

Minutes of the meeting of the PARTNERSHIPS AND GROWTH SELECT COMMITTEE held on WEDNESDAY 23 JUNE 2010 at 7.30 pm

**Present:** Councillor P Geary (Chair)  
Councillors Bradburn, Long, D McCall, Morris, Tamagnini-Barbosa, Wharton, White and Zealley

**Officers:** D Hill (Chief Executive), B Sandom (Corporate Director Environment), G Snelson (Corporate Director Partnerships and Growth), J Moffoot (Assistant Director [Democratic Services]), J Entwistle (Growth Co-ordination and Delivery Manager), S Evans (Strategic Environmental Infrastructure Manager) and S Parker (Senior Committee Manager)

**Apology:** Councillors Morris and Tallack

**Also Present:** T Roxburgh (Director [Milton Keynes Partnership]), R de Grey (Chairman [Milton Keynes City Centre Management]), K Greenhalgh (City Centre Manager [Milton Keynes City Centre Management]), Councillors Crooks, I Fraser, Miles and Tallack and Town Councillor P Gladwin (Central Milton Keynes Town Council)

**Members of the public:**

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**PG03 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Partnership and Growth Select Committee in the new Council Year and Members and officers introduced themselves.

**PG04 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Councillor White declared personal interests in Item 6 (Enabling the Development of Central Milton Keynes), as the Secretary of the Federation of Small Businesses (locally) and Chair of the Sustainable Energy Agency.

**PG05 MINUTES**

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Partnerships and Growth Select Committee held on 6 April 2010 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**PG06**

**PRESENTATION - CORPORATE DIRECTOR STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIPS**

The Select Committee received a presentation from the Corporate Director Strategy and Partnerships, which included information on:

- The partners and partnership the Council works with in Milton Keynes.
- Headline partnership challenges (including health inequalities, crime, economy and the environment).
- Policy and financial challenges.
- The refresh of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Comments from Members included:

- There were a lot of strategies that were a goal rather than a tool. Strategies should lead to something productive.
- Regard should be taken of the many 'positives' to sell Milton Keynes.
- The skills that the Council had got were inward focussed rather than focussed on a multi-networking way of operating.
- How relations with all sectors of the economy would be developed was a major issue which required consideration.

**RESOLVED -**

That the presentation be noted

**PG07**

**PRESENTATION - CORPORATE DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENT**

The Select Committee received a presentation from the Corporate Director Environment, which provided an overview of growth which including information on the following:

- The Strategic Framework.
- The baseline position in relation to housing, jobs and infrastructure.
- Headline challenges (including infrastructure delivery, future plans beyond the expansion areas and the role of the Milton Keynes / South Midlands partnership).

Comments from Members included:

- Measures to ensure the dovetailing of strategies.

- The need for officers within the Directorate to have the necessary skills.

RESOLVED -

That the report be noted

**PG08**

## **ENABLING THE DEVELOPMENT OF MILTON KEYNES**

The Select Committee considered a report and received a presentation on the role of Milton Keynes Council in enabling the development of Central Milton Keynes and the key areas on which to focus, in order to enable development (which including having an agreed and clear vision, appropriate planning policies and guidance, 'fit for purpose' public and private infrastructure, agreed use of public assets and public engagement and place making).

The Select Committee noted an executive summary of a Central Milton Keynes Organisation Review undertaken by officers on how the Council dealt with development issues in Central Milton Keynes and a proposed approach to co-ordinating Central Milton Keynes workstreams within the Council (which included establishing an officer board, directed by Cabinet, to ensure that key decisions were being managed and implemented effectively and that there was a single point of contact for Central Milton Keynes issues).

The Select Committee received contributions from:

- (a) Robert de Grey (Chairman [Milton Keynes City Centre Management])
- (b) Councillors Fraser and Tallack (Ward Members)
- (c) Tim Roxburgh (Director [Milton Keynes Partnership])
- (d) Town Councillor Peter Gladwin (Central Milton Keynes Town Council)

Comments were made on the following issues:

- (a) Involvement of Stakeholders
  - The importance of taking into account the voice of the business community in the running of activities in Milton Keynes, as they were the motors for growth.
  - There needs to be a coherent strategy for involving stakeholders to allow them to engage, influence and participate and they should not be regarded as passive participants of policy decisions. If stakeholders' businesses were not listened to, they would move out of Milton Keynes and set up business elsewhere.
  - Milton Keynes City Centre Management members find the Council a difficult organisation to deal with and are

concerned about how key stakeholders would be involved in a rapidly changing scene.

- The need for the Council to engage / involve the private sector.
- The need for Council Members and officers to have a strategic focus in their interactions with partners. This was a training issue.

(b) Services

- The report appears to suggest that the driver for Central Milton Keynes was the planning regime, when what drives Central Milton Keynes was economic prosperity. There was a need to determine what people need and fit planning around that.
- It was critical to ensure that there were facilities to attract people into Central Milton Keynes (for example, the Xscape building).
- The need to understand the nature / mix of housing required for those coming to live in Central Milton Keynes.
- The need to consider the affordability issue.

(c) Council's Lead Role

- The direction of the proposals, with the Council creating a focus for activities in Central Milton Keynes, taking on wider responsibilities and getting its internal structures 'fit for purpose', was welcomed and supported.
- The need for the Council to take the leading role in Central Milton Keynes was supported.
- There was a need to consider the skills / resources structure to support the wider role (including development).
- The need for the Council to work in partnership with many agencies was recognised.
- Milton Keynes City Centre Management members look to the Council for leadership through difficult times.
- A review of the Central Milton Keynes Development Framework should be carried out.
- The Council's leadership role was about creating a vision and a way of working, as well as responding to market forces.

- The Council had a lead role in delivering a strategic vision.
  - The need for future governance arrangements to have Member involvement.
- (d) Future Land Ownership
- Of concern was who would assume the functions of the devolved agency (which had the potential to throw future developments into disarray). The ownership of the land in Central Milton Keynes if the role of the Housing and Communities Agency changes.
  - The possibility of transferring the land asset to local people with the establishment of a City Centre Trust involved in the future development of Central Milton Keynes. Maintenance of the public realm could be included in any discussion about future land ownership.
  - The discussions between the Council and HCA about the performance of the Joint Venture and whether it was appropriate to have a Joint Venture arrangement for the future development of Central Milton Keynes.
- (e) Problems Experienced By Residents
- Problems highlighted included rat infestation, noisy Council trucks sweeping residential streets of Central Milton Keynes very early in the morning, poor parking rights and Houses in Multiple Occupation.
  - The need for a Community Building in Central Milton Keynes (which would help with stakeholder input).
  - The important role of residents' involvement in place-making.
  - Central Milton Keynes represented a 'fortress' bounded by two roads for those residents living in the 'doughnut ring' around Central Milton Keynes.
  - There were safety and transport issues for residents without transport who needed to go into Central Milton Keynes, for example to use the Post Office. A visit to the Post Office was a necessity now local Post Offices had closed.
  - To build a sustainable Central Milton Keynes, there was a need to build a sustainable community around it. There was a need to develop Milton Keynes as one city.
  - The need to address public transport issues.

- Grid roads created isolation for communities as they acted as large barriers.
- The public who used services should be consulted on services which were implemented / changed.

(f) Growth

- There was concern about how Central Milton Keynes grows and develops within the concept of Milton Keynes as a whole. The lack of transport was seen as a major constraint on growth in Milton Keynes.
- It was critical that there were facilities to attract people into Central Milton Keynes.
- There was a large number of decisions to be made in the next six months around the Growth Agenda and a need to make the case for Milton Keynes quickly, to take advantage as announcements were made around the growth agenda.
- Central Milton Keynes should have one Town / Parish Council.
- The Vision should be re-visited. The Central Milton Keynes Development Framework should be updated.
- There was a need and requirement for a Community Governance Review.
- The need for a local Design Plan.
- The need for a dedicated delivery agency for Central Milton Keynes.

RESOLVED -

1. That the need for Milton Keynes Council to take the leading role in Central Milton Keynes be endorsed, and that the role should be Member-led.
2. That the key areas of focus identified in the report to support this role be noted.
3. That Central Milton Keynes' crucial role in generating work opportunities for Milton Keynes residents be recognised.
4. That the principle of urgently establishing an officer board to co-ordinate Central Milton Keynes related projects and activities be endorsed.
5. That the Cabinet's attention be drawn to the problem being experienced by residents of Central Milton Keynes and the surrounding areas.

6. That Cabinet be asked to establish a training programme on strategic decision-making for all Members and senior officers.
7. That Cabinet identifies and responds to the window of opportunity that currently exists around the growth agenda.
8. That Cabinet review the links between the Council and stakeholders to ensure that they provide a transparent, effective and two-way process.
9. That Cabinet initiate a review of the Central Milton Keynes Development Framework.
10. That Cabinet explore the options for establishing a delivery agency for Central Milton Keynes development.
11. That Cabinet review the Council's impact on Central Milton Keynes and the surrounding areas across the whole range of Council services.
12. That Cabinet ensures that the development of Central Milton Keynes has appropriate Member involvement.

**PG09**

#### **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Select Committee considered its work programme for the new Council Year 2010/11.

**RESOLVED -**

That the Select Committee's work programme for the Council Year 2010/11 be approved, subject to the inclusion of an update on Central Milton Keynes Governance being made to the Select Committee's January 2011 meeting and the consideration of Regional Structures across the South East at the Select Committee's meeting on 5 October 2010 being widened to include the sub-regional impact on Milton Keynes.

**THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 10.30 PM**