

Minutes of the meeting of the ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE held on TUESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2014 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Tallack (Chair)
Councillors Hawthorn, Legg (Vice-Chair), D McCall, I McCall, McKenzie, Wallis and Wharton (Vice-Chair)

Witnesses: G Snelson (Director of Strategy), James Williamson (Planning Officer) and L Sung (Overview and Scrutiny Officer).

Apologies: Councillor Klein

Number of Public: 1

ET11 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Transport Select Committee held on 26 November 2013 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

ET12 MILTON KEYNES AS AN INTERNATIONAL SPORTING CITY

The Committee received the Milton Keynes as an International Sporting City Strategy and the Sports and Active Communities Strategy which builds upon the International Sporting City Strategy, helping to raise the profile of sport in Milton Keynes and increase co-operation and participation.

The Committee also received the draft report of the Major Event Management Review Group and heard a short presentation from the Director of Strategy based upon a presentation made by Four Communications at one of the Review Group's meetings.

Many places are known for particular things and may become famous for how well they perform on particular dimensions and for a relatively new place like Milton Keynes, there is an issue about where to focus direction and how to build a reputation. Becoming a destination rather than a place is essential if Milton Keynes wants to become an area where people will want to visit and spend their time and money in Milton Keynes which will help to improve the local economy. Becoming a destination will also benefit people who reside in Milton Keynes by providing a strong identity and building a sense of community pride.

Four Communications, over a period of a month did a media search of where Milton Keynes was being mentioned in the press and the main stories were around the MK Dons, the Centre for Cities Reports, growth and communities, autonomous vehicles and references to the success of the Red Bull team. This indicates that

Milton Keynes has some strengths on which to build, but these are likely to be reasons to live or work in Milton Keynes and may not necessarily attract many tourists to Milton Keynes. A gap analysis had identified some of the values, aspirations and ambitions of Milton Keynes and how could best it could build upon its strengths. Considering what Milton Keynes can develop in terms of assets and opportunity, Milton Keynes would do well to promote and develop one or more areas of sporting events, technology, events, venues and education and to consider how these area can reinforce an overall branding of Milton Keynes.

Four Communications had suggested that Milton Council could develop as an international sporting city by an associating through sport, by hosting major sporting events, development of excellent sporting facilities and high performance centres, provision of excellent grassroots and attracting sports governance bodies to locate in the area and attracting visitors by providing a positive experience around sport.

The Committee considered the report of the Major Event Management Review Group which had been set up to consider all aspects of major event management and to seek out the best approach to ensure that people visiting and attending events in leave the area with a good impression of both the event itself and of Milton Keynes.

The Committee discussed the issues around those events that are unsuccessful and the ensuing reputational damage that may subsequently occur. The Council's involvement in the holding of such events would be limited to licensing and safety advice to the event organiser and the Committee particularly endorsed the recommendation at 9.2 of the report to develop a low cost guide for event organisers on some of the major issue to consider when hosting an event in Milton Keynes.

The Review Group had acknowledged that Milton Keynes was not the easiest of places to travel around, particularly people visiting Milton Keynes who come to Milton Keynes by train.

RESOLVED –

1. That 'Milton Keynes as an International Sporting City' Strategy be welcomed and noted.
2. That the Major Event Management Review Group report be endorsed and submitted to the Cabinet for consideration.

ET13

FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT

The Committee received details of the Council's flood and water management responsibilities.

As reported in March last year at the Environment & Transport Select Committee, Milton Keynes Council was now a Lead Local

Flood Authority (LLFA) and responsible for the management of flood risk from surface runoff ordinary watercourses and groundwater.

Milton Keynes continues to have a low flood risk profile both nationally, and regionally and this is the final year in which the Council will receive DEFRA funding to put into place and the carrying out of the new responsibilities under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

In light of the recent levels of rainfall, Milton Keynes was coping quite well and with the exception of the area of Willen Lake, it is testament to effective drainage systems in place in Milton Keynes area.

Over the last year there have been some concerns arising around the issue of priority and maintenance of ordinary watercourses (those that are not the Environment Agency's responsibility) and a budget has now been agreed as part of the Highways contract, to address those issues as from April 2014.

From a planning perspective and as part of the evidence base for the new Plan:MK, work is being carried out to update the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and following that, a water-cycle study that will be looking at the supply of water and in particular, the supply to specific growth sites as they come about as part of the plan.

The Surface Water Management Plan will be produced over the next year. As the drainage authority, the document will highlight areas of water management issues and suggest possible ways of mitigating those issues.

The Council will also be helping the Environment Agency complete a Water Framework Directive which will indicate the work to be undertaken by the Environment Agency on watercourses under their responsibility. In the event that there is a water quality issue within the Council's area of responsibility, both agencies will work together to formulate a solution. The Council is also working with the Environment Agency to produce some local guidance for developers, local businesses etc on what the Council's expects from them in terms of water quality.

Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires the LLFA to establish a SuDS Approval Body (SAB) which will have a range of responsibilities including the evaluation and approval of proposed surface water drainage systems in new and re-developments and, adopting and maintaining SuDS which serve more than one property, where they have been approved by the SAB. Applications to the SAB will be separate to planning applications and a separate SAB approval will be needed before development can occur. It is the intention that Schedule 3 will only apply to major planning applications for a period of 3 years before being implemented for all developments over 1 dwelling. Planning applications already within the planning system will not need to

apply for SAB approval, providing they have discharged conditions attached to the planning permission within a year of Schedule 3 being implemented. Both Building Control and Planning have been working together to plan for the establishment of a Milton Keynes Council SAB and it is the intention that Building Control will take on the responsibilities that goes alongside this.

It is expected that draft guidance and standards will be released in April 2014 and implementation is likely to be around October 2014. The Environment Agency have decided to continue to pull out of providing advice on planning applications as from April irrespective of the Schedule 3 implementation date being pushed back to around October this year. This means that the Planning section will require some drainage expertise within the section for the time being and this may come in the form of consultants or for the IDB to provide planning application advice on schemes that currently meet the threshold for Environment Agency advice. In addition, planning and building control officers will be undertaking relevant training to ensure there is knowledge within each section to ensure the appropriate advice is being collected.

A Council working group has been established which consists of Development Plans, Development Management, Building Control and the Growth & Infrastructure Team to go through any new guidance and information from Defra about the way forward. The Council is also in discussions with Bedfordshire Councils about what can potentially be done on a tri-partnership basis. Central Bedfordshire Council was currently advertising a vacancy for a SuDS engineer.

Members raised the following concerns/issues:

- Flood defence has been working well in Newport Pagnell where, historically, the Town has been prone to flooding.
- There has been some localised flooding on roads which are not usually prone to flooding such as the H3 coming into Newport Pagnell and on the V7 north side of the city centre.
- Funding was allocated for flood prevention in Stoke Goldington following flooding in 2006 and work is progressing extremely slowly.
- A considerable time has passed since the last dredging of the river in Newport Pagnell.
- Important that the Council's planning policies continue to indicate the avoidance of building on flood plains.
- The future lack of advice from the Environment Agency as from April 2014.

The Planning Officer reported that the Council's drainage team has responded to the flooding of the H3 and V7 and are dealing with the

issues in respect of these areas. In respect of the H3, there has been some works being carried out at the quarry and ditch infill had impacted on the ability to clear water. Following discussion, the matter has been dealt with and there should no longer be any further issues regarding flooding along that road.

The area of Stoke Goldington, in terms of flooding, is an ongoing issue and subject to many consultations in respect of land ownership and the cost of the land allocated for flood defence.

In terms of river maintenance in Newport Pagnell, funding for the clearance of vegetation on the banks of the river has been allocated from April 2014. The Environment Agency are happy with the way the flood defences are working in Newport Pagnell and the matter of dredging the river has been mentioned to them.

The Council's current policy is to avoid any development in flood zone 3 or development that would create a flood risk in another area. In flood zones 2, the Council would expect appropriate works to be undertaken and details of any surface water works included in any planning application submitted by a developer. Milton Keynes has sufficient land available in areas that would not be prone to flooding and it is likely that Council will continue its policy of no development in high risk flood zones. Flood risk is one of the main elements the Council should address when considering large land allocations and in the unlikely event that the matter was under consideration, any proposal would be subject to the sequential assessment under the national planning policy framework.

Other concerns raised by the committee were:

- In respect of schedule 3, the timescales involved in for any approval by the SAB.
- Whether or not developers are aware of the proposed changes.
- How this would impact on the viability of development schemes and whether this could be used by developers as a means of providing fewer affordable housing units.
- Flood mitigation transferring flooding problems to other areas.

The Planning Officer reported that the turnaround time is not as yet known as guidance is still to be produced, but the suggestion is that the approval route will follow the timescales of each planning application.

The House Building Federation should have been involved in the discussions with Defra and so developers should be fully aware of the changes.

The Planning Officer reported that he did not think the changes would have any impact on the level of housing development in

Milton Keynes. Developers will still be required to carry out the same process at the outline and pre-planning application stage of a planning application, but the difference may be that at outline permission stage, SAB approval may not have been received, however SAB will be a statutory consultee in the planning process and their full approval or their recommendation of conditions to be placed on the developer to ensure an appropriate drainage scheme was in place, would be required at full planning application stage.

The Planning Officer reported that any flood mitigation measures should not be undertaken if the impact is then transferred to another area. These matters are fully considered within the Council's planning policies. In the event that any flood mitigation measures was to be carried out without the consent of the Council as Lead Local Flood Authority, and which cause flooding in another area, then those carrying out the flood measures would be liable under enforcement and appropriate action could be taken against them. The works would need to be removed and be responsible for any insurance issues that came about from those measures.

RESOLVED -

1. That this Committee expresses its concern about the slow progress of flood defence measures in Stoke Goldington and that the Cabinet consider ways in which the project could progress at a faster rate.
2. That during the review of Plan:MK, the Cabinet provide an assurance that the Council continues its policy of not building on land with a high risk of flooding.
3. That the Environment Agency's maintenance and dredging programme for the river in Newport Pagnell be submitted to appropriate Ward Councillors.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 8.30 PM