

Meeting with the Open University re Neighbourhood Plan 12.1.16

Present: Lisa Emmanuel, Stuart Copeland, Dorian Holloway

Background & Introductions

SC introduced himself and the background to the NPWG and the development of the plan.

DH informed that he lives locally in Monkston and is aware of Neighbourhood Plans.

SC then shared the journey over the last two years, the view of residents and the timeline being followed leading to referendum in September.

SC re-iterated that we are not against development as long as it is done well. The Plan has to comply with the NPPF and the Local Plan, but we are trying to avoid recent scenarios where development has taken place without infrastructure.

DH asked who has the final say over content in a Neighbourhood Plan

SC re-affirmed it cannot be in contravention of the Local Plan.

LE also outlined the fact that the plan has identified projects and infrastructure needs within the parish on which planning gain will be requested from future development.

OU Land

DH outlined the extent of land owned by the OU, which includes the East Campus in Kent's Hill Park. The land is owned outright including a total of around 26-28 acres of reserve land.

The reserve land is being held for future development if/when expansion is needed.

DH further explained that the OU is in a period of considerable change and are currently centralising their student services, retaining only offices in Belfast, Edinburgh and Manchester.

All other staff will re-locate to MK and will be housed within the existing footprint. There are no plans to develop on the reserve land which is being held in the long term. Over the years they have had enquiries including from a private school and a hotel.

In the past they have tried a start-up business hub, but this was not successful. They are exploring increasing the research side of the business which could potentially lead to partners coming to the site.

The site currently has a few post-grad students on site – 200-300, for between 1-6 months but only to access facilities needed for the course. No teaching takes place on site and no summer camps etc.

There are 4500 staff and they are currently the 3rd or 4th largest employer in MK, behind Network Rail and MKC.

LE asked about parking on site as the walkabouts had shown some issues around the site. DH pointed out that they have planning permission for an additional 190 spaces, after building out 40 they discharged all the planning conditions, which in effect means the consent is held in perpetuity.

The only time that parking is stressed on site is during examination time. The OU promote green travel with 700 car sharing and around 200 regularly cycling.

LE then shared the identified location for a potential redway link identified from the site surveys. DH stated they would be happy to discuss any plans although could not offer any contribution financially. The only stipulation would be for defences against travellers being required as this has been a historical problem at that location.

It was agreed that we would share the draft plan in February as part of the pre-submission consultation.