



Minutes of the meetings of the LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK ADVISORY GROUP held between THURSDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2009 and TUESDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2009

Present: Councillor Galloway (Chair) (Present 3/9, 10/9, 17/9, 23/9, 29/9), Councillors Bristow (Present 3/9, 10/9), Ferrans (Present 3/9, 10/9, 17/9, 23/9, 29/9), Hopkins (Present 3/9, 10/9, 17/9, 23/9, 29/9), A Morris (Present 3/9, 10/9, 17/9, 23/9, 29/9), Potts (Present 3/9) and White (Present 3/9, 10/9, 17/9, 29/9).

Officers: I Haynes (Chief Spatial Planner) (Present 10/9, 17/9, 23/9, 29/9), B Wilson (Development Plans Manager) (Present 3/9, 10/9, 17/9, 23/9, 29/9), M Moore (Senior Planning Officer) (Present 3/9, 23/9, 29/9), M Sullivan-Gould (Senior Solicitor) (Present 3/9), S Bridglalsingh (Senior Solicitor (Acting)) (Present 10/9, 17/9, 23/9, 29/9), G Lane (Senior Committee Manager) (Present 29/9) and J Zammit (Committee Manager) (Present 3/9, 10/9, 17/9, 23/9).

Apologies: Councillor Bristow (for 17/9)

Also Present: Councillors Bint (Present 3/9, 10/9, 17/9, 23/9, 29/9), Butler-Ellis (Present 3/9), Crooks (Present 3/9, 10/9, 17/9, 29/9), Edwards (Present 23/9), Exon (Present 3/9), Miles (Present 23/9), C Morris (Present 10/9), Tunney (Present 10/9) and Tamsin Cottle (Roger Tyms and Partners) (Present 23/9)

Number of Public Present: 2 (on 3/9)

LDF8 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor White declared a personal interest in Item 4 – Core Strategy 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.

LDF9 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK / CORE STRATEGY

The Group received a referral from the Environment Policy Development Committee held on 2 September 2009 on the future of Milton Keynes. Officers explained that many of the issues raised in the referral were not directly related the Core Strategy, such as discussion of an elected Mayor or the involvement of the Youth Cabinet. However, officers assured the Group that planning issues raised in the referral were addressed in the Core Strategy.

The Development Plans Manager updated the Group on the main changes made to the Core Strategy since discussions at previous meetings. The report also outlined the process from the first stages of preparing the Core Strategy to show how and when choices for the Core Strategy had been made. This included the MK2031 work which considered a number of options for the future development of the city and involved extensive public consultation. As the Core Strategy has progressed the range of choices available had been narrowed down.

Councillor Bint noted that while there were still choices left to be made in the document, that members had not been given sufficient information to know what choices could be made and where. Officers would need to give a list or an explanation on what choices were left to make. For example was there still choice in regard to what type of people the strategy would attract to live in Milton Keynes.

The Group noted Councillor Bint's point. The Group recognised that members' work on the Core Strategy had mostly been to make the document more readable and understandable.

The Group noted that minutes from previous Local Development Framework meetings had not been produced.

The Group proceeded to comment point by point upon the Officers comments to Member suggestions and submissions for the Core Strategy as set out in the Annex to these minutes.

The Group noted that the Development Control process was informed by the adopted Local Plan. It was suggested that there was little respect for the current local plan which was evident from developers who did not follow it in their planning applications. If there was not a new plan soon then a significant number of planning decisions could be overturned in the future via appeals. The Group was finally informed that the Core Strategy could be revisited and updated in the future.

The Group was concerned that radical and imaginative ideas had been ignored in the document especially in regards to transport and changing the nature of travel within Milton Keynes.

Officers informed the Committee that imaginative ideas were considered but that some ideas such as a monorail or tram had already been discounted. Provision for electric cars was included, however, and the document allowed for future transport developments as and when they arrive.

There was concern over the provision of gardens in newer housing developments. The Group felt most new houses should have a

garden. Officers informed the Group that such detail would be more appropriate for a Development Plans Document rather than in the Core Strategy Document itself.

Councillor Bint noted that the Document aimed for a larger number of flats outside of Central Milton Keynes than was necessary; he felt that people who lived in flats had a lower commitment to the local community than people who lived in houses. The Group noted that there were some instances where flats were necessary – e.g. for the elderly, and that it was how flats were arranged and managed which would dictate the owners' involvement in the local community.

Councillor Bint noted the importance of redways but that it would be desirable to keep high speed traffic away from pedestrians. The Group noted that placing redways near roads allowed for greater visibility on the redway and therefore increased security for pedestrians. The change to redways being near roads was not a change in policy, but was a change in implementation. The Group noted however that the Council supported the Sustrans scheme and the idea of moving around Milton Keynes without crossing main roads (i.e. via underpasses). The Group also asked officers to investigate how well the Core Strategy matched up with the Sustrans scheme.

There was concern from the Group that Research and Development office development would be focussed within the City Centre unless there was sufficient reason not to be sited there. Members were concerned that this focus on the City Centre would discourage research and development companies from setting up in Milton Keynes, especially as they may prefer cheaper office space and close proximity to their clients which were often not located in the City Centre. Members felt the emphasis on the City Centre location should be balanced with out of City Centre locations.

RESOLVED -

1. That the referral from Environment Policy Development Committee be noted
2. That the officer response to the referral be distributed electronically to Members of the Advisory Group.
3. That Points 1 to 20 (as amended) of the Annex be approved.

LDF10

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - CORE STRATEGY

(10 SEPTEMBER 2009 RECONVENED MEETING)

Officers informed the Group that in respect of extension of the grid road system that in relation to the proposed Salden Chase Strategic Development Area, 3 access points on to the A421 had been considered. However, there were some limits to this in respect of the

geography of the area. The Group noted that the Core Strategy for Aylesbury Vale did not mention the costs of road infrastructure.

In relation to CMK, the Group was also concerned regarding references to reducing the influence of the car in the design of the area. Some members felt that this emphasised an anti car driver nature within the document and felt this should be changed to 'recognise' the influence of the car. Officers informed the Group that this may run counter to the Council's own policy and Government policy which sought to reduce overall use of the car. Councillor Bint felt that as cars were the primary mode of transport for the majority of citizens of Milton Keynes and were likely to be for the foreseeable future, that recognition of this fact within the Core Strategy was important.

RESOLVED -

1. That Cabinet and Council be invited to consider the advice given to the Advisory Group regarding the protection of different landscapes when the Core Strategy is considered.
2. That if there is a need to include references to the upgrading of a road route east of Newton Leys that references to it be put in the appropriate section.
3. That Points 32, 33, 35-39, 41-45 and 47-49 of the Annex be approved.
4. That the Points relating to retail (30, 31 and 46), employment (34) and choice (40) be not approved at present.
5. That the Council's consultants for the Retail Capacity Study be invited to a reconvened meeting of the group.

LDF11

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - CORE STRATEGY (17 SEPTEMBER 2009 RECONVENED MEETING)

The Group suggested that the Core Strategy Document should highlight Central Milton Keynes' relationship to the rest of Milton Keynes as well as CMK's role as a regional centre, recognising the different ways in which people access CMK from within the city and from the wider sub-region. Councillor Bint also proposed CMK needed highlighting as a transport hub for Milton Keynes (Point 50).

The Group had asked Officers about the siting and interrelationship of individual policy statements within the Core Strategy. Officers informed the Group that the Core Strategy document should be read and understood as a whole and therefore the need for cross-references between policies was limited. Further questions were asked about the flexibility of the Core Strategy document and how individual policies offered flexibility and contingencies, for example would there be a specific contingencies section. Officers informed the Group that there would be annual monitoring of the Core Strategy to examine impacts and interpretations, especially as most

of the detail would be located within Development Plan Documents which flowed from the Core Strategy.

The Group considered draft submissions from Councillor Bint on "Meeting Housing Need".

Councillor Bint commented that the key part was to recognise that the need of existing residents would be different from the needs of people moving to the city. He stated that recent residential developments provided mediocre accommodation and did not provide enough of a mix of housing types. It was also key that the policy catered for all diverse and minority needs.

The Group asked Officers if students would need to be catered for with the new university in Central Milton Keynes. Officers informed the Group that the university at present did not intend to have student accommodation. Members felt that the university may need housing provision for students in the future.

Officers informed the Group that a fundamental part of the evidence for the Housing section of the Core Strategy was the Housing Market Assessment and that evidence within the Core Strategy was repeated from the Assessment.

The Group felt housing surveys should be more frequent, at least every 2 years. The information from the most recent survey suggested 1 or 2 bedroom accommodation was needed, but anecdotal evidence was suggesting otherwise. The Group also noted that the nature of shared ownership in Milton Keynes was different from other areas, in that it was commercially run and attracted a premium on resale.

The Group was concerned that details within the policies of the Core Strategy would prevent further action within other documents that flowed from the Core Strategy, limiting flexibility and opportunity in the future. Officers informed the Group that passing on key decisions to lower level documents must be avoided as there needed to be an overall policy direction and that there would be a risk of the Core Strategy being found unsound.

Councillor Bint informed the Group that he wished his submissions to be kept intact as much as possible apart from updating the language for consistency etc. The Group thanked Cllr Bint for his submission and supported its general content. However, there was concern that some parts of the submission may not be supported by evidence and may need to be revised. The Group felt that it would not be feasible to incorporate the submission as a whole but asked officers to use Cllr Bint's submission as a base for that policy section.

The Group was concerned over how to attract businesses that will provide jobs at higher skill levels and diversify the economy. Milton Keynes needed policies that would attract inward investment and achieve the skill levels necessary. The Group also felt that there was not sufficient provision for small to medium sized business both in

terms of office space and conference facilities. There needed to be an examination of how to attract clusters of businesses.

RESOLVED -

1. That the Development Plans Manager be requested to consult with local business leaders and the Milton Keynes Chamber of Commerce to discuss how to attract inward investment into Milton Keynes and the diversification of the local skills base.
2. That changes to the Core Strategy be documented and a list be made available.
3. That Points 50-53 and 55-64 of the Annex be approved.
4. That consideration of Point 54 (Well Connected MK) be deferred.
5. That the comments from Councillor Bint (Points 65-79) relating to Housing Needs Policy be referred to officers for use as the basis of a redrafted section.

LDF12

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - CORE STRATEGY

(23 SEPTEMBER 2009 RECONVENED MEETING)

The Group received a presentation on the Retail Capacity Study. The presentation informed Members that the study had been drafted before the end of 2008, before the recent economic troubles. The data for the study had been revised to reflect the recession. Key points were that retail consumer spending was down and would not reach levels from before the economic troubles until 2016; there would be an oversupply of retail capacity space until 2011; and that a slower rate of housing and population growth had now been factored in.

The Group questioned T Cottle (R Tyms) on whether the Study proposed a specific number of sites or locations for the retail floorspace and their size. T Cottle informed the Group that the study did not identify specific sites but recommended where new retail development should be located - i.e. within or near growth areas. The Council would need to be flexible in allocating retail floorspace. Proposals would need to be determined on their own merits but the onus would be on developers to show how their proposals met the needs identified in the Retail Capacity Study.

The Group heard that figures within the Retail Capacity Study did not need to factor in small retail developments and they could be provided without impacting on the wider retail capacity figures.

The Group noted that allocation of local centres and smaller retail space would be in Development Plan Documents. The Group felt this point should be made clearer within the document. The Group also noted that specific provision of services such as leisure etc would also be addressed within future Development Plan Documents and this should also be highlighted.

The Group noted the difference between commercial leisure and public outdoor leisure facilities (parks etc)

RESOLVED –

That reference is made in Policy CS4 section of the Core Strategy, to Development Plan Documents where local centres will be planned.

LDF13

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY
(29 SEPTEMBER 2009 RECONVENED MEETING)**

Following the discussions held at the previous sessions, there remained three areas left for the Group: the Well Connected chapter of the Core Strategy; a legal note on the basis for reviewing the Core Strategy and other DPDs; and the offices and high technology uses in the Employment section of the Core Strategy.

The Development Plans Manager explained that the majority of the changes requested by councillors had been agreed and had led to changes to the Core Strategy and this emphasised the influence the Group had in helping shape the document.

The paper on the legal advice was reviewed and a revised version of the Well Connected chapter, drafted by Councillor Bint, was discussed.

The Advisory Group heard that the phrasing of the final draft of the Core Strategy would be subject to review by an external consultant to ensure that all important legal and planning issues were addressed and that the Strategy was written in plain English.

The revised Well Connected chapter would be sent to the consultant for consideration in this critical review together with the other changes agreed by this Group.

Members considered a revised version of Policy CS3 (Employment Land Supply) devised by officers for inclusion in the draft Strategy.

The Advisory Group affirmed that the Policy must prevent developers from undermining the Council's commitment to the provision of employment land outside of Central Milton Keynes in order to promote the vitality and sustainability of the old towns.

In considering the draft of the Strategy, the Advisory Group endorsed the amendments as in the Annex.

RESOLVED -

1. That Points 80-115 of the Annex be approved.
2. That the draft Core Strategy be approved, subject to independent review by an external consultant to ensure that it was phrased in plain English and that all important legal and planning issues were addressed.

3. That the Strategy was subject to final approval by the Local Development Framework Advisory Group, prior to submission to Cabinet.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9.00PM ON
29 SEPTEMBER 2009