

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE

30 JULY 2014

RESPONSE FROM CABINET / RESPONSIBLE CABINET MEMBER ON ANY RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE / REVIEW GROUPS**Author: Lesley Sung (Overview & Scrutiny Officer)****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To report to the Select Committee any comments made by the Cabinet or responsible Cabinet Member in response to any recommendations made by the Select Committee.

2. Referral to Cabinet 12th March 2013 – Flood & Water Management

- 2.1 Following recommendations made by this Select Committee on the Council's Flood and Water Management, at its meeting on 11 February 2014, the Cabinet considered the recommendations on 12 March 2014 and recorded the following (Minute C156 refers):

2.2 FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT - REFERRAL FROM ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE: 11 FEBRUARY 2014

The Cabinet considered a referral from the meeting of the Environment and Transport Select Committee held on 11 February 2014, which was present by Councillor Tallack, Chair of the Select Committee and was as follows:

- “1. That this Committee expresses its concern about the slow progress of flood defence measures in Stoke Goldington and requests that the Cabinet consider ways in which the project could progress at a faster rate.
2. That during the review of Plan:MK, the Cabinet provide an assurance that the Council continues its policy of not building on land with a high risk of flooding.”

The Cabinet Member for Public Realm and Performance welcomed the work of the Committee and updated the Cabinet on flood defence issues in Stoke Goldington. The Cabinet Member reported that 80% of the flood alleviation scheme was now complete and it would be further progressed when it can be possible to compulsorily purchase land at the southern end of the village for further flood alleviation measures to be built, this would then leave only a few minor works to be completed, which it was hoped would be complete within the next 12 months.

The Cabinet Member indicated that a project manager had recently been employed to oversee both the Stoke Goldington scheme and other flood alleviation schemes being installed across the borough.

The Cabinet Member also reminded the Cabinet that the area had just experienced one of the wettest periods since records were began and not one property in Milton Keynes had flooded.

The Cabinet member for Economic Development and Enterprise indicated that Milton Keynes was designed in order to reduce any risk of flooding with development not being permitted on flood plains and a series of balancing lakes being provided to take the run off from developed areas. Similar measures were included in the Core Strategy and would be applied to the expansion areas for which both a Water Systems Study and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment had been carried out. The Cabinet Member undertook to provide a written statement for the Select Committee.

3 Referral to Cabinet 12 March 2014 – Report of the Major Event Management Review Group

3.1 Following the Cabinet's receipt of the report of the Major Event Management Review Group at its meeting held on 12 March 2014, the following Cabinet Minute was recorded (Minute C155 refers):

3.2 MAJOR EVENTS MANAGEMENT REVIEW GROUP – RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED BY COUNCILLOR CEC TALLACK, CHAIR OF THE REVIEW GROUP

The Cabinet received the report of the Major Events Management Review Group, which was presented by Councillor Tallack, Chair of the Review Group.

Councillor Tallack reported that the Review Group had addressed how major events of both a national and international status could be attracted to Milton Keynes, which included the role of all stakeholders in providing the visitor with a positive experience.

The Leader of the Council undertook to provide a written response to each of the Review Group's recommendations for report to the Environment and Transport select Committee.

3.3 Written Response from the Leader of the Council

3.4 "The Review Group's work drew on advice and evidence from a range of sources including our own track record of hosting major events. The report is very timely as MKC are becoming increasingly successful in our strategy of attracting major event to MK:

- National Badminton Championships – February 2014
- FA Women's Cup Final – 1 June 2014
- Three major concerts at the Bowl over the summer 2014
- Rugby World Cup in Autumn 2015

- 3.5 Officer have been asked to review the recommendations of the Review Group in detail and advise how best to take them forward, including those recommendations that are best taken forward by the MK Events Board (the partnership bode that includes cross-party representation).
- 3.6 The recommendation about exploring the prospect of Milton Keynes becoming the European Capital of Culture in particular requires a partnership view as the whole city would need to get behind such a proposal.”
- 3.7 The recommendations of the Review Group are set out below with a summary of how the Review Group came up with those recommendations. The response is set out in bold italics:

4 Findings and Recommendations

- 4.1 Milton Keynes is an area providing a range of arts and heritage opportunities which help to support the visitor economy but recognises that visitors do not come to Milton Keynes specifically for those reasons. The Review Group acknowledged that Milton Keynes provided a strong local offer and assessed whether or not, facilities such as MK Theatre were being promoted to the best of their advantage. The Review Group recommended that the Council explores the prospect of Milton Keynes as a contender for the accolade of ‘Capital of Culture’ and the potential for marketing Milton Keynes arts and heritage attractions outside of MK.

Response:

This relates to the prospect of bidding for European Capital of Culture 2023. A bid for this would need to be made in 2017. It could present a major opportunity for Milton Keynes but would also require major effort across all partners to deliver, and some significant resources, so it is important that we assess the opportunity thoroughly and together. The MK Events Board has had some early discussions about this issue.

- 4.2 The Review Group acknowledged that the role of the Safety Advisory Group was to encourage and promote the safe management and organisation of events in Milton Keynes and not to comment on the quality of events. Keeping in mind the reputational damage that may ensure from the staging of a poor quality event, the Group would recommend the development of a low cost guide, providing advice to event organisers on some of the major issues to consider when hosting a major event in Milton Keynes.

Response:

This came out of the Winter Wonderland debacle over Christmas 2013. It is a helpful suggestion as we do not have the capacity to be directly involved in all the events that take place in MK. This recommendation makes reference to ‘major events’ but such a guide would provide advice for all events organisers.

- 4.3 The Group acknowledge the lack of accommodation available for visitors to Milton Keynes, particular during the week. The Group recommended that the Council explores ways to facilitate an increase in hotel provision within the

area and the potential for increased campsite and camping facilities located close to sports and event venues.

Response:

The need to boost hotel provision is something to consider as part of the development of Plan:MK. The Parks Trust already provides camping for events at the Bowl (eg. Willen Lake) and this can be promoted as part of future events, with the use of camping perhaps developed more over time if there is evidence of sufficient demand.

- 4.4 The Review Group considered how Milton Keynes could capitalise upon the Olympic Legacy and looked at how this could enhance the development of grassroots sport and encourage resident engagement in developing Milton Keynes as a major sporting and events city. The Review Group recommended that the Council assess the capacity to build upon the Olympic legacy and explore the potential for developing, in consultation with Community Action:MK, a major sports / events volunteer pool.

Response:

A volunteer strategy is part of the city's Rugby World Cup preparations and we are working closely on that with Community Action:MK and MK Dons Sports and Education Trust. For each event, we can add to our pool of volunteers.

- 4.5 The Review Group recognised that there were some difficulties for visitors to navigate around Milton Keynes and that any attempts for the city to be a truly international sporting and events base, it was important that visitors had access to accurate and up to date travel and directional information. The Group welcomed the work being undertaken as part of the SMART cities initiative and so too, the development of a bespoke visitor phone app, the Group recommended that the Council investigate the provision of appropriate and effective way-finding and signage to sporting / event venues and other places of interest; the provision of information points at advantageous locations, up to date bus and coach information and location maps at CMK station, bus shelters and the coachway.

Response:

The MK Smart project will create a city motion map that will help residents and visitors plan their journeys within MK – avoiding congestion, finding parking and making transport connections. Wayfinding is a distinct challenge – for both specific events and more generally. Officers will need to explore this more fully, as recommended by the Review Group, to find out what is planned and where any gaps are.

- 4.6 The Review Group recognised the reputational value of hosting events such as the International Festival. Some of the events taking place under its banner this year would be re-located to areas outside of Central Milton

Keynes (e.g. Willen Lake). Taking into account the potential difficulties of navigating between venues, the Group was of the opinion that this could create a possible disconnect between events, which may have a detrimental impact on Milton Keynes reputation as a good place for hosting well-planned events. The Group recommended that the Council enter into discussions with the event organiser for them to provide free transport to and from major event venues. The Group further recommended that a similar approach be adopted for the Rugby World Cup 2015 and that free transport be provided to and from events from appropriate locations.

Response:

We would need to take a case by case approach to events generally. The planning for the Rugby World Cup in 2015 includes some additional (free) transport to and from specific locations.