

Minutes of the meeting of the ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE SELECT COMMITTEE held on WEDNESDAY 29 FEBRUARY 2012 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor I McCall (Chair)
Councillors Bald, Barney, Brackenbury, Gerrella, Jury, Kennedy, Marland, O'Neill, Shafiq, and Small.

Officers: P Gosal (Corporate Head of Economic Development), N Fenwick (Assistant Director [Planning, Economy and Development]), B Matthews (Head of Transportation Services), L Sung (Overview & Scrutiny Officer) and J Moffoot (Assistant Director [Democratic Services]).

Also Present: Councillors Bint and Hopkins
Clive Faine (Transport Partnership) and Alison Keech (JobCentre Plus)

Members of the public: 2

ED17 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Select Committee held on 30 November 2011, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

ED18 RESPONSES FROM CABINET

The Select Committee received the responses from Cabinet following recommendations made by this Committee on 21 September 2012:

- (a) The Knowledge Based Economy
- (b) Business Support and Inward Investment Plan
- (c) Visitor Destination:MK

RESOLVED –

That the response from Cabinet be noted.

ED19 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY – PRIORITY 6: ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE

The Select Committee was currently looking at the priorities as set out in the Council's Economic Development Strategy to be assured that the Strategy was meeting its objectives to maintain and develop and grow economic activities in Milton Keynes.

The Committee considered issues relating to Priority 6 of the Economic Development Strategy which sets out to create, maintain and improve the appropriate infrastructure for growth, focussing mainly on transport issues.

In addition, the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee had requested that the Select Committee consider the Transport Strategy which was currently undergoing a refresh and consultation process. Comments would be fed into a report recommending changes to the Transport Strategy which would be received by the Cabinet at its meeting to be held on 3 April 2012.

The Corporate Head of Economic Development reported that a recent 'Centre for Cities' report had identified Milton Keynes as a 'well placed and well skilled area' and that it was 'well placed to support the creation of the jobs and growth that will address the UK's employment challenge'.

The Committee received a presentation from the Council's Head of Transportation Services and the Corporate Head of Economic Development on future transport challenges, as indicated by transport forecasts. Alison Keech from JobCentre Plus was invited to address the Committee on how people travel to work and how this impacted on the local economy and Clive Faine (Transport Partnership) had been invited to address the Committee on transport issues that affects the economy; how it supports economic growth and helps to retain businesses in Milton Keynes.

The Cabinet Member reported that the Council's Core Strategy indicated that job creation in Central Milton Keynes focussed mainly on office and retail. He added that employment locations were dispersed throughout Milton Keynes and public transport sometimes did not fit in well with idiosyncratic employment behaviour such as shift work. He reported that the Council was investigating other transport options such as the use of vehicles picking up passengers for work, similar to a taxi but with a multi-person function.

Alison Keech (JobCentre Plus) highlighted that single parents and young people found it the most difficult to gain access to out-of-town employment areas and that lengthy bus journeys were a main reason.

Clive Faine (Transport Partnership) reported that the grid structure of Milton Keynes was a success and had been a means of attracting employers to the area. However, the grid structure was unsustainable and from an employers point of view, how people travel to work and the level of car parking available to their employees were priorities for their success.

The Committee considered the information put before it and the presentations made and highlighted the following issues:

- The Council's Local Plan did not stipulate that new developments should provide fibre-ready housing which could reduce transport issues due to more people working from home.
- The bus park near the Theatre District could be put to better use, such as a dual facility.
- Return tickets and multi-use tickets that could be used on bus and rail, similar to London's Oyster Card could make public transport an attractive alternative to the car.
- There were difficulties travelling to employment areas situated in out-of-town locations.
- Organised pick-up and drop-off points for children travelling to school could reduce congestion on the road at specific times of the day.
- Consider cheaper cycles for children travelling to school.
- Real time information to be made easily accessible e.g. via phone app.

The Committee considered the possibility of the Council establishing Passenger Transport Executive to co-ordinate and link travel between different modes of transport and transport companies. The Committee considered that this type of scheme, by working with other authorities/bodies could initially cover the SEMLEP area and could help establish effective and efficient public transport that would help to grow the local economy.

RESOLVED –

1. That the comments made by the Committee be fed into the Transport Strategy refresh.
2. That the Cabinet be recommended to consider including in the Council's Core Strategy the requirement that new developments should provide housing that is fibre-ready.
3. That the Cabinet investigate dual facility use at the bus park situated near the Theatre District.
4. That the Cabinet consider the feasibility and possibilities for introducing an MK card (similar to London's Oyster Card) to provide multi-transport options for travel throughout Milton Keynes and the wider area.

ED20

INWARD INVESTMENT PLAN

The Corporate Head of Economic Development reported that the Inward Investment plan was currently at the outline stage and that the Council had put in a funding bid to the Homes and Communities Agency.

The Inward Investment Plan would be refreshed every three years.

RESOLVED -

That the verbal report be noted and that the Inward Investment Plan be included in the Committee's work plan for further consideration in the next civic year.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9.30 PM

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