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ITEM 4a



Minutes of the meeting of the REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held on THURSDAY 25 JUNE 2020

Present: Councillors Baines, Crooks (Chair), Cryer-Whitehead, Exon, Petchey, Priestley, Rankine, Trendall, Walker and C Wilson-Marklew

Officers: M Kelleher (Director of Housing and Regeneration), W Rysdale (Head of Housing Delivery), J Trueman (Service Delivery Unit Manager), D Pragnell (Head of Public Health Programmes), E Richardson (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

Also Present: Councillor Baume (Cabinet Member for Economy and Culture), Councillor O'Neill (Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing) and two members of the public

Apologies: None

RG03 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Councillor Baines advised that he was a council tenant on the Fishermead Estate and Parish Councillor for Campbell Park. He also advised that he had worked on the Neighbourhood Plan for the Campbell Park Parish Council.

Councillor Cryer-Whitehead advised that she was a council tenant on the Fullers Slade estate.

RG04 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 19 December 2019 and 20 May 2020 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

RG05 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Committee had received 18 written questions from the public in advance of the meeting, to which written replies had been made.

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David Lee, Secretary of RoRE (Residents of Regeneration Estates) commented on the questions submitted by RoRE and thanked respondents for their answers.

Jeanette Marling attended to the meeting to ask her question in person. Details of her question, together with those received in writing, including supplementary questions and the replies, are included as Annex A of these minutes.

RESOLVED –

That once all the responses to the questions received have been collated, they are posted on CMIS as part of the documentation relating to this meeting.

RG06

**REGENERATION IS MORE THAN JUST BRICKS AND MORTAR:
HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

Witnesses: Councillor O’Neill (Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing) and D Pragnell (Head of Public Health Programmes)

The Committee received a presentation from Cllr O’Neill and the Head of Public Health Programmes, originally scheduled for the March meeting which had been cancelled due to the Covid-19 lockdown.

The presentation covered a number of themes, including housing quality, food inequalities, education and skill, the availability of employment, deprivation and the provision of primary healthcare. The Committee also heard about the different levels of impact these factors had on the health and wellbeing of residents and how improving the availability or delivery of these factors through a process of regeneration and renewal can make a positive difference to people’s lives.

The presentation concluded with a brief update on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on health inequalities.

The Committee then discussed the presentation with Cllr O’Neill and the Head of Public Health Programmes, making the following comments:

- a) The apparent age gap at death between men and women in Milton Keynes was of concern as local life expectancy seemed to have got worse over the last ten years. It was not clear how the information had been gathered or where from. The lack of an equivalent to the old *MK Atlas*, which had provided a wide range of statistical information, was lamented and councillors would like to see it restored.

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- b) The level of poverty in what was considered a prosperous town was also a concern. The best way out of poverty was decent jobs and the Council needed to proactively attract viable, businesses to Milton Keynes which could provide long-term employment opportunities.
- c) Although the presentation was thorough in its assessment of the issues, there was concern at the lack of detail about any actions to address them.
- d) The performance of some schools needed to be improved and joint working between schools and industry to equip students with the right skills for future job markets could be a way forward.
- e) The Council's social mobility pledge did not appear to have been acted upon and needed energy to activate it.
- f) Poor health, both physical and mental, was linked to poor housing and just tweaking bathrooms and kitchens in regeneration areas would not solve the problem.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and the Head of Public Health Programmes be thanked for their presentation and their contribution to the Committee's scrutiny of this item.
2. That the Committee's Planning Group collates the Committee's comments on this item into a short report for presentation to Cabinet.

RG07

DRAFT COMMUNITY LED REGENERATION AND ESTATE RENEWAL STRATEGY

Witnesses: Councillor Baume (Cabinet Member for Economy and Culture), W Rysdale (Head of Housing Delivery)

In her introduction to this item, Councillor Baume reported that so far the Council had received 137 responses to its public consultation on the revised strategy. The basis of the strategy was no longer about wholesale demolition, although some buildings, such as Cripps Lodge and Buckland Lodge which were no longer fit for purpose and beyond economic repair would be demolished and replaced with good quality, affordable family housing.

Councillor Baume explained that it was important to get the strategy right first and then develop a detailed action plan against which progress could be monitored.

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During scrutiny of this item, the Committee noted that:

- a) the strategy had shifted from its original position of concentrating on just bricks and mortar and that the other aspects of renewal beyond the housing agenda were welcome;
- b) engagement work with local people was being undertaken to find out what was important to them as the Council needed to take on board what residents thought were the key issues;
- c) the Council would partner with local agencies and tap into their expertise in their communities to deliver an efficient regeneration and renewal programme.

However, concern was expressed by some members of the Committee that the strategy appeared to be very light weight, with nothing much of substance in it to give those living in poor quality housing any hope of improvement. The question of what had happened to the Cabinet's Regeneration Sub-Committee was also raised.

Other comments made by the Committee were that:

- a) there was a lot to like in the new draft strategy and the move beyond the original 7 estates was welcome;
- b) the programme needed to be led by place and closely involve parish councils so that it could be led from the ground up and local knowledge utilised;
- c) the move away from the idea that regeneration was about wholesale demolition was welcome as renewal was also about people, not just bricks and mortar;
- d) the programme needed to be done with residents, not to them;
- e) pace of delivery was important and how the Cabinet could be held to account for any delay needed to be built into the programme. Monitoring needed to be regular and effective, possibly quarterly.

The Committee thanked all those who were working on developing the revised strategy and welcomed the wider remit it was now covering.

As part of this item the Committee then moved on to discuss the final winding up of the Council's relationship with YourMK. The Chair welcomed Will Rysdale, the new Head of Housing Delivery to the Council, and thanked Aniekan Umorien, the Interim Head of Regeneration for her work.

The Committee had received a briefing note setting out the Council's position and the need for the decision to terminate the partnership with YourMK. The Partnership had been heavily scrutinised over the past 4 years and it was clear that it had failed to deliver its original objectives. There was a need to improve the Council's relationship with local communities and a fresh start was needed in order for any future regeneration projects to succeed.

The Committee welcomed the briefing note and thought it was well presented and set the case out clearly. Concern was expressed though at the lack of financial information in the paper on which to base any recommendations; having that detail in a separate, confidential document might have been helpful. However, it was agreed that there was enough information on which to make a recommendation to support the winding up of the partnership.

The Committee agreed that it was essential that the Council acted on the lessons learned from the failure of the partnership although the possibility of using other public-private partnerships in the future should not be ruled out.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Cabinet Member for Economy and Culture and the Head of Housing Delivery be thanked for their contribution to the Committee's scrutiny of this item.
2. That the Committee's Planning Group, picks up the comments from the meeting and, on behalf of the Committee, prepares a formal response to the current public consultation.
3. That the Committee formally requests Council that its name be changed to the Regeneration and Renewal Scrutiny Committee.
4. That the Committee's comments on the future of the Regeneration Partnership Between the Council and Mears PLC be passed to the decision maker for inclusion in the report for to a Delegated Decision on this matter being made on 21 July 2020.

RG08

DRAFT 2020/21 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received and noted the draft 2020/21 Work Programme. It was agreed that the item scheduled for the March 2021 meeting scrutinising Sustainability within the Regeneration Programme be expanded to include the issue of cost-effective heating and hot water systems previously raised by Councillor Rankine.

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RESOLVED –

That the Committee's Draft 2020/21 Work Programme be received and noted, subject to the following additions:

- a) That scrutiny of efficient and cost-effective heating and hot water systems be included in the item on sustainability as part of the Regeneration Programme scheduled for March.
- b) That the Planning Group reviews the Committee's procedures to ensure that it provides effective scrutiny of the Council's Regeneration and Renewal Programme.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 21:13

The recording of this meeting is available to view on the Council's YouTube Channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/MiltonKeynesCouncil/videos>

CHAIRS SIGNATURE.....

CHAIRS INITIALS.....

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