to me use: Microsoft Teams or 01908 254885

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And

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Interim Highways Operations Manager

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Good contact Points in Waste and landscape Management

Euan Darling – Landscape Client Manager

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Bedford Council's assessment of the
East West Rail route update announcement.

An East West Rail briefing was held on 6 February 2024 in the Bedford Borough Council Chamber.

View the presentations and documents (PDFs):

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/media/7115/download?inline>

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/media/7117/download?inline>

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/media/7116/download?inline>

See also CPRE Report

<https://www.cprebeds.org.uk/news/bedford-borough-council-briefing-on-options-for-east-west-rail/#:~:text=The%20Systra%20study%20found%20that,over%20a%2060%20year%20period.>

Planning in Buckinghamshire – updated February 2024

Planning in Buckinghamshire offers great opportunities due to its location with Greater London to the south-east, Berkshire to the south, Oxfordshire to the west, Northamptonshire to the north, Bedfordshire to the north-east and Hertfordshire to the east, together with its position in the Oxford to Cambridge (OxCam) Arc. <https://www.jdesign.org.uk/news-updates/oxford-to-cambridge-oxcam-arc/>

Buckinghamshire is one of the home counties with towns such as High Wycombe, Amersham, Chesham and the Chalfonts in the east and southeast of the county forming some of the most densely populated parts of the county. Development in this region is restricted by the Metropolitan Green Belt and the Chilterns AONB. Other large settlements include the county town

of Aylesbury, Marlow in the south near the Thames and Princes Risborough in the west near Oxford. The areas around the old county town of Buckingham and near Olney in the northeast, are much less populous. The largest town is Milton Keynes in the northeast, which with the surrounding area is administered as a unitary authority separately to the rest of Buckinghamshire.

The remainder of the county is administered by Buckinghamshire Council as another unitary authority. This Unitary Authority was created in April 2020 from the areas that were previously administered by Buckinghamshire County Council and districts of South Bucks, Chiltern, Wycombe and Aylesbury Vale.

<https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=346&Mid=18201>

Buckinghamshire Council must produce a Local Plan within five years of coming into being, that is, by April 2025. An update on the progress of the Local Plan preparation was considered by the Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee on 7th September 2023. The report advises that the following studies are expected to be published in the next 6 – 9 months:

Employment and Retail Land Review

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 and Water Cycle Study

Climate Change Study

Local Housing Needs Assessment

Self-Build Needs Assessment

Settlement Review

Landscape Character Assessment update

Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment

In 2021 and 2022 Buckinghamshire Council carried out Call for Sites consultations. Submitted sites can be viewed here.

<https://bucksCouncil.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/basic/index.html?appid=3dba0355936e43bfbf34dbf1eab92a1f> All sites submitted through the wider call for sites (and previous calls for sites) will be technically assessed in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HEELA).

In the meantime the current Strategic Planning position in Buckinghamshire is as follows:

Milton Keynes

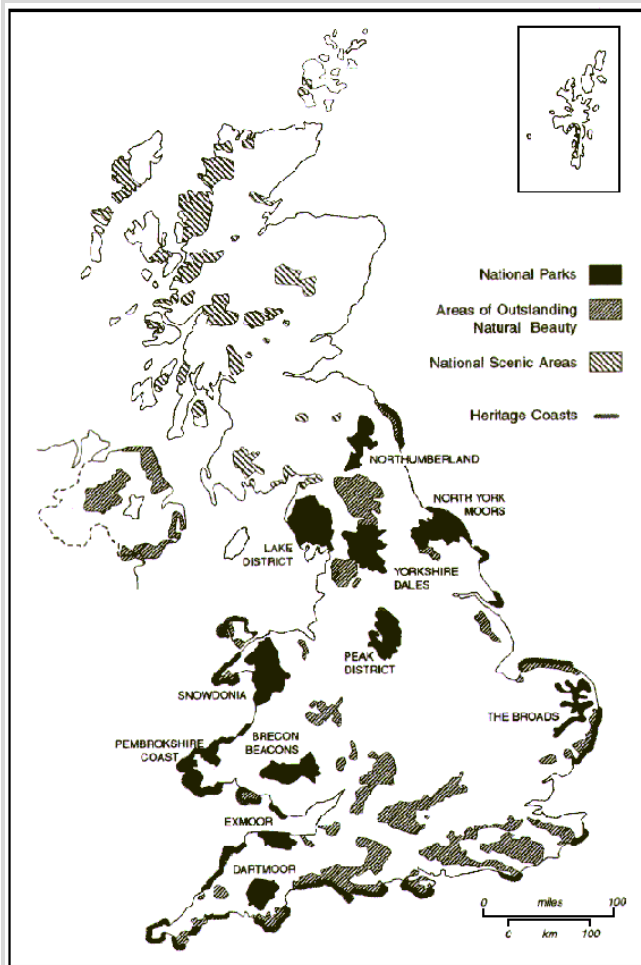
The current Local Plan Plan:MK was adopted in March 2019. Plan:MK now forms part of the Council's Development Plan and replaces both the Core Strategy (2013) and saved policies of the Local Plan (2005).

The adopted version of Plan:MK with, its updated Policies Maps, can be viewed here.

<https://milton-keynes.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s14538/Publication%20of%20Local%20Development%20Scheme%20Annex.pdf>

The Council are currently working on a new Local Plan. A new Milton Keynes Local Development Scheme was published in November 2023. Overall, the timetable to submission has been extended by six months and the Regulation 18 consultation is now programmed for late summer 2024 with the Regulation 19 consultation following in early 2025. The Council propose to submit the Local Plan for Examination before May 2025. The Council website will be updated with further information in due course.

Landscape Designations Consultation



The consultants undertaking the work for MKCC can be viewed here: <https://www.landuse.co.uk/>

A recording of the workshop held on 29 February is currently with the Communications team at MKCC as the recording itself needs to be converted to a link which MKCC is able to share more widely via email. This is likely to be early next week.

If, however you wish to view the recording before it is issued via email you should be able to do so by accessing the “chat” from last weeks session, where the recording will be available.

The link to the consultation hub is also in the chat however for ease I have copied it here: <https://milton-keynes-ild.co.uk/> .

I am still pressing for an upgrade consideration on the Greensand Ridge as it passes through the Brickhill's from AAL to Special Area of Conservation (SAC) SAC – Special Areas of Conservation

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) are internationally important areas defined by the national planning policy framework (NPPF) as ‘Areas given special protection under the European Union’s Habitats Directive, which is transposed into UK law by the Habitats and Conservation of Species Regulations 2010.’

The purpose of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) is to help conserve the habitat and species identified in Annex I and II of the Directive. Of the Annex I habitat types, 78 are believed to occur in the UK. Of the Annex II species, 43 are native to, and normally resident in, the UK.

They are considered to be the habitats and species that are most in need of conservation at the European level (excluding birds). Special Areas of Conservation along with Special Protection Areas (SPAs), which are classified under the Birds Directive, collectively form the Natura 2000 network.

SACs along with Special Protection Areas (SPA) form part of the Natura 2000 and Emerald Network known as Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCIs). Both Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) may cover the same areas. See <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/>



As I hope you are aware, the full train service resumed on 19th February. A special ticket offer was launched to celebrate the resumption of the full service. A single journey between any two Marston Vale Line stations costs just £1 for adults and 50p for children. This offers a discount of up to 90% on the usual fare. The offer is valid for 3 months. Please see <https://www.marstonvalecommunityrail.org.uk/full-train-service-restored-to-the-marston-vale-line-with-1-ticket-offer>

A team from Marston Vale CRP, Bedford to Bletchley Rail Users' Association and a number of Station Friends Groups were on trains throughout the day on Monday to welcome passengers back. Timetables, pens and special cakes were distributed. Please see <https://www.marstonvalecommunityrail.org.uk/full-train-service-restored-to-the-marston-vale-line-with-1-ticket-offer>

The resumption of the full timetable and introduction of the £1 ticket offer has been very well received with good passenger loadings and uptake of the 25% discount for rail passengers at Gallone's ice Cream in Bedford.

The next part of the relaunch is a community competition to name one of the Class 150 units. Please see <https://www.marstonvalecommunityrail.org.uk/train-naming-competition>

I would be really grateful if you could circulate to your colleagues and post on your websites & intranet as appropriate please.

Posts are being published on the Marston Vale CRP Facebook & Twitter accounts in the next couple of days. Any assistance with sharing would be much appreciated.

NOTE Closing date for entries is Monday 4th March.



StopTheArc

... believe that it s very important to hold the Rail Minister to account over the deteriorating communications and engagement by East West Rail.

Despite the key recommendation from the NAO in December for EWR to improve their communications and engagement with local communities their recent behaviour has been worse not better. In particular:

- 1.They have arbitrarily, without consultation or agreement, amalgamated each of two or three Local Representative Groups into one and reduced the frequency of meetings.
2. They have produced a false and misleading Press Release over their unbalanced Bedford survey. They claim 75% support but the question is simply whether responders would use a new train service. It would produce a similar result for a new train service to the Moon as it ignores ticket prices, environmental damage, cost to tax payers etc.
3. They buried responses to Q2 in their survey which show only 5% support for EWR to improve public transport services. Nine times as many responders (44%) want more buses, ten times as many (53%) want "Other", and three times as many (15%) want no improvement (presumably mindful that this is not free). Copy of the full survey is attached.
4. They have now admitted that they failed to record the public's questions in their only public engagement of the whole of 2023. They have refused to take any steps to rectify this error.

The following extract by a departing member of staff gives a useful insight into the reality of EWR's internal culture:

This follows on from EWRCo.'s 2022 Savanta survey <https://cambridgeapproaches.org/the-savanta-study-do-people-support-the-east-west-railway/> where they only asked people living near proposed EWR stations whether they thought "improved East West public transport" was a good idea. 71% of people said yes and then EWRCo. concluded that this applied to their railway and to all people living between Oxford and Cambridge even though most people would not be able to easily access the proposed railway.

There is every sign that EWRCo. are not interested in the opinion of the public that they are ultimately there to serve. They organised many drop-in sessions after the confirmation of their route in May 2023 and then admitted that they took no notes of the questions that the public had asked. <https://www.cambridgeindependent.co.uk/news/east-west-railway-company-kept-no-notes-from-drop-in-sessi-9353617/?fbclid=IwAR0-3DwA9EMYJBIX0msmSUDg1wEWwUDy3SBv6UWZzKlk->

[3c9gvpZ0Bufjk_aem_AUiHvdmFc4UyfxHze0j8uOW9oabU8CLec1J3xih59h9_mAOddZVLZzH35R52_PPKWefE](https://www.cambridge-news.com/news/2018/12/13/3c9gvpZ0Bufjk_aem_AUiHvdmFc4UyfxHze0j8uOW9oabU8CLec1J3xih59h9_mAOddZVLZzH35R52_PPKWefE)

Sadly, the misinformation does not stop at public consultation. Their core economic claim is that their railway will in some mysterious way add £103 billion GVA to the regional economy by 2050. After discussion with the Department for Transport, ultimately this claim comes from the "baseline scenario" of a 2016 report by Cambridge Econometrics which, after careful reading, makes no such claim. This is not a matter of opinion, but one of hard logic.

<https://www.camecon.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/CE-SQW-CaMkOx-corridor-report-NIC.pdf>

The review from the former employee is one of several such reviews written over a period of years. Yes, all organisations have upset employees, but not this many and to this degree. We learnt from the NAO EWR investigation that there was a Treasury led inter-departmental EWR Growth Board and asked to see the minutes. The request was refused on the grounds that it was not in the public interest for us to see them. Funnily enough, public opinion on twitter did not seem to agree. See below for coverage of this decision in the Cambridge Press.

See also

<https://heyzine.com/flip-book/13f6930996.html#page/1>



Cons

The organisation has an identity crisis which stems from senior management's relationship with the board and DfT. At one time it wanted to be a fully integrated infrastructure proposer, designer, deliver and operator. Most have now has come to the realisation this will not be supported by government. Unfortunately some managers are still pursuing the target state they were originally aiming for. Whole teams are working on reams of activity which they do not have authority or money to pursue. There is a lack of delegation with everything needing to go through the CEO and Head of Strategy, who themselves have minimal delivery experience. In addition the leadership are poor communicators and fail to inspire members of staff.

The financial control demonstrated is abysmal. Not for the first time, forecast spend with a contractor is looking likely to exceed budget by a significant degree. This is having a detrimental impact on the wider business which is out of money. The business case is dependent on an 'affordable railway' yet the route being proposed will incur significant engineering challenges which have been ignored within estimating to date. There has been a departure of railway experts, and it's likely the pending rounds of redundancies will exacerbate this by decimating the engineering team. This will result in a 'TP Max' organisational structure; further strengthening the position of the technical partner and their ability to bloat budgets whilst meaning the leadership are making uninformed decisions regarding railway engineering.

Advice to Management

Step aside and let Network Rail run the programme. There is no case for EWR Co. any more.

This culture of wanting an independent railway is clearly behind EWR's obsession with six tracks north of Bedford for example. This is despite Mayor Wootton's (Bedford Mayor) study showing that only 27% of current freight paths on MML are actually used and most passenger trains terminate at Bedford.

EWR is avoiding scrutiny at every opportunity, including the secret Treasury led Economic Growth Board, so it is critical to hold them to account at every opportunity pending a full Transport Committee enquiry.

Cllr David Hopkins

2 March 2024