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Minutes of the meeting of the STRATEGIC PLACEMAKING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held on WEDNESDAY 13 JANUARY 2021 at 7.00 PM

Present: Councillor P Geary (Chair)
Councillors Bint, Crooks, Ferrans, Gilbert, Legg, Long, McPake, Petchey and Priestley

Apologies: Councillor K Bradburn (substituted by Councillor Ferrans)

Officers: G Snelson (Director of Strategy & Futures), Fiona Robinson (MK Futures Programme Manager), P Brown (Head of Democratic Services), R Tidman (Committee Services Manager)

Also present: Councillor Walker and five members of the public

SP19 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

None

SP20 MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Strategic Placemaking Scrutiny Committee held on 14 October 2020 and 24 November 2020 be approved and signed by the Chair as correct records.

SP21

THE 'NEW NORMAL'

The Chair advised that this item had been withdrawn as given the new national lockdown it was not appropriate to take this item at this time and it would be rescheduled to a later date. The Committee agreed that it would be sensible to take this item later.

SP22

MILTON KEYNES 2050

Witnesses: G Snelson (Director of Strategy & Futures) and F Robinson (MK Futures Programme Manager)

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of Strategy & Futures and the MK Futures Programme Manager. Their presentation summarised the most recent changes that had been made to the Strategy and the amendments proposed since the Strategy went to Cabinet before it being recommended for approval by Full Council later in the month.

The Committee heard from five members of the public who whilst many commended the strategy and welcomed the changes that had been made since the last iteration still had concerns about:

- the ability of the strategy to respond to change;
- the prescriptive nature of the proposals on Rapid Mass Transport system and that a different approach to public transport may be required ie not focused on 'Mass';
- that it should be clearer that the Council would work closely with parish and town councils across the borough to help implement the aims of the strategy;
- how land dedicated to parking was seen in the strategy;
- the population target for 2050 was still too high; and
- the growth of the city and the surrounding areas should be coordinated by a development corporation.

Councillor Crooks then proposed a set of amendments for the Committee to consider which he summarised as not being about challenging the fundamentals of the Strategy but to clarify the wording that had been used within it.

The Committee then made a number of comments on the Strategy including:

- (a) regret that the current economic blip had been used as an excuse to downgrade the Council's aspirations for the Strategy;
- (b) that more work needed to be done on what makes Milton Keynes special;

- (c) that a study was needed into the utility capacity as the borough grows and whether there was adequate resource within the utilities or whether there were any constraints that the Council needed to be aware of;
- (d) that affordable housing within Milton Keynes was not truly affordable to most people and further work was required into how the Council could ensure decent, secure, truly affordable housing, of the right size for the people who needed it;
- (e) that more thinking around 'Rapid Mass Transport' may be needed and in order to understand the transport network properly more studies would be required. These obviously could not be carried out until passenger numbers had stabilised post Covid-19;
- (f) that a vision of higher education was important to retain in the strategy and for Milton Keynes to seize this opportunity for a University;
- (g) that protecting and preserving what was special about Milton Keynes needs to include retention of underpasses;
- (h) it was important to consider how culture linked into how we perceive the economic development, particularly of the centre;
- (i) the diverse communities of Milton Keynes were essential ingredients in shaping the future of the area and ongoing structured engagement with these communities needed to be allowed for;
- (j) there was a need to look at culture in its entirety with potentially a 'curator' to pull together the range of cultural activity across the area; and
- (k) there was a need to understand the role of the Strategy and the role of the policies that will come from it and the role scrutiny would have in the development of these documents going forward.

RESOLVED –

1. That Group Leaders be asked to include the amendments listed in Annex A to the minutes in their Amendment to the Strategy for 2050 to be considered by Full Council on the 20 January 2021.
2. That the Interim Director of Planning, Strategic Transport and Placemaking be requested to ensure that work is

commissioned on understanding the capacity of utilities to support the Council's growth aspirations.

3. That the Planning Group be asked to schedule an item on the capacity of utilities to support the Council's growth aspirations when this report is available.
4. That the Committee's concerns around 'Affordable Housing' be noted and that Scrutiny Management Committee be requested to ensure that work is programmed to scrutinise this issue further.
5. That the Cabinet member responsible for Planning Policy be requested to consider the Committee's concerns that the infrastructure the city needs to grow is in place before any further expansion takes place.

SP22

2020/21 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received and noted the proposed Work Programme for 2020/21.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Work Programme for the remainder of 2020/21 be noted.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9.43 PM

The recording of this meeting is available to view on the Council's YouTube Channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/MiltonKeynesCouncil/videos>

SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS TO GROUP LEADERS

- (i) That the word 'invented' be deleted from the penultimate sentence in the final paragraph of page 6 and replaced with the word 'pioneered' such that it reads 'Back then we didn't know that the way we lived would contribute to climate change or how computers (pioneered at Bletchley Park) would change the way we earn a living, communicate, shop and travel.'
- (ii) That after the word 'support' in the fourth bullet point of page 8 insert the word 'sport'.
- (iii) That Figure Three be replaced with a clearer map with better colour definition and a legend that includes all symbols used (i.e. the greyed-out development symbol used in Figure Eight).
- (iv) That the words '... especially some of the early areas built by Milton Keynes Development Corporation...' in the first paragraph of page 32, be deleted and replaced with '...including some of the earliest areas built as part of the New Town....' such that it reads 'Many of our existing homes and estates, including some of the earliest areas built as part of the New Town, need major investment to bring them up to a decent standard for our residents.'
- (v) That the words 'that reflect changes in the diversity, age, composition and lifestyle preferences of our communities...' be added to the third paragraph of page 32 after the word 'designs' such that it reads 'We wish to see a wider variety of designs that reflect changes in the diversity, age, composition and lifestyle preferences of our communities than the relatively standard homes built in recent years...'
- (vi) That the words 'early childhood intervention and' are added to the last sentence on page 36 after the word 'through' such that it reads 'Our council regeneration policy will help people in our most deprived neighbourhoods to improve their life chances through early childhood intervention and skills development.'
- (vii) That the words 'and to encourage investment in our Local Centres by their landlords' are added to the end of the last sentence of the fourth paragraph on page 54 such that it reads 'We want to maintain this community spirit and to encourage investment in our Local Centres by their landlords.'
- (viii) That the word 'underpasses' is added to the fourth paragraph on page 58 after the word 'crossings' such that it reads 'We will make sure that paths, road crossings, underpasses and places where people gather are overlooked, well-lit and well-maintained.'

- (ix)** That the word 'reducing' is deleted and replaced with the words 'working with Thames Valley Police to reduce' in the first paragraph on page 59 such that it reads 'This will be supported by working with Thames Valley Police to reduce road speeds within developments and having excellent paths and Redways that link to our wider mobility network.'
- (x)** That the word 'Eid', be deleted and replaced with the words 'cultural and religious' in the second paragraph of page 61 such that it reads 'This ranges from attending events at our theatre, gallery and music venues through to big community celebrations at our World Picnic, Pride and cultural and religious festivals and our thriving independent dance scene.'
- (xi)** That the word 'controlled' be replaced with the word 'led' in the second paragraph of page 69, such that it reads 'One option being considered is to establish a new locally led development corporation financed by government.'
- (xii)** That a new sentence 'We will work closely with Town and Parish Councils across Milton Keynes in delivering our Strategy for 2050, to ensure there is local involvement at all stages.' be added at the end of the fourth paragraph on page 73.
- (xiii)** That the word 'greater' be capitalised in the final sentence on page 73 such that it reads 'Working across Greater Milton Keynes with our partners, stakeholders, investors and local communities, we can deliver the promise of our Seven Big Ambitions and make our Great City Greater.'
- (xiv)** That the words 'For more information about the role and the work of The Parks Trust go to www.theparkstrust.com' be added as a reference to the work of the Parks Trust on page 78 under Other Links relating to Chapter Three – A Sustainable and Green City.