**Milton Keynes Council Development Review Forum**

**2 March 2020, Civic, Room 1.05/06**

**Forum Meeting Notes**

**Attendees**

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| **NAME** | **ORGANISATION** | **E-MAIL** |
| Neil Sainsbury (Chair) | MKC – Head of Placemaking | neil.sainsbury@milton-keynes.gov.uk |
| Kevin Twigger | KRT Associates | admin@krtassociates.co.uk |
| Cllr Vanessa McPake | MK Council | southcentralld@btinternet.com |
| Cllr John Bint | MK Council | John.bint@milton-keynes.gov.uk |
| Chris Callaway | AECOM | chris.callaway@aecom.com |
| Cllr Keith Mclean | MK Council | Keith.mclean@milton-keynes.gov.uk |
| Mandy Shipp | Wolverton and Greenleys Town Council | mandyshipp@wolvertonandgreenleystowncouncil.gov.uk |
| Dianne Sutton | MK Forum | Dianne.Sutton@mail.com |
| Dave Humphreys | MK Forum | daveghumphreys@gmail.com |
| James Mooney | L+Q Estates | James.mooney@lqestates.co.uk |
| Wes Sedman | Define | wes@wearedefine.com |
| Cllr Amanda Marlow | Milton Keynes Council | Amanda.Marlow@milton-keynes.gov.uk |
| Matthew Clarke | Milton Keynes Council | Matthew.clarke@milton-keynes.gov.uk |
| Tim Skelton | Milton Keynes Forum | colesbourne@btinternet.com |
| David Tooley | Local Democracy Reporter | David.tooley@jpimedia.co.uk |
| Mike LeRoy | MK Forum | mg@leroy.com |

1. The Chair welcomed everyone, did introductions and explained the purpose of the Forum, ie allowing stakeholders an input into the emerging design and layout of schemes as well as raising the quality and profile of design in Milton Keynes. The chair explained that this was the first Forum that had seen Design Codes but that the latter are important as they set the design requirements to which reserve matters must conform with.

**Whitehouse, Calverton Green North and South Western Expansion Area Design Codes**

1. The applicant explained that that the design codes were one of a number of design codes for the Western Expansion Area and unusually were required as part of a s106 requirement and therefore needed to adhere to the adopted WEA Highway Design Code.
2. There were 2 design codes submitted to the Forum (Calverton Green North and South) totally approximately 800 homes as well as a primary school. The site of the codes lies to the south of Calverton Lane (which forms the northern edge of the area defined by the code) with each code covering an area either side of the city street
3. The applicant explained the role, scope and purpose of design noting in particular the mandatory elements which are clearly identified in the code.
4. The applicant explained the context of the site and went through the Placemaking Plan as well as examples of the Street Hierarchy and Key Open Plans as well as the requirements regarding materials and street furniture.
5. In terms of character, the design code is such, that a common character across the whole code area will be established so as to not create a ‘theme park’ although the code requires some variations in character around key spaces and along key frontages.

Questions and Discussion

1. It was requested that in terms of materials there shouldn’t be too much wooden cladding as this this can weather poorly and make the buildings look tired and of a poor quality.

The applicant responded that wooden cladding would never be a predominant material (just supporting) and the emphasis was on quality.

1. It was stated by a stakeholder that the WEA is a suburban setting so there should not be a lot of landmarks while it was recommended that cul-de-sacs should be included as they are a requirement of the New Residential Design Guide SPD. It was also mentioned that ‘shiny’, fragile bollards should not be included as highways won’t adopt them
2. The comment was also made that given experience in the Eastern Expansion Area that if facilities are included that unintentionally might attract a lot of people from a wide area by car eg a skate park, then sufficient parking should be provided and the street leading to the facility should be sufficiently wide to allow the additional traffic generated by the facility to safely access the facility
3. It was said that a proportion of apartments (given they have very little open space) should be located next to the largest open spaces
4. It was noted that the Council is spending a lot of money fixing the problems of the city street in the EEA so the same problems must be avoided in the WEA
5. A stakeholder didn’t like the street cross sections saying they looked too urban
6. A comment was made that Kiln Brook can flood and therefore the development of housing should not be such that this will cause increased flooding of the Brook. It was also questioned what the proposed ponds were for.

The applicant responded that Kiln Brook has been designed to take all the flood water and that there would be no more run off following the development than that running off the current farmland.

1. It was questioned whether the ponds have been designed to comply with the flood authority – Anglian Water. The applicant stated that they do.
2. It was also noted that cul-de-sacs need to be wide enough for all refuse lorries to turn around in.
3. Schools should also go in early and the supporting infrastructure such as bus shelters and disabled infrastructure also needs to go in early – when the school is built. Sufficient drop off parking also needs to be included. Wooden fences should not be included as they get knocked over by children leaning on them.
4. A question was asked that given MKC is part of the Joint Venture in the WEA they could exert more control over the design code.

The applicant explained that a requirement for developers is that they comply with the design code and they could refuse to sell a parcel of land if the developers reserve matters is not in conformity with the design code

1. A comment was made that the design code didn’t appear to provide guidance that really supports MKC’s green agenda – there was no guidance for example on layout of homes to support solar gain and positioning of rooms etc.
2. It was stated that the photos of housing included (which showed a wide variety of materials) didn’t seem to support the statement that a common character with minimal material variety was to occur through the development.

The applicant said they would look to check that the photos of housing do convey the message that a common / uniform character is required.

1. It was commented that the photos of housing did not look very adventurous and portray the design aspirations of MK as a ‘city of design’ that in its early days in particular promoted contemporary housing.

The applicant stated that all photos showed housing that had won design awards.

1. It was asked if bungalows could be included as a requirement especially ‘patio housing’ (L-shaped)
2. A stakeholder commented that the ‘vision’ should be worded such that a distinctive development is created (rather than generic)
3. A comment was made about ‘downsizers’ – is there accommodation for them – but importantly, while this group of people don’t want 4 or 5 bedrooms they still want a big living area / lounge. Downsizers also still want utility rooms!!
4. It was commented that the roads around the edge of the development should match up in character area.

The applicant stated that edge streets as a street typology did have a common character

1. It was stated that given the name of the design code area included the word ‘green’ that the code should build more on the green agenda – for example, the code should say that it requires the greenest new homes!!

The applicant responded that while the design code will require a highly sustainable development the name Calverton Green is derived from the planning history of the area linked to the formal green space (named Calverton Green) that is at the heart of the Calverton Green North design code area

1. It was noted that the original 2004 masterplan for the WEA has lost some its detail while the original masterplan didn’t focus much on the sustainability agenda. It was questioned whether what the design code proposes is line with the 2004 Development Framework
2. It was noted that the street trees need to be the right species – ones that encourage biodiversity and butterflies etc. It was noted that with the increase in densities required that accommodating street trees was becoming increasingly difficult.

The applicant responded and said that part of the problem is that the Highway Code stipulates a 2m wide verge which once parking goes into them, makes it very difficult to include trees. The applicant said elsewhere around the UK where they prepare design codes verges of 3m are proposed which allows parking and street trees to occur.

MKC agreed to speak to the planners to see whether a variation of the 2m verge width to 3m would be acceptable.

1. It was commented that landscaping should feature more prominently in the code
2. It was asked whether deeper foundations were required for homes next to existing trees.

The applicant responded yes to this.