



Update from your City Councillor, Cllr David Hopkins (February 2026) Representing Wavendon at MKCC

On a ward wide level, I have raised the profile of the late delivery and inconsistent delivery of mail from the Royal Mail locally and the need for MKCC to include provision for a designated lorry parking site or sites in its MK2050 local plan.

Glebe Farm School welcomes the Co op 🌟

Glebe Farm School is absolutely thrilled to welcome the brand-new Co-op to Glebe Farm, an addition our community has been eagerly awaiting! The arrival of the store marks an exciting new chapter for our area, bringing convenience, connection, and community spirit right to our doorstep.

Our students were lucky enough to play a special part in the grand opening. They enjoyed an exclusive tour of the store, had the chance to meet the fantastic team, and got a behind the scenes look at how everything comes together. Their enthusiasm and curiosity made the event even more memorable.

Over the past few weeks, it has been a real pleasure getting to know Jake, the store manager. Together, we've begun exploring meaningful ways to collaborate and support our community. It's clear that this partnership will bring even more warmth, connection, and support to Glebe Farm, values that truly shine at the heart of Co-op.

And this is only the beginning!

🌟 Watch this space – the school has lots of exciting plans in store, including:

- Support for the foodbank
- Contributions to the community fridge
- Joint community engagement events

We can't wait to see how this partnership grows and the positive impact it will bring to everyone in Glebe Farm. Here's to new beginnings and stronger community ties!



Local Transport Plan 5 Consultation

Our Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5) consultation is now live at: [Have Your Say Today - MK Transport Conversation - Commonplace](#) and will run until 31 March.

LTP5 sets out Milton Keynes City Council's transport priorities and policies for the next 10–15 years, as the City continues to grow. A short, easy to read consultation summary is available on the engagement website and forms the basis of the stakeholder questions. The full draft LTP5 will also be available for those who wish to explore data, maps and more detailed background information. Please note however, that as it is a draft document it may be unavailable for short periods whilst being updated.

LTP5 is a high level 'parent' strategy supported by more detailed documents such as the Bus Service Improvement Plan, Local Cycling & Walking Implementation Plan, and Highway Asset Management Plan.

Briefings for Parish, Town and Community Councils will take place on:

- Tuesday 17 February, 18:00–19:30 (Teams)
- Thursday 5 March, 18:00–19:30 (Teams)

AREAS	BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E	BAND F	BAND G	BAND H
Bow Brickhill (PC)	1,351.15	1,576.35	1,801.54	2,026.74	2,477.12	2,927.51	3,377.89	4,053.48
Little Brickhill (PC)	1,305.89	1,523.55	1,741.19	1,958.85	2,394.15	2,829.45	3,264.74	3,917.70
Walton (PC)	1,303.60	1,520.88	1,738.14	1,955.42	2,389.95	2,824.49	3,259.02	3,910.84
Wavendon (PC)	1,289.28	1,504.18	1,719.04	1,933.94	2,363.70	2,793.46	3,223.22	3,867.88
Woburn Sands (TC)	1,319.34	1,539.24	1,759.12	1,979.03	2,418.81	2,858.59	3,298.37	3,958.06

***The table above shows the 2026/27 BASIC AMOUNT OF COUNCIL TAX**

NOTE: Basic Amount of Council Tax includes parish precepts but excludes Police and Fire Authority precept

What Are Your Thoughts on Crime?

Each year MKCC ask local people to give us their thoughts about crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the annual Community Safety Survey.

<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=APcl1dKKd0aPljbhwlL6diqRzlsnJBxKvA4COslck6BUNUMxSFhGRjdJWFk1RktSRDRBUFNHQjBOUSQIQCN0PWcu&route=shorturl>

MK Together (the MKCC partnership with police and other organisations) would appreciate you taking a couple of minutes to take part. Previously, feedback has helped MKCC secure funding to enhance safety in the city centre, as well as making changes to how we manage ASB cases to give victims faster support. The survey closes on 13 March.

Awestruck Audiences Share Love for School-production Success!

This half-term at Glebe Farm School, the Performing Arts department have been delighted to finally perform their production of Disney's Frozen Jr to sell-out audiences.

It is safe to say that the staff team are incredibly proud of their young cast and crew. It has been an intense process from auditions in September until now. The students have always maintained focus and dedication to the show.

The support from the local community has been overwhelming, with many patrons raving about the show afterwards. Many said that it hugely exceeded expectations and that the students were incredibly talented.

We had the incredible pleasure of welcoming original West End Elsa, Jenna Lee James to watch the show and meet the cast afterwards. It was wonderful to hear her praising the students and inspiring them to follow their dreams of being in the West End too one day.

We are saddened to see this production come to an end, but very excited to see what Glebe Farm school bring to the stage next! Keep your eyes peeled.



*Disney's Frozen Jr Music & Lyrics by Kristen Anderson-Lopez & Robert Lopez, Book by Jennifer Lee. Based on the Disney film written by Jennifer Lee and directed by Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee. The original Broadway production of Frozen was directed by Michael Grandage and produced by Disney Theatrical Productions

Disney's Frozen JR. is presented through special arrangement with, and all authorized materials are supplied by Music Theatre International, New York, NY212-541-4684 mtishows.com .

Levante Gate in Little Brickhill



PLN/2026/0087 - Scoping request under the

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations 2017 relating to construction of up to 1,375 dwellings, a primary school, and local centre at Levante Gate, Watling Street, Little Brickhill.

Link to view the planning application below. **The Target Decision Date is 19/2/2026**

<https://www.be.milton-keynes.gov.uk/pr/s/detail/a0IWS000003RaNR>

- MKCC Planning Officer - Lakeisha Peacock
- Note: A scoping request under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations 2017 (Regulation 15) is a submission by a developer to the Local Planning

Authority (LPA) seeking a formal "Scoping Opinion." This opinion identifies the key environmental topics, potential impacts, and level of detail that must be included in the Environmental Statement (ES) for a proposed project.

Key aspects of a Scoping Request:

- Purpose: To define the scope of the assessment, ensuring the EIA focuses on relevant impacts (e.g., noise, ecology, traffic) and avoids unnecessary information.
- Requirements: Must include a map identifying the land, a description of the development's nature and purpose, and an explanation of the potential significant environmental effects.
- Process & Timescales: The LPA must consult statutory bodies (e.g., Natural England, Environment Agency) and provide a scoping opinion, usually within 5 weeks of the request.
- Outcome: The resulting Scoping Opinion guides the developer in preparing the ES, though it does not prevent the authority from asking for additional information later.
- This process is critical for EIA development to ensure the planning application is robust.

Steps for Responding to a Scoping Request:

- Review the Scoping Report: Examine the applicant's proposed scope, which must include a plan, project description, and anticipated environmental effects.
- Identify Key Impacts: Determine if all significant environmental features likely to be affected have been included, as per Regulations 15(6) and 18.

Formulate the Response:

- Scope In/Out Topics: Explicitly list which environmental topics (e.g., biodiversity, traffic, noise) must be "scoped in" for detailed assessment and which can be "scoped out" with justification.
- Specify Methodology: Advise on the expected methodologies, guidance, and best practices to be used.
- Request Data: Highlight any missing baseline data or specific local environmental information that must be included.
- Consultation: If you are a statutory consultation body (e.g., Environment Agency, Natural England), provide specialized input on risks in your remit.
- Submit within Timeframes: Ensure the response is sent within the statutory 5-week period (or 42 days for NSIPs).

Key Considerations

- Alternatives: Ensure the applicant has outlined the main alternatives studied.
- Expertise: Confirm that the assessment will be carried out by competent experts.
- Cumulative Effects: Ensure the scope covers potential cumulative impacts with other projects.

- Flexibility: Note that providing a scoping opinion does not preclude requesting additional information later.



Snippets

Reported: Fly Tipping

The Environmental Crime officer at MKCC has responded as set out below. Both I and the Admin Parish Clerk have met with him (along with the Parish Clerk) to discuss the issues 'on site'.


We currently have a contract that runs up until June 2026. We will be carrying out a tender exercise for a new contract which we will start to look at early in 2026. The current contractor provides us with a managed service; he is not a sole CCTV supplier. He does provide both covert and overt cameras to us and these are viewed (not monitored 24/7) by a team he has working for him. If an offence is committed, he will interrogate the cameras and see whether it has been captured and what evidence is available. This will then be packaged up and provided to us for us to take forward.

He does supply this same service to other Wards and Parishes in the MK area as we have given permission for him to do so. None of this fall under the main MKCC contract, it is done on an individual basis. He doesn't sell or provide cameras alone. I have not seen solar power cameras, but I know that his opinion is that they are not what they claim to be. For instance, the dark early nights will not allow enough charge for them to run during the nights of the winter. The cameras that he provides are powered by mains from lamp posts and I know that we have deployed our own cameras there before. It is a large area and difficult to monitor with the limited resources that we have available.

The ability of CCTV is somewhat exaggerated and needs to be managed correctly or it is a waste of money. There are a lot of companies out there who will sell you a few cameras and tell you that they will capture everything, I assure you they don't.

I am happy to meet with you and the Parish to have a chat or put you in touch with our supplier for a chat.

Environmental Crime Manager - Environmental Crime Unit



Theydon Avenue Woburn Sands

19th February 2026 9:30am 4:30pm

Theydon Avenue, Woburn Sands (Between 9:30am and 4:30pm) - Closed for the whole entirety.

Whilst the above closure is in place the alternative route will be via Station Road and The Leys (and vice versa).

<https://one.network/?GB148386861>



Good News

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

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



Milton Keynes Community Foundation (MKCF) launched the 13th edition of its annual Vital Signs MK report at Unity Place.

Vital Signs MK provides clear, evidence-based insight into local needs and takes a pulse of the city's health across 10 major themes. Themes include Poverty and Disadvantage, Environment, Health and Wellbeing, Housing, Transport, and Crime and Safety. This year, the Foundation conducted its own survey of residents in Milton Keynes, ran by Opinium, to provide an authentic voice on everyday life in the city.

The 2026 report findings reveal a familiar story: Milton Keynes has ambition, innovation and opportunity, yet many residents are being left behind.

In housing, Milton Keynes ranks in the bottom 7% of local authority districts for 'barriers to housing and services' (IMD 2025), measuring difficulties accessing affordable housing and essential services.

Although homes are being built at pace - an average of 2,110 new homes delivered each year - exceeding the government's target of 1,720, the situation is far more complex.

On paper, affordability looks strong: the city ranks eighth of 296 local authorities, with 32% affordable housing across private developments. But affordable homes are increasingly pushed out

of the city centre, and in Central Milton Keynes last year, developments delivered just 7% of affordable housing.

Crime and safety remain a major concern. In the survey conducted by MKCF, 54% of residents said levels of crime are the top thing they wanted to see improved. Women report deeper concern: 52% believe crime is worsening, compared with 34% of men.

Three-quarters of residents feel that the sense of community/belonging is getting better or staying the same.

86% of adults agreed that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.

Further Findings:

Transport

Public transport is limited in estates outside the city centre, placing additional financial strain on low-income families.

Reliance on taxis highlights deep inequality: 26% of residents in the most deprived areas rely on taxis as a main mode of transport, compared with 11% in the most affluent areas.

Limited access to nearby shops forces many households to choose between expensive convenience stores or costly taxi trips to supermarkets.

Work and Local Economy

Milton Keynes ranks 4th for new economy firms, 8th for average weekly earnings, and 3rd for start-up rate nationally.

76% of residents feel confident they have the skills for a good job.

Environment

85% of residents say they have good access to nature.

75% report that spending time in green spaces positively supports their wellbeing.

The 2026 Vital Signs MK Report is now available at:

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



Mandatory Parking Zones for E-Bike and E-Scooter Hire

From 29 January, the rollout of Mandatory Parking Zones (MPZs) for e-bike and e-scooter hire schemes began across Milton Keynes. MPZs are locations where users can go to pick up or leave their e-bikes and e-scooters. Users will know where these locations are from the Lime or Dott app they are using.

Previously the e-scooter and e-bikes could be picked up and left after journeys using a 'free-floating' system which means they could be left at any place within the operational area, causing some complaints about obstructions, especially if the e-bike or e-scooter had accidentally fallen over.

The new practice will be monitored by the two operators and users will continue to be required to leave the vehicles upright and take a photo before they can 'End Ride'. Users who park obstructively will be warned and may be fined. Patrollers will also visit locations to tidy vehicles.

These new locations will be monitored over the next two-three months to make sure that they are the right spots for both users and residents. After this initial phase, we'll look at putting some permanent markings to show the MPZ locations such as racks or painted markings, depending on usage, budget and available space.

For access to an embargoed copy of the map of all the MPZ locations, or to provide feedback on the suitability of sites / suggesting alternative sites, please contact the team at cycling@milton-keynes.gov.uk.

To report issues with the Lime or Dott e-bike or e-scooter equipment, please report it directly using the details below.

Lime: help-miltonkeynes@li.me | Dott: mk-ops@ridedott.com for direct contact (Councillors / Clerks): del.osullivan@ridedott.com



East West Rail



East West Railway Company (EWR Co) has joined key infrastructure providers to discuss with Government how the new Planning and Infrastructure Act will help deliver critical infrastructure more quickly.

The new Act became law just before Christmas and aims to streamline the planning system, accelerating the construction of new railways, roads, homes and other pieces of major infrastructure.

East West Rail is set to deliver new rail infrastructure between Oxford and Cambridge, improving connectivity through Milton Keynes and Bedford, and creating a regional corridor aimed to be at the centre of UK economic growth.

For East West Rail, the Act will mean that the economic and social benefits of the new railway will be felt by communities sooner due to the more streamlined planning system.

Crucially, the new legislation will also improve the way major projects such as East West Rail engage with the public during the planning process – enabling EWR Co to deliver more localised targeted engagement with communities and key stakeholders as the designs for the railway develop.

As a result, East West Rail is launching a series of Design Update Sessions which begin this week, where specific proposals are being discussed with communities in a more targeted, localised approach.

The new legislation also removes the requirement for a Statutory Consultation requirement before submitting an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to build the railway. However, EWR Co will still carry out a full route-wide consultation this Spring as planned, but this will now be a non-statutory consultation informed by the changes in the new Act.

“We had a really productive discussion about how we implement the new Planning and Infrastructure Act to maximise its benefits - both to speed up the opening of EWR by making the planning process simpler and quicker, and also to make sure local communities get high quality ongoing engagement rather than just a single statutory consultation,” said Will Gallagher, Chief Strategy Officer at EWR Co.

“As EWR is one of the first projects to operate under the new legislation, ministers were keen to hear about our progress.”

EWR Press Release

<https://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment>

Although after the brief blast of cold weather after Christmas it has been comparatively mild, there is plenty of winter left to come and residents may get **Cold Weather Payments** if they are receiving certain benefits or Support for Mortgage Interest.

If you're eligible, you'll get these payments automatically. You do not need to apply, but you may need to tell Jobcentre Plus if you have a baby or if a child under 5 comes to live with you.

The payments do not affect your other benefits.

You'll get a payment if the average temperature in your area is recorded as, or forecast to be, zero degrees Celsius or below over 7 consecutive days.

You'll get £25 for each 7-day period of very cold weather between 1 November 2025 and 31 March 2026.

Find out if the weather where you live means you may get a payment.

Check a postcode in England or Wales. <https://coldweatherpayments.dwp.gov.uk/>



60  **ONE YEAR TO GO** **MK** **Countdown to 60**

Milton Keynes was officially designated as a New Town on 23 January 1967, and last week we marked the one-year countdown to the city's 60th anniversary. We're working on a programme of events for next year and are inviting residents and groups to suggest local activities that could help bring communities together. The place to add ideas is www.mk60.uk/get-involved.



New NPPF Webinar

Just before Christmas, the Government published proposed reforms and other changes to the planning system via a new National Planning Policy Framework. These changes are subject to consultation which closes on 10 March 2026.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-proposed-reforms-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>

The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) will be holding a FREE webinar for Councillors to discuss the draft National Planning Policy Framework on 21 January 2026 10.00 - 12.00. For more information and to book a place click here. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/councillors-nppf-webinar-jan-2026-tickets-1978105063494?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

Consultation description <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/housing-sec-pledges-to-go-further-than-ever-before-to-hit-15-million-homes>

This consultation seeks views on a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). A draft NPPF has been published alongside this consultation and both documents should be read together.

The government is also seeking views on:

- data centres and onsite energy generation
- standardised inputs in viability assessments
- reforming site thresholds



Bin Collections in Wavendon Parish

Collection date	Bin/sack collection
Wednesday 18 February	Black, blue and green
Wednesday 25 February	Black, red and green

Milton Keynes fastest growing city for second year

Milton Keynes is once again named in the Cities Outlook 2026 report as UK's fastest growing city for housing growth. <https://www.centreforcities.org/publication/cities-outlook-2026/>

The report also highlights how Milton Keynes ranks highly for innovation, employment, population growth, business stock and productivity — placing the city firmly within the top tier nationally across these indicators. It's also one of the few cities where long term economic growth has gone hand in hand with rising living standards, something that hasn't been the case everywhere in the UK. A strong mix of businesses, good access to jobs and ongoing investment in skills and infrastructure all contribute to this performance.



Housing growth remains a standout area. Milton Keynes recorded one of the highest increases in housing stock nationally, with growth of 1.8% between 2023 and 2024, reflecting the city's ability to keep pace with demand while continuing to plan for the future. The findings also highlight the city's capacity for further growth, supported by ongoing development and a long-term approach to planning and infrastructure. It's a clear signal that Milton Keynes is well positioned to continue its upward path in the years ahead.

A great achievement for our city — and a strong reflection of the work taking place across Milton Keynes to support sustainable, long-term success.



● **Winter Phishing**

The new year and winter is a prime time for cybercriminals to launch phishing attacks. Remain vigilant, if you have any doubts about a message or links, don't engage and report it!

https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/UKMK/2024/11/22/file_attachments/3080148/Phishing-attacks-dealing-suspicious-emails-infographic.pdf

Phishing is where hackers try to steal your money or identity by getting you to reveal personal information such as credit card numbers, bank information, or passwords on websites that pretend to be legitimate. The NCSC has highlighted below what may stand out in a phishing email.

- Subject marked with [EXT] which shows it's coming from an external address
- Wrong email address listed
- Unusual sending time
- Generates warning or caution message
- The address may be unusual or spelled wrongly
- Poor English/grammar

If you're worried about an email, don't reply or click on links and do send it to IT to check out. See the National Cyber Security Centre poster for more advice on phishing.

https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/UKMK/2024/11/22/file_attachments/3080148/Phishing-attacks-dealing-suspicious-emails-infographic.pdf



- **Proposed Submission (Regulation 19) MK City Plan 2050 consultation**

In advance of formal notifications being sent, MKCC Planning team has written to let residents know that due to a technical issue, some consultees did not receive an email notification at the start of the Proposed Submission (Regulation 19) MK City Plan 2050 consultation that began on 7 November and ran until 20 February .

To make sure everyone has a fair and equal opportunity to comment, all consultees will be able to take part in a further six-week consultation period, which starts on Monday 5 January and runs until 16 February 2026. We are notifying you of this in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

If you have already submitted comments and do not wish to add to or change them, you do not need to take any action. If you have not already made any comments or have made comments but wish to change them, you can do so. Please make it clear if any submission replaces a previous one. All comments must be received by 5.30pm on 16 February 2026.



Thames Valley Police Cuts - The police settlement announced by Government just before Christmas confirmed Thames Valley Police's core funding will be £8.8m less than expected, barely covering the costs of inflation and pay increases.

Police and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Barber said: "This settlement is terrible news for Thames Valley Police. While the Government push headlines claiming they are investing more in policing the harsh reality is that yesterday's settlement means nearly £9m less than we were expecting. Even with the significant burden the Government are looking to pass on to local council taxpayers this still leaves a huge gap in our funding plans for policing next year. I am appalled by the way the Government has handled this process which leaves Forces struggling to balance budgets and is in complete contradiction to the Government's own Comprehensive Spending Review.

"I have already met with the Chief Constable and will be working over the Christmas period to consider how we can still set the budget in the New Year which will continue to prioritise the protection of front-line services. It will be challenging to balance the budget going forward. It is likely to mean delaying or cancelling future spending plans as well as drawing down our reserves sooner than anticipated rather than finding additional productivity savings above what the force has already planned.

"Sound financial planning means that Thames Valley is in a stronger position than many police forces. I am confident that we will be able to amend our plans to ensure that we can maintain frontline policing; these cuts from the Home Office will inevitably have a long-term impact unless the Government think again.

"This appalling situation reinforces the urgent need for a review of the police funding formula which is outdated and becoming more unsustainable every year."

The PCC's survey asking residents to share their views on which priority areas they would like to see the policing element of council tax (the precept) used for in the 2026/27 budget will be open until 12pm (noon) on Friday 2nd January. The survey can be completed at <https://survey.alchemer.eu/s3/90503915/OPCC-public-consultation> or by visiting the PCC website.



Centre for Ageing Better Age Friendly

Town & Parish Councils (see attached document circulated to LBPC members)

This guide demonstrates the important role of town and parish councils in creating age-friendly communities and gives examples from local councils who are already leading the way.

The guide for towns and parishes, endorsed by both the National Association of Local Councils and Society of Local Council Clerks, is aimed at anyone working in town and parish councils, as well as those who are working with them.

The guide covers:

- How town and parish councils' responsibilities, activities and influencing roles can be applied to make the built and social environments of towns and parishes more age-friendly
- Example case studies from 21 town and parish councils of age-friendly practice in action
- Mapping and action planning tools to help town and parish councils take the first step.

Building an age-friendly town or parish requires coordinated efforts between local older people, the local council and principal authorities, health services, transport providers, businesses, and voluntary organisations.

Town and parish councils have an important role to play, as they are uniquely positioned to facilitate or support these partnerships and advocate for decisions that enhance the wellbeing of their communities. This guide is not only for those who work in towns and parish councils but also those who would like to work with councils.

This guide is grounded in the WHO Eight Domains of Age-friendly Communities, which outline key areas of community life that enable people to age well. It highlights the diverse range of stakeholders essential to making towns and parishes age friendly.

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241547307>

Designed for town and parish councils in England, the guide explores how their statutory duties, powers, and influence can be aligned with the eight domains. The age-friendly activities wheel in this guide offers a practical framework to help councils consider, expand, and celebrate age-friendly initiatives in their local areas.

To support councils in their journey toward becoming age-friendly communities, the guide includes examples of age-friendly activities, case studies and relevant resources for each domain. For more insights across different tiers of local government, see Centre for Ageing Better's Age-friendly Handbook <https://ageing-better.org.uk/resources/age-friendly-policy-handbook>



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

The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government issued a Special Development Order (SDO) for the complex to be constructed in Kempston Hardwick, close to Bedford.

Universal had sought planning permission through the SDO, which allowed the government to approve the project directly and bypass standard local planning procedures. The entertainment company said the "transformative" project was expected to attract more than eight million visitors a year and could open by 2031.

'James Bond and Paddington'

The site will be built on a former brickworks site and was chosen for its nearby transport links, including rail services and London Luton Airport.

Planning documents released in July showed that structures reaching up to 377ft (115m) were proposed for the site, making them the tallest rides in Europe.

About 55,000 visitors are expected on peak days.

The plans showed that most structures at the park would range between 20m and 30m, with some taller structures creating a skyline with "visual interest".

It would also include parking for more than 7,000 cars, additional spaces for hundreds of people to arrive by coach and bicycle and an entry plaza.

Details of the rides have not been released, but a source close to the project told the BBC that James Bond, Paddington and The Lord of the Rings-themed attractions could feature.

Page Thompson, president of new ventures, Universal Destinations & Experiences, said: "I want to express my sincere appreciation for the continued engagement from Bedford and the various communities surrounding our site, as well as the many other national and local stakeholders who have provided feedback and expressed such enthusiasm on the transformative nature of our project."

A government spokesman said the planning permission was "subject to conditions and limitations".

They added that Steve Reed, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, "gave proper and impartial consideration to the planning merits" and made the decision on "the evidence and advice in front of him at the time".

Bedford Borough Council said the park would provide £50bn of "economic benefit to the economy" and followed several years of close collaboration between Universal, councillors and council staff.

Adam Zerny, the independent council leader of Central Bedfordshire Council, said it would bring "significant benefits to our area, creating new jobs and increasing income for many local businesses".

Universal said it was "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."

Work to build a new railway station at Wixams started in August 2024, but it was put on hold to allow a bigger station to be built to accommodate Universal.

Last month, East West Rail Company (EWR Co) said a new railway station would be built to serve the park in Stewartby.

National Highways confirmed there would be upgrades to the transport network in the area, which would include a new link road off the A421.

Zerny said: "I have met with Universal to discuss the implications for our area, and I am encouraged by the acknowledgement that improvements to local road infrastructure will be necessary."

While some residents welcomed the plans and the prospect of more jobs, others, including some living close to the site in Manor Road, Kempston Hardwick, told the BBC they had not been informed about what would happen to their homes.

In July, they said they had not received confirmed offers of compensation even though their properties were earmarked for demolition in Universal's plans to transform the former brickworks site.

Blake Stephenson, the Conservative MP for Mid Bedfordshire, said he would "work closely with residents, the council, and Universal Studios as the project moves forward, to ensure the infrastructure our communities need is delivered so that we can reap the rewards of this exciting development".

He welcomed the project and said it would "bring thousands of jobs" as well as exciting new opportunities for young people, and "a major boost for local businesses and tourism".

Other Universal Studios news includes

- What happens when eight million Universal visitors need the loo?
- The announced investment exceeds US\$63 billion, placing it among the largest projects in the history of the entertainment industry on the continent. Beyond its direct economic impact, the development is expected to transform the Bedford region into an unprecedented centre for tourism and urban growth.

- The choice of Bedford as the location is based on several key factors: Its proximity to London, the availability of large, well-connected land areas, and the vision of creating an integrated complex that goes beyond a conventional amusement park. The master plan includes a main park with multiple themed zones inspired by iconic Universal franchises — such as Jurassic Park, Harry Potter, Minions, and Fast & Furious — as well as additional leisure areas, retail spaces, restaurants, and complementary services.



Protecting the Safety of Councillors (City and Town and Parish)

- New Guidance

The LGA has published new guidance on Operation Ford, outlining strengthened measures to protect the safety of councillors. The guidance explains how dedicated Force Elected Official Advisers can provide security support through advice and guidance. It also sets out how ordinary policing of crime against elections takes place alongside this new provision. The resource aims to clarify the role of these new operatives and provide councillors with all the information they need to utilise them effectively.

Operation Ford and policing crime against elected members - new guidance

<https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/must-know-operation-ford-and-policing-crime-against-elected-members>



London Northwestern Railway and West Midlands Railway services return to public ownership From 1 February 2026, passengers who travel with London Northwestern Railway and West Midlands Railway are impacted.

- Services to return to public ownership this Sunday (1 February 2026), bringing the country one step closer to a unified rail system under Great British Railways
- more than 8,500 publicly owned rail services are now running daily, helping over 660 million passengers get where they need to go each year
- these services are powering Britain's economy, linking people to jobs and education while strengthening local economies across the Midlands and from Liverpool to London

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

- Mon 09 February 2026 (2:30 PM - 4:00 PM): Crime Prevention Stand, 1A Bolebec Avenue, Eagles Farm South, Milton Keynes.
- Mon 23 February 2026 (2:30 PM - 4:00 PM): Crime Prevention Stand, Fyfield Barrow, Walnut Tree, Milton Keynes.
- 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, Woburn Sands.**

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

Cllr David Hopkins – Representing Wavendon at MKCC

February 2026