

LANDSCAPING ON ADOPTED HIGHWAY

Summary: To provide an update on landscaping matters on Milton Keynes City Council Adopted Highway.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In 2023, the verges in Whitehouse were in a state of neglect. Once the highways had been adopted by Milton Keynes Council, this neglect resulted in weed-filled verges, vastly impacting on the look and feel of this new development.
- 1.2 There were a couple of reasons for this:
 - (a) The work on the verges and hard-standings were not picked up by the contractor which meant that work essential pruning works were missed and works that should have taken place had not started.
 - (b) Milton Keynes City Council as part of its sustainability agenda, implemented an MK-wide policy not to use herbicide (Glycocate) in the summer (Note: Using herbicide in the winter is not as effective as summer use). This was a policy adopted by many local authorities throughout the county.
- 1.3 The impact of the decision not to use herbicide was felt MK-wide, but the adopted areas in Whitehouse were also impacted by the lack of any maintenance at all during this time.

2.0 WORKS CURRENTLY SCHEDULED FOR WHITEHOUSE

- 2.1 By the time this meeting takes place, the contractor will have started spot spraying in the Whitehouse area and will start to be identify the areas where hand-weeding is required.
- 2.2 Some of the worst landscaping areas in Whitehouse is along Vaynol Way, Heren Lane and Angus Way. This has been highlighted to MKCC and an assurance has been given that those areas will be investigated and works carried out where appropriate. See map below.



3.0 FUTURE WORKS IN WHITEHOUSE

3.1 MKCC will be commencing an MK-wide landscaping trial in Spring 2024. This involves comparing three areas in MK where in one area, the contractors will use herbicide; in another area, they will employ the use of less effective organic materials along with hand-weeding, and the third area will be maintained as at present.

3.2 Works with the use of herbicide would be used in the following areas:

Whitehouse
Two Mile Ash
Pennylands
Neath Hill

3.3 Whitehouse had not originally been identified as an area for herbicide works, but MKCC felt that due of the uniqueness of the area and because of the landscaping issues already experienced, it consider it an appropriate area to include in the trial.

3.4 The trial will take place from Spring and over the summer period. A report will then be received by MKCC's Cabinet in September and recommendations will then be made about a programme of improvement works and whether to include more hand-weeding in the contract, which will incur much cost, or to revert to the use of herbicides, where appropriate.

3.5 The use of herbicide will likely improve the area instantaneously and so improvements are likely to be seen in the Whitehouse area from Spring this year.

4.0 NEW AREAS IN WHITEHOUSE

4.1 The area at Calverton Lane (just off Watling Street) has now been adopted. This is the untidy area opposite the large bund which does not give a good impression as people enter the Whitehouse area. MKCC has given an assurance that this area will be picked up by the contractors and landscaping works will now commence there as part of the trial.

