



Minutes of the meeting of the LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK ADVISORY GROUP held on 15 DECEMBER 2009 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillor Galloway (Chair)
Councillors Ferrans, Hopkins, A Morris, Potts and White

Officers: N Fenwick (Assistant Director [Planning]), I Haynes (Chief Spatial Planner), B Wilson (Development Plans Manager), Neil Sainsbury (Principal Urban Designer), David Blandamer (Urban Designer), Matthew Clarke (Senior Urban Designer) and J Zammit (Committee Manager)

Apology: Councillor Bristow

Also Present: Councillors Bint and Crooks

Public: 2

LDF17 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor White declared a personal interest in Item 7 – Local Development Framework Core Strategy: Submission Document as the Secretary of the Federation of Small Businesses and as the Chair of the United Sustainable Energy Agency which administers the Council's Carbon Offset Fund.

Councillor Potts declared a general personal interest as a member of the NEEM group (No Expansion East of the M1).

LDF18 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: DESIGN GUIDE – NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

The Group reviewed an updated Design Guide which had taken into account Members comments made at the meeting of the Local Development Framework Advisory Group held on 21 October 2009. Changes had mostly been in respect of:

- Shared Surfaces
- Tandem Parking
- Housing Types and Garden Sizes
- Sustainability
- Durability of Materials
- Cul-de-sacs

- Conservation Areas and Rural Villages
- Character/Identity of New Development

The Group was informed that once changes had been agreed the document would go out to public consultation in January/February 2010. The Group felt that officers had not taken comments made by members into account especially in respect of shared surfaces, the look of durability in housing materials and Cul-de-sacs.

Members made the following comments:

- That shared surfaces were still being promoted despite Members' comments previously to stop shared surfaces being used. Members were of the view that shared surfaces turned streets into rat runs for traffic to avoid busy roads and therefore should not feature in the Design Guide unless they were the only viable option.
- That there needed to be an emphasis on the look of building materials, that they looked durable and would remain so in the long term.
- That significant areas of development where it was desirable to create an identity should be given a name to help create that identity.
- This document had the potential to prevent innovation and create a bland design template.
- That demonstrations of popular houses focus on quirky and innovative types when generally people prefer more traditional types of houses. The guide should therefore state support for traditional houses in some areas.
- All pictures of housing in the Design Guide are of 1970's-1980's housing, there needed to be more contemporary examples.
- Where areas were going to be high density it was necessary to ensure that there was still average family sized dwellings present to avoid a proliferation of flats just to achieve the higher level of density required for sustainable transport services and amenities.
- That dwellings with small/no gardens should be placed nearest to open park space to make those properties more desirable. Feelings of open space were a traditional part of Milton Keynes with linear parks being a key factor in this.
- That there was no mention of provision for working from home and running businesses from home.
- That the size of a group of affordable houses pepper potted amongst market housing should be flexible or refer to another document that could be updated as necessary.

- There needed to be a statement saying that any public sector housing in the future would also be required to abide by the design guide.
- That ownership of grass verges needed highlighting as often there was no clear ownership of verges and they often got damaged by parked cars.
- Front court parking was not promoted enough in the document and it appeared to present rear court parking as acceptable which Members had previously not supported. Tandem parking should be discouraged rather than encouraged as it appeared to be.
- Houses should not have steps to the front as it hindered disabled access.
- That the design functionality of the houses themselves should be addressed. Minimum sizes of houses and rooms should be looked at to ensure that houses were not built which were too small and not fit for purpose. Research needed to be done to see what the current thinking was in this area and to help set a minimum requirement or standard for the internal design of houses.
- Reference needed to be made to encourage design to be in keeping with the architectural style of existing North Buckinghamshire villages.
- The Guide needed to address frontages onto grid roads, to ensure that development on one side of the grid road takes into consideration development on the other side of the grid road.

Members also commented on the permeability of estates for pedestrians and suggested that estates needed to be designed so that it was easier to travel by foot than by car if we want people to walk around estates. Officers responded by informing the Group that too many footpaths in secluded areas, for example behind houses, was against best practice and discouraged on terms of community safety by Thames Valley Police. Members felt that it would be important in the future to have discussions with a range of professionals, including Thames Valley Police, to discuss community safety and street design.

Members also noted that in regards to the timetable for the publication of the Design Guide, the Guide should be resubmitted to the Group in the new Council Year rather than in April.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Design Guide – New Housing Development be agreed to go out to public consultation, subject to the Members comments be incorporated where possible and final

approval by the Chair of the Group to confirm the changes to the Guide.

2. That Officers be requested to research standards for internal building design with regard to energy efficiency, use of rooms and room sizes for possible inclusion in the document.

LDF19

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: CENTRAL MILTON KEYNES TALL BUILDING GUIDANCE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Group received a draft of the Central Milton Keynes Tall Buildings Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for comment before it would be presented for formal consultation.

The Group was informed that tall buildings had the potential to add significant value to the City. They could enhance skylines and provide recognisable landmarks that could serve to promote the City on a national and international stage.

The Group was informed that the Local Plan and adopted CMK Development Framework recognised that taller buildings could play an important role for the sustainable growth of the city centre, but failed to define a tall building, or where tall buildings were appropriate in CMK. The Group was informed that the SPD provided a definition of a tall building as one that is 10 or more stories high.

The Group acknowledged that the document would need to dispel the myth that Milton Keynes was designed around a principle of no building taller than the tallest tree. People would automatically think of this and the Council would face resistance as a result. It was suggested that this issue should be addressed head on within the document.

The Group also made the following comments:

- That areas other than CMK would need tall building policies, while recognising that CMK is where the most pressure for tall buildings was.
- That potential innovative/interesting uses for underground floors or tall buildings other than car parks, be explored.
- That the topography and contours of Central Milton Keynes needed to be available to get a proper understanding of the impact of tall buildings in CMK.
- The consultation document should be expressed in easily understood language.

Members noted that the Supplementary Planning Document was mainly for guidance and that more detailed design issues of tall buildings such as occupancy figures, persons and goods movements would be addressed in a separate document.

Members were informed that applications for tall buildings would still need to be considered through the Development Control process and applications would be addressed on a case by case basis.

Members noted that the Supplementary Planning Document was a valuable tool in the marketing of CMK as an alternative regional centre to developers and gives developers a greater degree of certainty.

RESOLVED –

That the Central Milton Keynes Tall Building Guidance Supplementary Planning Document be agreed for public consultation subject to the Members' comments being incorporated where possible and final approval by the Chair to confirm the changes to the document.

LDF20

MILTON KEYNES LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY: SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

Officers informed the Group that an updated Core Strategy would be produced once proposed changes from Member submissions and Member comments arising from the meeting of the 17 November 2009 Local Development Framework Group had been agreed. The Group indicated that it would wish to see an updated Core Strategy document as soon as possible in order that Members could compare Minutes of the Group's meeting with the document.

Members made the following additional comments in respect of the Core Strategy:

- That it would be helpful to say that there were increasing pressures to encourage more sustainable transport.
- That the town centre definition of Bletchley needed clarifying.

Andy Thomas and Mike Leroy of Milton Keynes Forum addressed the Group and made the following points:

- That as transport was a fundamental aspect of CMK and was a fundamental building block for the Core Strategy, the Forum was not yet convinced that the data in the document was solid enough and that appropriate action was being planned in respect of transport.
- There was an expected large intensification of jobs and that the resulting transport needs had not been adequately addressed in the Core Strategy.

Members noted that the issues raised by MK Forum could be addressed through meetings between the Forum's representatives and officers to clarify any outstanding concerns.

RESOLVED –

1. That the leader be recommended to convene a special meeting of the Cabinet on 5 January 2010 to consider for approval for Council the Core Strategy.
2. That officer changes in response to Member comments from the meetings of the Local Development Framework Advisory Group on 17 November 2009 be agreed and the Core Strategy updated accordingly.
3. That the officer changes in response to the redrafted 'Delivering Economic Prosperity' section of the Core Strategy be agreed and the Core Strategy updated accordingly.
4. That Officers be requested to consult with MK Forum in respect of Transport issues

THE CHAIR ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 21.50pm.