



Minutes of the meeting of the HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE held on TUESDAY 10 DECEMBER 2013 at 7.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor Coventry (Chair)  
Councillors Bradburn, M Burke, Exon, Kennedy, Klein, O'Neill, C Williams and Wallis

**Officers:** J Reed (Assistant Director [Housing and Community]), L Ellen (Head of Housing Management), R Davies (Sports Development Manager), M Kirbyshaw (Cultural Services Manager) and S Heap (Democratic Services Manager)

**Apology:** Councillor Hoyle

**Also Present:** Councillor Bald, J Duggan (Milton Keynes Development Partnership), S Jarman (Opinions Research Services) and 8 members of the public

#### **HC13 MINUTES**

##### **RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 October 2013 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

#### **HC14 MILTON KEYNES DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP – ITS ROLE IN THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The Committee received a presentation from John Duggan (Chair of Milton Keynes Development Partnership), which addressed:

- (a) how the Development Partnership's Business Plan addressed the need to provide the 30% Affordable Housing in the Council's Core Strategy as part of each housing development, particularly at times of recession when developers are requesting a lower percentage;
- (b) the Partnership's landholding and potential residential development sites, including priorities for future development;
- (c) the Partnership's role in delivering 'quality' Affordable housing, both in terms of build and design; and
- (d) how the public was involved / consulted in determining 'development briefs'.

In respect of each of the points, the Committee heard that:

- (a) The Development Partnership's Board had a number of members who had development experience and so were aware of viability issues. The Partnership was of the strong belief that there was little reason for developers not to be able to provide 30% Affordable Housing as part of schemes and would expect any housing development on land made available by the Partnership to include 30% Affordable Housing .
- (b) The Development Partnership currently had 850 sites, although some were small and not necessarily suitable for development. The sites currently identified for housing could potentially provide up to 5,000 homes, of which it was expected that 1,500 would be defined as 'affordable'. However, the timing of development had still to be decided.
- (c) The Development Partnership was still formulating its design and build standards, but would seek to ensure that the affordable housing provided quality design and energy efficiency. The first design brief due to be published was for land at Newlands.
- (d) Key stakeholders would be invited to comment on development proposals for large sites, before undertaking a formal consultation. For smaller sites it was intended that Ward Members, the parish council any other stakeholders would be consulted and their views actively considered when forming the development brief.

In answer to questions the Committee received the following responses from the Chair of the Partnership:

- (a) While understanding the wish of Members to increase the availability of affordable housing, the Partnership was working to the Council's Core Strategy, which had a 30% requirement. The Development Partnership would seek to follow the Council's policy if it was agreed that the percentage of affordable housing provided as part of developments should increase;
- (b) Generally it was expected that most developers would seek support from a Registered Social Landlord as part of the development who would then provide the funding for the affordable homes element;
- (c) Partnership plan briefs would identify those sites being considered for development and it was intended that Ward Members would be informed when the Partnership was preparing a particular development brief for a site and invited to comment. While there was no formal process for Ward Members, or parish councils to come forward with ideas for particular sites the Partnership would welcome an approach to discuss ideas;

- (d) A list of the Partnership's landholdings was available, but there needed to be some thought given to how this information was made available to Members in a coherent and understandable manner and it could then be made available on request; and
- (e) Affordable rent levels would be set by the Registered Social Landlord working with developers, the Partnership could not dictate rent levels in its development briefs, just the percentage of affordable homes to be provided.

Members recognised that the Development Partnership could potentially reflect the need to provide 30% affordable housing in the sale price of the land, so that viability would not be an issue for developers.

The Chair thanked Mr Duggan for his attendance at the meeting.

**HC15**

### **PRIVATE RENTED PROPERTY LICENSING CONSULTATION RESULTS**

The Committee received initial details of the emerging findings and key outputs from the research and consultation on the Private Rented Property Licensing Consultation.

The Committee received a copy of the draft Executive Summary of the report and noted that it was intended that the full report would be issued later in the week for consultation with key stakeholders.

A representative of Opinions Research Service, who had undertaken the research, reported that the consultation began in July 2013 and closed on 1 November 2013 and had involved a wide range of groups, which included key stakeholders, such as residents, landlords and tenants.

The representative of Opinions Research Service also reported that the final report would provide collaborative evidence for the report's findings, but referred to the differing opinions between landlords and tenants as to whether additional licencing was desirable.

In answer to questions the representative of Opinions Research Service indicated that responses to the consultation in respect of Houses in Multiple Occupation had been limited, therefore it was difficult to establish a need for additional licensing. However, the report would address the specific issue of Houses in Multiple Occupation. While noting the concerns of Members with regard to perceived anti-social behaviour associated with Houses in Multiple Occupation, it had been difficult to establish a causal link between Houses in Multiple Occupation and anti-social behaviour and if it was the Council's decision to introduce additional licensing it would be necessary to demonstrate that all other measures to address any problems had been tried.

The Committee noted that the final report was scheduled to be considered by the Cabinet in March 2014.

RESOLVED -

That an extraordinary meeting of the Committee be held to allow it to submit comments to Cabinet on the final report on the Private Rented Property Licensing Consultation, including the officers' recommendations.

**HC16**

## **ARTS/HERITAGE/SPORT AND LEISURE STRATEGIES**

The Committee received a presentation on the background to the Arts and Public Art Strategy, the Heritage, Museums and Archive Strategy and the Sport and Active Communities Strategy, including details of the initial findings arising from the consultations, which were undertaken between on 30 August 2013 and 29 November 2013.

The Committee noted that there had been a wide range of engagement activities undertaken by officers to encourage responses to the consultations, including specific workshops aimed at key stakeholder organisations and members of the public and direct invitations to organisations.

The Committee, noting the aspiration in the cultural vision to be recognised as world class by 2023, questioned how such an aspiration could be measured, but in doing so was of the view that Milton Keynes was already world class and a leader in many areas and should recognise its many achievements and cultural heritage.

The Committee also referred to the added impetus achieving city status would bring to gaining greater recognition.

The Committee also recognised that as part of delivering the Strategies there was a need for the Council to enable the development of small groups and then support them, perhaps by making facilities available.

With regard to public art the Committee noted the challenge provided by the need conserve the public art and the on-going maintenance costs. The engagement of the community and engendering a pride in the art was considered key.

The Committee further recognised that the involvement of the community, including parish councils was key to the successful delivery of the strategies.

It was reported that the draft Strategies, taking account of the responses to the consultations, were due to be considered by the responsible Cabinet member as a delegated decision on 11 March 2014.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 8:55 PM