

Minutes of the meeting of the STRATEGIC PLACEMAKING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held on THURSDAY 26 JULY 2018, 7.01 PM.

**Present:** Councillors Bint (Chair), Ferrans, Gilbert, Marklew, McPake, Morla, Minns, Rankine

**Officers:** Tracy Darke (Service Director - Growth, Economy & Culture), Martyn Smith (Manager - Infrastructure Programme) and Dwight McKenzie (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

**Apologies:** Councillor Geetha Morla

**Also Present:** Councillor Mick Legg (Cabinet Member - Customer Services) and Councillor David Hopkins

**SPS03 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Councillor Rankine advised the Committee that he was a former employee of BP and shareholder in BP.

Councillor Bint advised the Committee that he was a member of the Milton Keynes Development Board.

Councillor Ferrans advised the Committee that she was a member of the Milton Keynes Development Board.

**SPS04 MINUTES**

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the Strategic Placemaking Scrutiny Committee special meeting of 16 May 2018 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**SPS05 MOBILITY STRATEGY - AN ACTION PLAN DETAILING PROGRESS**

Witnesses: Jane Palmer (CEO - Age UK, Milton Keynes), and other business and community organisations in Milton Keynes

Councillor Bint introduced the item and raised concerns as to the lack of detail in the Milton Keynes Mobility Strategy Action Plan document which had been provided for the Committee.

In the initial discussion of the item, the Committee noted that:

- (a) The Mobility Strategy Action Plan was scheduled to be submitted to Cabinet in September 2018;

- (b) The purpose of the Committee's scrutiny of this item was to contribute to the Mobility Strategy Action Plan in time for the Cabinet meeting in September;
- (c) A draft Mobility Strategy Action plan had been expected for the Committee's meeting, however the lack detail in the document submitted for the meeting made effective scrutiny difficult;
- (d) Concern that the Mobility Strategy Briefing Note submitted to the Committee was vague. Among the information Committee members expressly desired was:
  - (i) to know what projects were being proposed;
  - (ii) in what time period; and
  - (iii) with what performance targets.

The Committee received a presentation from Jane Palmer (CEO-Age UK, Milton Keynes) who advised that:-

- (a) There were fewer buses in Milton Keynes's Community Transport Service, and a restricted definition made many people ineligible for community transport;
- (b) Public and accessible transport was a problem in Milton Keynes and there was a disconnect between demand and supply;
- (c) Age UK's "Policy Position Paper - Public Transport" makes clear that the UK government needed to reduce social isolation and loneliness for older people;
- (d) Under "Chapter 1 - Our ambition" of the Mobility Strategy, there should be a section devoted to the issue of bus punctuality in the Action Plan as this was a problem in Milton Keynes, evidenced by previous bus service surveys;
- (e) Buses may need shorter routes / journey times but should always be punctual;
- (f) Chapter 2 of the Mobility Strategy should address the issue of car occupancy. In Milton Keynes it was low (approximately 1.5 people per car), and more car sharing schemes would help reduce congestion on the roads;
- (g) Page 6 of the Mobility Strategy referenced expanding bus use. This was something that should be in the short term not medium term especially as it could be done quickly;
- (h) The bus stop was on the wrong side of the dual carriageway to the hospital.

In concluding the presentations, Age UK expressed hope that the above points would be addressed in the Action Plan.

A number of other community and business stakeholders at the meeting also made contributions to the Committee's scrutiny of the Agenda item, through participation in the item's discussion.

During the general discussion following the presentation by Age UK the Committee noted:

- (a) Information from Tracey Dark (Service Director - Growth, Economy and Culture) that 'short term' for the Mobility Strategy meant up to 5 years, 'medium term' meant up to 2030, and 'long term' meant up to 2050;
- (b) The Mobility Strategy was already completed, it was the "Action Plan" of the Mobility Strategy that that was the subject of current scrutiny;
- (c) Business and community stakeholders had been to review meetings and put forward views on the Mobility Strategy, and would in future put forward views on the Action Plan if afforded the opportunity;
- (d) Arriva had been involved in some of the points of the Mobility Strategy Action Plan, but the Committee remained concerned as to the lack detail of the Action Plan.

**RESOLVED -**

- 1. That the Committee extends its thanks to the guest speakers for having contributed through their presentation to the Committee's scrutiny of this item.
- 2. That the Committee express its disappointment to Public Realm officers for their failure to publish the "Mobility Strategy Action Plan" for Cabinet in time for the Committee's meeting.
- 3. That the Committee recommends to Public Realm officers that they engage with councillors and public stakeholders before publication of the "Mobility Strategy Action Plan" for Cabinet.
- 4. That the Committee recommends that the Council's "Energy, Water and Carbon Strategy" feed into the "Mobility Strategy Action Plan".
- 5. That the Committee recommends to Cabinet that the "Mobility Strategy Action Plan" takes into account time scales for the "East-West Arc".
- 6. That the Committee recommends to Public Realm officers that the "Mobility Strategy Action Plan" report clearly outlines its priorities and justification for those priorities.
- 7. That the Committee recommends to Public Realm officers, that the "Mobility Strategy Action Plan" should reflect the challenges associated with Milton Keynes being a

“destination city” together with those faced by elderly residents and visitors.

**SPS06**

## **PARKING PRICING POLICY**

Witness: Steven Gordon-Wilson (Chief Executive- Destination Milton Keynes)

The Chair introduced the item and outlined that parking was an issue in Milton Keynes evidenced for example by officers reporting that the availability of parking spaces was reducing relative to demand. New parking and parking enforcement infrastructure was therefore being put in place for the future. It was also pointed out that a copy of the delegated decision of June 2018 in relation to was available from McPake.

The Committee received a presentation from Steven Gordon-Wilson (Chief Executive- Destination Milton Keynes) who informed:-

- Milton Keynes Council has stated that it wants the borough to be a cooperative borough, customer friendly and a tourism destination
- Tourism for the city of Milton Keynes was valued at approximately £232 million
- A destination Management Plan was created by Destination MK.
- The Briefing Note provided by Milton Keynes Council officers and authored (Steve Hayes) identifies falling visitor numbers to Milton Keynes
- Destination MK's position is as follows:-
  1. Parking costs in Milton Keynes were high and is a deterrent to visitors
  2. Parking infrastructure would be improved if it was made to include pay on exit parking
  3. Destination MK welcomed a chance to discuss a scheme where visitors were incentivised to visit Milton Keynes through parking
  4. Concept of pay on exit parking should be budgeted for by Milton Keynes Council

Kevin Duffy (Centre Director- Centre MK) in his contribution to the Committee outlined:-

- Businesses in Milton Keynes faced many challenges including increasing business costs, increased online competition, a more mobile workforce, and matrix parking displays which have not effectively worked in recent years
- Milton Keynes's Parking Strategy does not recognise the above challenges

- Milton Keynes Council needs to look at parking in Milton Keynes as a business, and invest in it accordingly.
- Research and investment was needed before any introduction of new parking tariffs

Alan Francis (Chair- Milton Keynes Transport Partnership) in his contribution to the Committee outlined:-

- Reducing cost of parking undermines bus services in Milton Keynes
- Income from parking is funding transport infrastructure services in Milton Keynes
- Milton Keynes was competitive in parking except in terms of the premium rate
- Previous Task and Finish Groups raised concerns that some people overpay for parking Milton Keynes in that they overestimate their stay
- Greater use of technology for parking management and pricing in Milton Keynes will help people in the borough.

Following the presentations, the Committee in its discussion noted:

- (a) Milton Keynes might need a shuttle bus service which could reduce the demand for parking space in the borough, especially in Central Milton Keynes
- (b) The Council's parking policy extends to residents parking
- (c) An issue for Milton Keynes is ineffective enforcement of Parking Permits in domestic rural areas, which could suggest that the Council's contractor is not effectively enforcing the scheme
- (d) There needs to be a formal review and assessment of parking services and whether parking contractors were fulfilling their obligations.
- (e) Milton Keynes Council needs to be careful in not being over reliant on motorists to fund subsidised bus services
- (f) September 2018 will see the introduction of new parking technology in Milton Keynes, and 2 new car parks
- (g) Prepaid parking can be counterproductive for Milton Keynes in and lead to undesirable outcomes; for example (1) Shoppers deciding to stop shopping early if their parking time runs out, and (2) Shoppers decide to exhaust their parking time even if their shopping or any other business was concluded.

- (h) Pay on exit parking is potentially desirable for Milton Keynes as a more effective and efficient way of managing and pricing parking especially as relates to Central Milton Keynes.
- (i) Shuttle service as a solution to parking is a potential solution especially for the business district
- (j) Any review of parking enforcement should include the residential district

**RESOLVED**

1. That the Committee welcome the contractual changes that are leading to the better collection and utilisation of data to inform future decision and to enable more technology sophisticated payment tariffs to be implemented in Milton Keynes.
2. That the Committee recommends to Cabinet that before any further changes are made to the Council's parking tariffs, research is undertaken of the attitudes and behaviour of people using parking services in Milton Keynes, and this research be used to inform a business plan for parking as a whole in Central Milton Keynes.
3. That the Committee recommends that Cabinet and Public Realm officers engage with the retail and business community in Milton Keynes so as to ensure Council understanding of the parking needs of these stakeholders.
4. That the Committee recommends to Cabinet that parking tariffs in Milton Keynes be simplified and/or parking signposting and messaging be improved.
5. That the Committee welcomes Arriva's introduction of a £1 charge for bus travel around Milton Keynes, and encourages the Council to promote it as a means of helping to alleviate demand on parking resources in Milton Keynes.
6. That the Committee recommends to Public Realm officers that they compare Milton Keynes to comparable local authorities, but also comparable out of town leisure destinations for example Bluewater as part of the business plan for any Parking Pricing policy.
7. That the Committee recommends that the Council review whether there is effective enforcement by the Councils parking contractor, of the parking permit scheme in rural and suburban areas of the borough.

**SPS07**

**RENAISSANCE CMK**

Witnesses: Tim Roxburgh (Special Projects Director- MK Council), Tracy Darke (Service Director- Growth, Economy & Culture), and Martyn Smith (Manager- Infrastructure Programme)

The Committee received a presentation from the witnesses who outlined:-

- The Renaissance CMK document will be presented to Cabinet in September 2018
- The documents aim is to encourage investment into Milton Keynes and to aid development of the borough
- Milton Keynes is located in a strong growth region; Cambridge to MK- Oxford Arc
- Renaissance CMK, sets out a programme designed to create a vibrant and prosperous town centre suited for Milton Keynes future needs
- A questionnaire had only recently been started as regards Station Square, however the discussion of Renaissance CMK's Prospectus was without prejudice as regards any planning application that might on future be received by Milton Keynes Council

Following the presentation, the Committee in its discussion noted:-

- (a) No limit was being put on the height of developments as relates to the Renaissance of Milton Keynes. Although there were height guidelines in some policy documents, they provide exemptions for some projects
- (b) A National Policy Planning Framework (2<sup>nd</sup> version) was very recently published and this document had been helpful and informative.
- (c) There was scope for the Renaissance CMK Prospectus to incorporate international links especially European links for development in Milton Keynes
- (d) More residents choosing to live in Milton Keynes might be a circular argument as developers might just be choosing to develop in Milton Keynes, and people therefore having to choose to live in Milton Keynes.
- (e) Things such as a musical venue, museum and art things etc. would be good for Milton Keynes, and could be considered as "must haves" for Central Milton Keynes. When this list of "must haves" was developed, it can be shared by officers with the SPS Committee.
- (f) University projects had proven to be helpful to the development of city centres in other parts of the UK. The MK University project was therefore good for Milton Keynes.
- (g) Committee members concern that Milton Keynes relies too much on retail for development activity and this was risky in light of the intense competition being faced by retail outlets across the UK.



- (h) MKDD would welcome more project directors as indicative of full support of it from the Council.
- (i) Acknowledgment that both a day time economy, night time economy and cultural attractions were important to Milton Keynes's future development.

**RESOLVED**

1. That the Committee welcomes the report, and commends Public Realm officers for the style, presentation and content of the Report.
2. That the Committee express its agreement to Cabinet and Public Realm officers that the renaissance and development of Central Milton Keynes is an urgent issue due to the pace of change in Milton Keynes.

**SPS08**

**FLOODING ISSUES**

The Committee considered a Briefing Note which had been submitted by Jane Harrison (Head of Communities- Milton Keynes Council) for the Committee's information. The Briefing related to flooding in parts of the borough as a result of heavy rainfall experienced in Milton Keynes on 27 May 2018.

In its discussion of the Briefing, the Committee heard:-

- (a) Councillor. McPake was lead councillor on flooding
- (b) the Section 19 Report was not yet available
- (c) There would be a further Flooding Report (Section 19 Report) which would serve as a follow up to the Briefing submitted to the Committee, once it was prepared and finalised.
- (d) The Committee would further consider the issue of flooding in Milton Keynes once the Section 19 report was made available.
- (e) After the last major flooding to affect Milton Keynes, a Section 19 report had been prepared. Councillor D. Hopkins would try to identify and share this report with Committee members for their information.

**RESOLVED**

That the Committee notes the report briefing.

**SPS09**

**WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19**

**RESOLVED**

1. That the Committee recommends to the Scrutiny Management Committee the addition of 'Energy, Water and Carbon Strategy' to the work programme at a future date to be determined by the Planning Group.



2. That the Committee recommends to the Cabinet Member for Public Realm, the Acting Chief Executive and the Corporate Director Place, that their officers produce documents in a timely manner taking into account the Scrutiny Timetable, so as to enable cross party scrutiny of documents/reports before they are presented to Cabinet.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9:00 PM