



Minutes of the meeting of the PARTNERSHIPS AND GROWTH SELECT COMMITTEE held on TUESDAY 6 APRIL 2010 at 7.30 pm

**Present:** Councillor Tamagnini-Barbosa (Chair)  
Councillors Bristow, U Clarke, P Geary, D McCall, Small, Wharton and White

**Officers:** J Moffoot (Assistant Director [Democratic Services]), M Parris (Corporate Policy Officer) and S Parker (Overview and Scrutiny Section)

**Apologies:** Councillors I McCall and Tallack

**Also Present:** Councillor Crooks

**Members of the public:** 4

#### **PG08 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Councillor White declared personal interests in Item 5 (Future of Milton Keynes), as the Secretary of Small Businesses (locally) and a Member of the Partnership Committee.

#### **PG09 MINUTES**

RESOLVED -

1. That the Minutes of the meeting of the Partnerships and Growth Select Committee held on 20 January 2010, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record, subject to Ward Councillors being included in the stakeholder group process outlined in resolution 2(b) of the Minutes.
2. That the Minutes of the special meeting held on 4 March 2010, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

#### **PG10 FUTURE OF MILTON KEYNES**

The Select Committee considered a feedback report on the views expressed at the Select Committee's special meeting held on 4 March 2010, which considered issues relating to the Future of Milton Keynes.

Comments from the Select Committee included:

- The special meeting on 4 March 2010 was positive and taken forward in a positive way.
- There were too many speakers in too short a time and the structure for future meetings should be refined.
- More contact should be made with 'hard to reach' groups, including young people, to ensure greater attendance from those groups at future meetings.
- Consideration should be given to analysing the skill sets of Council officers which would be crucial to the future development of the city and to consider how gaps in skill sets could be filled. Skill sets could be met by using those available from within other organisations and not necessarily from those employed by the Council (for example, economic development skills from Milton Keynes Partnerships).
- There would need to be a plan / route map of how the views expressed at the 4 March meeting could be translated into action plans.
- The ordinary members of the public had shown by their attendance at the 4 March meeting that they were interested in the Future of Milton Keynes, and it should be possible to develop a vision from that.
- Comments made by the public at the 4 March meeting showed that the public had a lack of awareness of what the Council was already doing in certain areas, for example, on green issues (for example, the implementation of Policy D4 and the availability of carbon offset funding).
- That the 4 March meeting had been essentially a 'brainstorming' exercise.
- Long term transport needs required consideration of how large numbers of people would be moved around the city as it grows, requiring a long 'lead in' time to build infrastructure.
- There is a need to 'raise the game' as far as creating a vision for Milton Keynes was concerned and going forward in a coherent, cohesive way with 'joined up' thinking.
- Consideration could be given to holding themed meetings of the Select Committee, for example, on transport and highways, to enable a common policy to be agreed.
- The need for the city to have a 'champion' for growth.

Comments from the public included:

- Concern at those at the 4 March 2010 meeting who had expressed hostility to the growth of Milton Keynes and who could potentially block plans for growth. Key factors for the future were growth (which was affected by Milton Keynes'

relations with its neighbours) and economic development. Too little was being done in the area of economic development. The basic economic stability of the city was focused on Central Milton Keynes.

- The order and process that the Council was developing in relation to policies and strategies should be clear. Also, the Core Strategy already included a future vision for Milton Keynes, so why was it necessary to develop a 'vision' again. A secondary tier of documents was examining policy in more detail, for example, Site Allocation Documents and the Local Transport Plan 3.
- The original plan for Milton Keynes was a written document detailing visions, objectives and ideas. There was a need for a 'vision' which sets out broad policies and ideas.
- There was not a need for a Transport Plan rather a need to manage transport.
- What was the point of a Tall Buildings Policy for example, this was micro-management.
- Trying to design cars out of Central Milton Keynes and getting rid of car parks was not a good idea. People would still need to drive and park in the future and there might be a need for the 25,000 car parking spaces in CMK in the future if there were 100,000 jobs created in Central Milton Keynes.
- There was a need for Milton Keynes to engage with its neighbours to receive support for its plans.
- There was a need to improve the economy of Milton Keynes to encourage people to come to Milton Keynes.
- Policy documents need to be brought together in an orderly co-ordinated sequence and communicated to a wider audience.

RESOLVED -

1. That the views expressed at the Select Committee's special meeting (held on 4 March 2010) on the Future of Milton Keynes be noted and the report forwarded to the Council's Corporate Leadership Team to inform them of the issues that were discussed.
2. That the Council's Corporate Leadership Team and Cabinet be asked to develop processes capable of engaging with interested stakeholders on the issues raised at the special meeting.
3. That the Council's Corporate Leadership Team be asked to look at how the Council's skill sets match with delivering the aspirations of the city ( by identifying gaps in skill sets, for

example, in the area of economic development and inward investment into Milton Keynes).

4. That the Council's Corporate Leadership Team be asked how and to what timescale, the Council would address issues raised at the special meeting and be asked to report back to the Select Committee.
- 5 That the Select Committee looks at the order that the Council is delivering its strategic and sub-core strategy documents.

## PG11

### **CROSS BOUNDARY MEMBER REFERENCE GROUP**

The Select Committee considered a report on proposed changes to the membership of the Cross Boundary Member Reference Group, which was to be the subject of a Delegated Decision, to be taken by the Leader of the Council, on 13 April 2010.

Comments from Members included:

- The need to consider holding a pre-meeting of Milton Keynes Council representatives prior to each meeting of the Reference Group to ensure that one single message was delivered whenever possible.
- Consideration should be given when appointing to the Reference Group, that members of the Partnerships and Growth Select Committee would be unable to scrutinise the work of the Reference Group in the future if they were members of it.
- The two way nature of Member representation on the Reference Group with the need for Members to consider how they should feedback to their individual parties.
- There was a need for representatives appointed to the Reference Group to understand the objectives Milton Keynes was trying to secure and the impact on Milton Keynes. Feedback and briefings were crucial.
- It should be remembered that most of the presentations made at the Reference Group were made by officers who would present the official line of the Council from agreed Council policy documents.

RESOLVED -

1. That the following recommendations in the report on the Cross Boundary Member Reference Group to be agreed by Delegated Decision , be supported:
  - (a) the proposed changes to increase the Milton Keynes Council membership of the Cross Boundary Member Reference Group from one to three Councillors; and

- (b) that each political party be requested to nominate one Councillor to attend the Cross Boundary Member Reference Group.
2. That the Leader of the Council be requested to give consideration to pre-meetings of Milton Keynes representatives appointed to the Cross Boundary Members' Reference Group.

## PG12

### INVOLVEMENT PROJECT

The Select Committee considered a report on the Involvement Project which aimed to involve the Council's customers, provide services that were responsive to their needs and making customers feel that they were involved in influencing and shaping the Council's services, policies and decisions.

The Select Committee noted that the project addressed issues raised by an Audit Commission inspection, which had highlighted a number of issues relating to the Council's approach to community engagement.

The Select Committee also noted the key stages of the project and made the following comments on an early draft of the Involvement Framework and the consultation document on the project.

Comments from Members included:

- The legal framework within which the Council was required to work should be taken into account, as it meant that it was not always possible to carry out the wishes of the local community in areas such as planning, transport and licensing.
- The general public has little interest in what the Council does until it affects them, which is why the Council's Development Control Committee dealing with planning matters is one of the most well attended meetings of the Council.
- There should be no corporate jargon in the consultation document.
- The need to ensure training is delivered across the Council on public engagement.
- The Framework Document should make clear the difference between communication, engagement, involvement and consultation.
- Consideration should be given to how to change the culture of the organisation as opposed to policies.
- Decision points should be clear. For example, there had been instances recently when consultations had taken place on matters where the decisions had already been taken.

- How does the Council deal with Residents' Associations which are not representative of the community?
- How is the relative weight of responses assessed? How are key issues identified and assessed?
- How are responses prepared? For example, much of the recent CAGOT report was just noted.
- Consultation should be part of a long term plan.
- Work already carried out within the Council should not be replicated. For example, consultation with the Parishes which resulted in the Parishes Charter, should be observed. There currently appears to be little co-ordination between consultation documents which were sent out to Parishes and there was usually inadequate time given for Parishes to discuss them and provide meaningful feedback.
- The importance and need for consultation with local Ward Councillors should not be overlooked. Failing to consult with Ward Councillors could lead to a situation where Councillors were campaigning against the Council on certain issues.
- The need for the Council to work as partners with the local community. Information should be accessible to the local community so they feel involved and listened to.
- There currently appears to be little co-ordination between consultation documents which were sent out to Parishes and there was usually inadequate time given for Parishes to discuss them and provide meaningful feedback.

**RESOLVED -**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That officers take into account the comments made by the Select Committee and members of the public on the draft Involvement Framework and consultation document on the Involvement Project.
3. That officers report back to the Select Committee on the outcome of consultation on the Involvement Project .

**PG13**

**COUNCILLOR ROGER BRISTOW**

Councillor Bristow stated that this was one of the last Committee meetings he would attend as a Member and thanked officers for their support.

The Chair, on behalf of the Select Committee, thanked Councillor Bristow for his service to the Select Committee and the Council and wished him well in the future.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9.32 PM