

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Motion 3

Is Milton Keynes Killing Me?

Councillor D Hopkins (4 October 2023)

“1. That this Council notes that:

- a) Over the last 10 years the area of Wavendon and Woburn Sands has seen continual construction activity, with 9 major developments leading to the rise in the number of dwellings in Wavendon Parish increasing from approx. 350 to more than 3100 (with many more under construction) and with the expectation that as many of 4000 will be constructed in the so-called SEMK urban expansion area over the coming decade. As a result, residents in the area have endured almost continuous exposure to construction and its impacts.
- b) The physical environment is a key determinant of health. Construction activity can lead to relatively large changes in the physical environment in short periods of time. However, the impacts of construction activity on health outcomes are complex and are often overlooked in the planning process. Existing evidence of the way in which continual exposure to construction activity may result in health impacts is relatively limited.
- c) Through evaluation of conversations and observations from residents, local teaching staff and contractors and traders, it is clear that construction activity affects the lives of residents in Wavendon parish in particular. However, it is also reasonable to assume this impacts the lives of residents across the city area. As construction activity has increased across the area, there have been increases in complaints about dust, noise, vibration, vehicle movements and accidents.
- d) It is common to park in an area where construction is underway and to return to a vehicle within one or two hours to find it covered with dust. This is especially concerning when visiting schools such as St Marys CoE Primary or Glebe Farm Combined which are surrounded by ongoing residential developments under construction and where pupils, teaching staff and local residents have no choice other than to breath in these particles.
- e) Although there are a number of mitigation measures that are already put in place to lessen the impact of construction on local residents, it is clear that many residents in Wavendon have continued to feel the adverse effects of construction activity, in particular the continual breathing in of often microscopic particles of dust. Going forward, as construction in the area (and in other areas of MKCC) is likely to continue at a similar scale, continued emphasis must be placed on further measures that can be put in place to mitigate the adverse effects that many local residents have highlighted.

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- f) According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) definition in 1948 stated that *“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”* Demolition and construction activity can lead to relatively large changes in the physical environment in short periods of time. And that whilst construction activity enables the evolution in the built environment necessary to support sustainable and healthy livelihoods it can also result in sudden changes in noise, pollution, dust and vibration that have knock-on impacts on health outcomes. Whilst construction activity is temporary, these changes can result in lasting effects on human health.
2. That this Council believes that:
 - a) Residents across MK do ‘their bit’ in supporting much needed housebuilding but it seems to fall on the same communities, time and time again to take the burden and impacts of such building, year in, year out. Residents should have more consistent access to construction information and noise and pollution monitoring data and be made fully aware of the health and well-being impacts construction has on existing communities.
 - b) The use of mitigation measures differs widely between construction sites. Best practise should be adopted consistently across all sites. However, currently, not all negative impacts can be fully avoided nor mitigated. Further appraisal, monitoring and constant review is required.
 - c) Evaluation of the cumulative impact of development on health outcomes is a relatively new topic. MKCC (as one of the country’s fastest expanding areas) needs to be at the forefront of developing policy and practices to address the health impacts of development, including through the establishment of a MKCC Development Coordination Team (possibly funded by 106/Tariff monies). What is clear through discussion with local residents is that the cumulative impact of construction can have large impacts on health, often beyond those identified by existing Health Impact Assessment tools and policy led planning deliverables.
 3. That this Council resolves to ask the executive:
 - a) To commission a report into the impacts of construction on existing communities, and those early movers into such expanding developments. In effect, to source and commission an independent socio-economic and health consultancy specialising in understanding the impact of development and infrastructure on social, economic and health outcomes.
 - b) That the findings of the consultancy report should contribute to the developing evidence base towards the local plan Plan:MK 2 (MK2050).

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- c) That, subject to an appropriate evidence base, consideration be given to the remaining undeveloped area on the south east of Milton Keynes (located within the parishes of Wavendon and Woburn Sands) being granted a planning holiday where any future growth is only phased at the latter end of the PlanMK: 2 (MK2050) period, in effect to be undertaken no earlier than the mid 2040's."