

ENABLING THE DEVELOPMENT OF CENTRAL MILTON KEYNES

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 This paper explains the need for Milton Keynes Council to provide a strong and visible lead in the development of Central Milton Keynes (CMK), the key areas for the Council to focus on in order to enable development, and how it is proposed to co-ordinate that activity.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Select Committee:

- (a) Endorse the need for Milton Keynes Council to take a stronger leading role in CMK
- (b) Endorse the key areas of focus to support this role in 4.5-4.23 below
- (c) Discuss how best to undertake the 'place-making' function in CMK
- (d) Note the principle of establishing an officer board to co-ordinate CMK related projects and activities, as illustrated in Annex C.

3. Background

- 3.1 The area referred to as CMK in this paper is contiguous with the area covered by the CMK Development Framework and is illustrated on the map in Annex A. It is bounded by H5 (Portway) to the north, H6 (Childs Way) to the south, the A5 to the west, and the Grand Union Canal to the east.

4. Issues and Choices**4.1 The Council's Role in CMK**

- 4.2 Milton Keynes Council was previously a member of the CMK Board, set up in 2003 to oversee the development of CMK. The Board was established by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), formerly English Partnerships (EP). In 2004 Milton Keynes Partnership (MKP) was formed as a sub committee of EP and in 2007 MKP reviewed the CMK Board arrangements and disbanded them. Furthermore, in 2008 when EP/MKP became a part of the HCA the organisation moved from a leading and driving force behind development in

CMK to a remit of supporting the local authority, in line with the HCA national agenda. HCA/MKP remains, however, a key landowner in the city centre.

4.3 In 2009, MKC officers undertook a Review of how the Council dealt with development issues in CMK prompted in part by the altered role of HCA/MKP, but also the economic slowdown, which coincided with the lapse of planning consents for some major development proposals in CMK. The Executive Summary of the Review is attached at Annex B.

4.4 The feedback from Council Members, stakeholders and partners acknowledged examples of joint working, good relationships with partners, and innovative projects and ways of working. However, the feedback also pointed to a need for strong and visible leadership in CMK, something that those interviewed felt had been lacking with the demise of the CMK Board and should be the Council's role. As the plan-making authority, the development control authority and with the change in HCA/MKP's role it seems clear therefore that MKC should accept this role and strengthen its image as the leading public body shaping development in CMK.

4.5 Key Areas of Focus for Milton Keynes Council

4.6 There are a large number of policies and strategies in place for CMK, and considered the challenge is to ensure the Council is well supported to implement its aspirations and priorities. The following areas are considered to be the ones that the Council should focus its efforts on in order to fulfil an enabling role.

4.7 *Forward Planning: Providing a Clear Vision and Policy Framework for CMK*

4.8 A Development Framework for CMK was approved by MKC in 2001 as Supplementary Planning Guidance and provides a long-term (30 year) Master Plan for the development of the City Centre. The principle of further developing CMK's role as a sub regional centre has been carried through into the Council's Core Strategy. The Development Framework has not been reviewed or updated.

4.9 In 2008 MKC produced a Vision Statement for the City Core to provide some clear direction on its aspirations for the retail and leisure core of the City centre. This Vision Statement was discussed with partners and stakeholders during 2009, which resulted in some debate about its status, its relationship to the Development Framework, and its applicability to CMK more generally.

4.10 Given the age of the Development Framework and the subsequent City Core work, it might be helpful if the Council revisited the Vision in the CMK Development Framework. This could subsequently lead to a refresh or a more comprehensive review of the whole Development Framework. Decisions about undertaking any work on the Development Framework would rest with Cabinet.

4.11 The original Development Framework has led to more detailed Supplementary Planning Guidance. Some of this work is still ongoing although a refresh of the Development Framework might require new guidance to update and replace existing, and Cabinet would need to direct this.

- 4.12 Other Council policies and strategies (such as those around transport), are required to support the implementation of development in CMK and a focus on the Vision for CMK would assist the Council in identifying and prioritising those.
- 4.13 *Facilitating New Development Opportunities*
- 4.14 The Council should develop its role in facilitating new development and investment proposals. Early, informal, pre-planning application dialogue with potential developers and investors is supported by national planning guidance and the Council's own Statement of Community involvement. It establishes the Council's policies, aspirations and expectations and assists the planning process through the formal stages to the point where the Council's Development Control Committee will determine the planning application.
- 4.15 As proposals develop the Council can also have a role in supporting investors making the move to Milton Keynes, working with partners such as Invest MK to provide advice on education, transport and housing opportunities. This approach was taken with the Network Rail proposals for CMK and has provided a useful model for pre-application discussions outside of CMK.
- 4.16 *Delivering and Enabling Key Infrastructure*
- 4.17 The Council is already engaged in co-ordinating the delivery of new public infrastructure through a joint arrangement with MKP to manage projects identified in the MK Local Investment Plan (LIP), which is endorsed by the Council. This work includes co-ordinating funding sources. Projects in CMK are included in the LIP and many of these are Council-led, approved through the Council's Capital Programme.
- 4.18 The Council also has the potential to develop its role as an enabler for private sector infrastructure works; for example the recent investment by Openreach in delivering fibre optic cables to provide access to super-fast broadband has been facilitated by MKC through a single point of contact who advises on planning and highways matters. This has supported the emerging Digital Infrastructure Strategy for Milton Keynes.
- 4.19 *Maintaining and Enhancing the Public Realm*
- 4.20 The Council, through Environmental Services, maintains and enhances the public realm within the City Centre. The Council also carries out operational duties, such as licensing, and contracts services, such as waste collection, street cleansing and parking enforcement.
- 4.21 These maintenance and operational issues contribute significantly to the feel and appeal of the centre (as they do elsewhere), and it is considered that they are of equal importance to attracting new development.
- 4.22 *Analysing the Joint Venture and Future Options*
- 4.23 In 2003, a Joint Venture (JV) arrangement was set up for a 5 year period to promote the development of CMK and provide a mechanism to share the uplift in land values. The JV was between the Council and English Partnerships. MKC and HCA are now in dialogue about the performance of the JV,

acknowledging that during its operation it was not applied consistently or fully by either partner and that there have been no surplus land receipts to reinvest in the city centre or regeneration areas as originally anticipated. This discussion will consider whether a JV arrangement is appropriate for the future development of CMK, and if not then what arrangements would be suitable.

4.24 Place-making

4.25 When disbanding the CMK Board in 2007 MKP established a CMK Placemaking Group to provide an advisory role to MKP and MKC on development proposals. The Group has principally provided feedback to MKC through Development Control.

4.26 At its meeting in March 2010 the Placemaking Group agreed that it would disband although it was decided that meetings would continue on an occasional basis to discuss any development proposals until new arrangements are agreed. The group is not a fully representative body although it does include some local interests. The Council's Member representation is based on equal representation of political parties as opposed to local Ward Member representation.

4.27 Place-making, or 'place shaping' is a key principle of developing the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF). National planning policy defines it as responding to and addressing a locality's problems, needs and ambitions and building a strategy to deliver a vision in a coordinated way. The Council needs to address this principle as a matter of course through the development of policies in its Local Development Framework, including any work on a new or refreshed Development Framework.

4.28 One important function of place making is the design and architectural appraisal of development proposals. The Council has statutory obligations around consultation on planning applications and its Statement of Community Involvement encourages pre-application engagement by developers (although this is not mandatory).

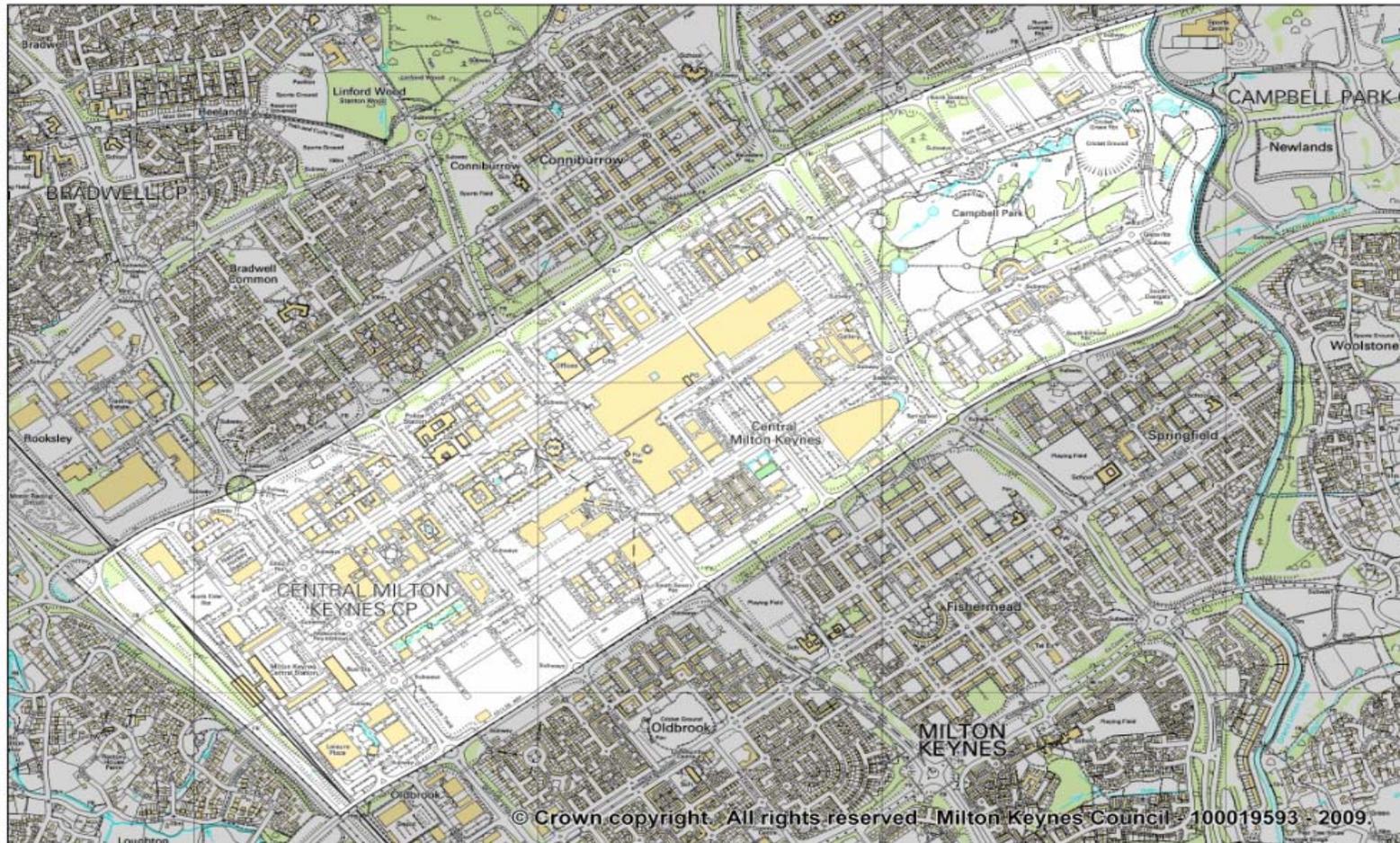
4.29 The Council could and should further develop its own arrangements for design appraisal with key stakeholders and the Committee is asked for its views on how best to do this. It could involve the appointment of a Design Champion for CMK, such as TransForm MKSM (part of the national network of Architecture and Built Environment Centres), or Design Panels convened on a project by project basis.

4.30 Co-ordinating the Council's Work

4.31 There is already work ongoing within the key areas of focus discussed above, however a greater degree of co-ordination across different workstreams is needed. Annex C illustrates the proposed approach to co-ordinating CMK related workstreams within the Council. The approach includes establishing an officer board, directed by Cabinet, to ensure that key decisions are being managed and implemented effectively and that there is a single point of contact for CMK issues.

4.32 It is recognised that if this proves to be a successful model then it could be replicated for areas outside of CMK.

Annex A: The Central Milton Keynes Area



Annex B: CMK Organisational Review Executive Summary (2009)

Central Milton Keynes (CMK) is at the heart of Milton Keynes, one of the UK's fastest growing cities and 'an international city of the future.'

This review is concerned with the organisational arrangements for CMK development including the environmental, social and economic development of the city centre. The current slowdown in development as a result of the recession, presents both a time for reflection and an opportunity to improve.

The aim of this review is to enable Milton Keynes Council to take a strong community leadership role in the development of CMK, through improving the organisational arrangements for CMK development.

The successful development of CMK is vitally important to the borough of Milton Keynes and the wider region. CMK is a major growth area with plans for more than 6500 new homes, 400,000 m² commercial floor space, 90,000 m² shopping entertainment and leisure space, improved public transport facilities and new high quality public spaces.

The review finds that we have a strong foundation for delivering CMK development including:

- A partnership approach to CMK development
- Good relationships between MKC and partners
- Innovative projects and developments

There are also a number of ways in which our CMK organisational arrangements can be strengthened including:

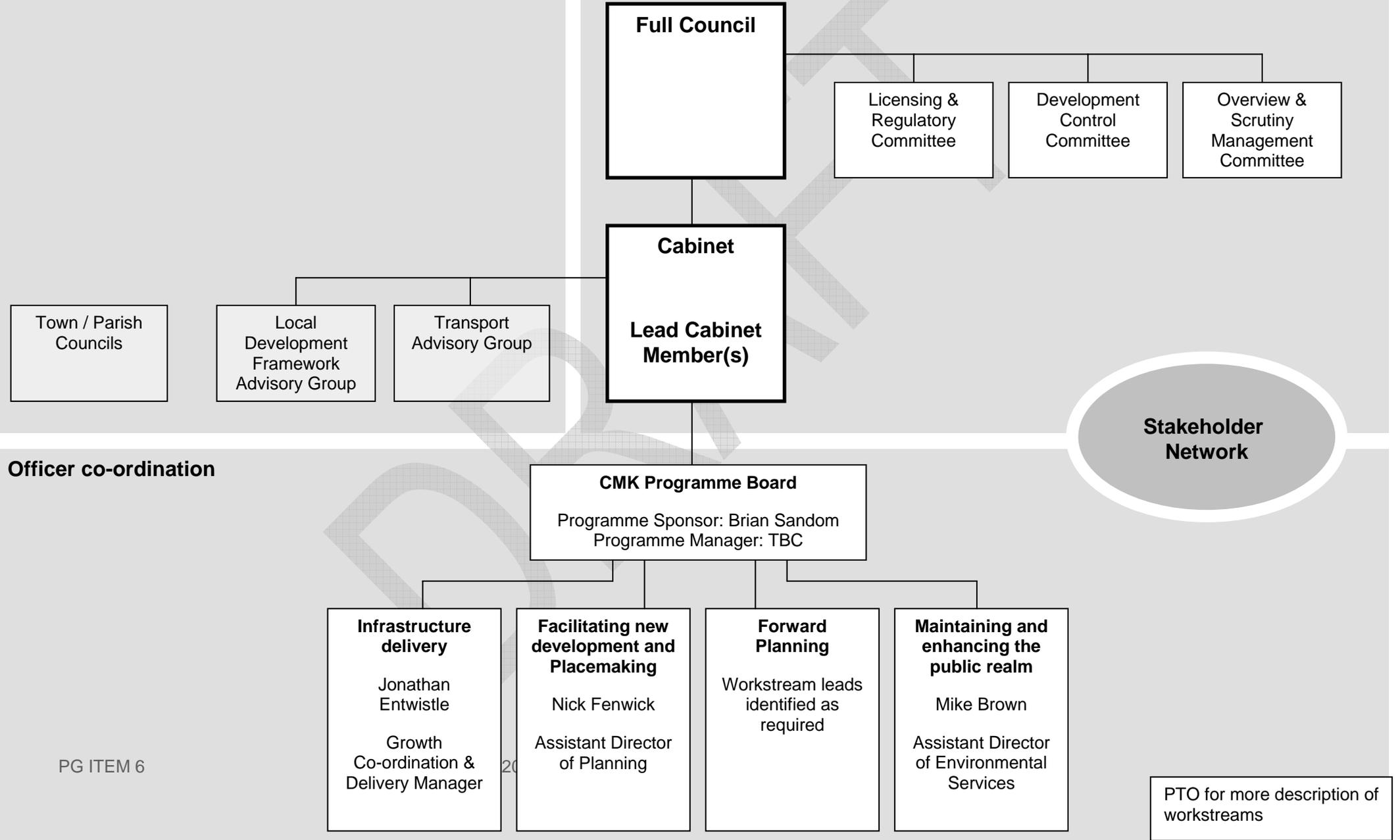
- MKC providing strong, community leadership
- Strengthening our programme management approach
- Pro-actively involving local councils
- Improving our communications

MKC are already making progress and have created dedicated 'facilitating teams' for developers; this has supported the major Network Rail development in CMK which will bring new jobs and investment to the city centre.

Annex C: CMK activity

Formal Advisory and Consultative Groups

MKC Governance Framework: policy setting and key decisions



PTO for more description of workstreams

Infrastructure Delivery:

- Co-ordinates the delivery of new public sector infrastructure planned for Central Milton Keynes.
- Co-ordinates funding sources for public sector projects, including Government grants and developer contributions.

Co-ordinates a programme for the delivery of new infrastructure including; transport; landscape and open space; leisure facilities; community facilities; cultural and schools.

Facilitating new development and Placemaking:

- Facilitates new development and investment proposals.
- Encourages and promotes potential development and investment opportunities.

Encourages, promotes and facilitates new development and investment opportunities by bringing together staff within the Council and other stakeholders with landowners and developers.

Forward Planning:

- Facilitates policies to support the development of the place in accordance with the CMK Development Framework.

Maintaining and enhancing the public realm:

- Maintains and enhances the public realm within the City Centre.
- Carries out operational duties such as licensing and contracts services such as waste collection, street cleansing and parking enforcement.

Co-ordinates investment and work programmes within the City Centre to improve and maintain the environment.