



Educate Investigate and Enable

13 December 2009

Councillor M Galloway
Chair LDF Advisory Group, Milton Keynes Council

Dear Councillor Galloway

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: CORE STRATEGY
(proposed changes for consideration by the LDF Advisory Group, 15 December 2009)

We are disappointed that the additional papers, circulated for this Tuesday's LDF Advisory Group setting out proposed further changes of the Core Strategy, take little account of MK Forum's previously submitted views. We are therefore writing, on behalf of the Milton Keynes Forum Committee, to make clear our continued concerns about significant shortcomings in this important strategy.

You will recollect that we wrote to you on 13th November, setting out five areas of concern. We appreciated the opportunity you gave to us to speak about these issues at the LDF Advisory Group on 17th November. We wrote to you again on 23rd November, immediately prior to Cabinet on 24th (attaching a more detailed note for officers) about implications for public transport and its relationship to CMK and providing the evidence base of our most serious concerns. We set out further down this letter (under the heading CMK and transport) what has happened to this discussion since then and what is still needed to resolve it.

In our first letter to you, of 13th November, we raised five issues and made nine specific points in relation to transport. We welcome the one change that has been made, to add 'transport' to the key issues at paragraph 1.3. But this has not been reflected throughout the Core Strategy, to explain the huge step-change to public transport that is needed if the strategy is to be successful. We made nine suggestions of the kind of changes needed to specific paragraphs, but not a single change is contained in the proposals put before the Advisory Group. It makes no sense to change a fundamental objective and not to reflect this throughout the strategy. We ask that further consideration be given to this.

We raised four points other than CMK and transport (in our letter of 13th November and in our presentation to the LDFAG on the 17th) most of which we thought were recognised by the Advisory Group as significant, but again we see no change recommended to the Core Strategy to reflect any of these. The points related to:

- Balancing housing and employment growth
- Employment and outward-commuting
- Shopping
- Potential future crossings of the M1.

CMK and transport

In relation to the issues we raised about CMK and transport, your officers responded to our letter and attached technical note of 23rd November in an e-mail letter we received on 7th December. We replied to this the next day, 8th December, copying it this to you and Councillors Hopkins and White. As you know, we decided it would not be a constructive way forward, to go point by point through the reasons why the officers' response of 7th December failed to answer the Forum's concerns. Due to what we are advised is an oversight, our e-mail reply of 8th December has not yet been made available to all members of the Advisory Group with their papers for this Tuesday's meeting, but late last Friday Andrew Thomas was informed that this would be corrected this Monday morning. In the meantime, whilst we remain available to meet with officers if necessary, we are awaiting their response to our 8th December e-mail as the most useful way forward at this stage.

You will recall that in our email we explained how unconvinced we were by officers' responses to the issues we raised about the relationship of transport to CMK development. So we set out seven pieces of information, which we considered needed to be made available, connected to each other, to understand how – or even whether – the planned growth of CMK can be achieved. Indeed, until that kind of analysis is provided, there is no clear basis of knowing whether the proposed level of growth is achievable. We await a further response to this, and we remain convinced that the Core Strategy will need to be changed to take this into account, unless we see evidence to the contrary.

We are copying this letter to Councillors Hopkins and White, Bob Wilson and other relevant officers.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Thomas
Secretary MK Forum

Mike LeRoy
MK Forum Committee

For Milton Keynes Forum Committee.