

## **NEW COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

**Summary:** Following discussions with Milton Keynes City Council, to provide the Council with an update on new community facilities in Whitehouse, namely the temporary shop, the new community meeting place and allotment site.

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### **1.0 Temporary Shop**

- 1.1 A temporary rapid retail unit is due to be constructed in Whitehouse and will be in operation until the construction of the High Street and a permanent retail unit is available.
- 1.2 The shop location was due to be located on Barrosa Way, but has now changed back to its original location, opposite the Whitehouse Medical Centre.
- 1.3 L&Q will be responsible for the rapid retail unit and are likely to submit a planning application to Milton Keynes City Council within the next two weeks.
- 1.4 The shortest time from submission of a planning permission to a decision being made, is 8 weeks. The planning application will be subject to neighbour notification and public consultation and any objections received to the planning application will delay provision of a temporary shop facility. If no objections are received, the decision to permit the application will be delegated to the Head of Planning and subject to the planning application being submitted in the next couple of weeks, permission for a temporary shop may be granted by mid-December 2023. L&Q have been working with MKCC on the provision of a temporary shop, so it is unlikely that planning permission will be refused.
- 1.5 Rapid Retail are ready to deploy and can construct their retail units very quickly.
- 1.6 It is feasible that the retail unit could be up and running by Christmas, depending on the retailer's ability to stock / staff the unit.
- 1.7 Initial applications received from prospective retailers were considered by L&Q and asked to complete a questionnaire. Shortlisted retailers will meet with representatives from both MKCC and Whitehouse Community Council for them to consider which retailer would provide the best service to meet the needs of residents. They will then make their recommendation to L&Q.

### **2.0 Community Meeting Place**

- 2.1 The new community meeting place is still on track for completion and opening by end of February 2024.
- 2.2 Whitehouse Community Council will take ownership of the community meeting place once construction is completed. Until then, Milton Keynes Council will

project managing the construction. The transfer of ownership will be agreed by MKCC by delegated decision on 5 December 2023.

- 2.3 Whitehouse Community Council are in discussion with Milton Keynes City Council about internal operational matters to ensure that the right infrastructure is in place at the time of opening. WHCC has also been discussing internal finishes.

### **3.0 Allotment Site**

- 3.1 It was hoped that the allotment site would be up and running by October 2023 but delays mean that the allotment site is now likely to open after Christmas.
- 3.2 The car park and fencing at the allotment site is complete and contractors are on site developing the layout and installing ridings and water supply.
- 3.3 Once the construction of the allotment site is complete, the site will be transferred from Milton Keynes Council to Whitehouse Community Council.
- 3.4 The track that runs along the allotment site will also come into the ownership of Whitehouse Community Council and it should be able to take small vehicle weight so that tenants whose plots are located quite a way from the car park, could transport equipment to their plot as required. The track is only 4m wide and there is no turning circle so vehicles would need to reverse to exit the track. The materials used for the track are not highway standard and is often used for additional or overspill parking. It will need replacing about every 30 years depending on level of use.
- 3.5 WHCC is currently looking for a contractor to carry out regular landscape maintenance at the site.
- 3.6 Residents that have been allocated an allotment plot will be informed of the delay and the new expected timetable.