

Sustainable Communities: An Urban Development Area for Milton Keynes: Consultation Summary and Decision Document

On 5th May 2006 the responsibilities of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) transferred to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

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Background

1. In February 2003, the Deputy Prime Minister set out an action programme to deliver sustainable communities for all ("Sustainable communities: building for the future" ODPM February 2003).
2. To accommodate the economic success of London and the wider South East and ensure that the international competitiveness of the region is sustained, four growth areas including Milton Keynes/South Midlands have been identified. The programme included a commitment in these growth areas to set up strengthened local delivery agencies with the necessary powers to drive forward development.
3. In many locations, local authorities will take the lead with Regional Development Agencies and other partners, but in a few locations, a different arrangement has been considered to be a more effective option to deliver the necessary change and maximise private investment. For Milton Keynes an Urban Development Area (UDA) approach has been proposed.

Consultation

4. On 5 January 2004, a consultation paper was published ("Sustainable Communities: An Urban Development Area for Milton Keynes - A Consultation Paper") on the proposed UDA for Milton Keynes. The paper sought comments on the proposals, included the area that the UDA should cover, the powers it should have and the composition of its Committee. Views were invited on seven major issues, and eleven specific questions:

Lifespan

Q1: The most appropriate lifespan for the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee and UDA.

Boundary

Q2: The area of the proposed UDA.

Q3: Whether the proposal for a UDA, and the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee, provide sufficient flexibility to maximise the regeneration and growth opportunities within the Milton Keynes area.

Relationship with local authorities

Q4: The best way for the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee to work with the local authorities, particularly in those areas where the local authority retains full planning powers.

Relationship with existing government agencies

Q5: The best way for the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee to work with existing Government agencies.

Scrutiny

Q6: The best way for the work of the Committee to be scrutinised.
Planning Powers

Q7: The area for which the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee would be the local planning authority and the development control functions that it ought to undertake.

Q8: How the section 170 order might best identify strategic and significant planning decisions to be taken on by the Committee within the UDA.

Committee membership

Q9: The groups from whom membership of the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee should be drawn.

Q10: The involvement of Aylesbury Vale and Buckinghamshire County Council as observers on the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee.

Q11: The skills and experience needed by members of the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee.

5. In total, 140 responses to the consultation were received. Replies were received from individuals, the voluntary sector, the private sector, local authorities, non-Governmental organisations and Government agencies. The complete set of responses (excluding confidential responses) have been deposited in the Office's own Library, and in the Libraries of the Houses of Parliament.
6. Throughout this document, where percentage figures are given, these refer to the percentage of those who have answered the specific question.

Responses to the questions

Lifespan

Question 1: The most appropriate lifespan for the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee and UDA.

7. In the consultation paper, it was proposed that the UDA and the Committee were expected to be established in April 2004 and could continue until at least 2016.
8. A number of respondents (14%) were content and generally agreed with the proposed lifespan of 2016. However, 61% thought that a longer time frame would be more suitable.
9. Some respondents thought that the lifespan of the UDA and the Committee should continue until the development of the area had been completed. Others thought that the suggestion of the lifespan was inconsistent and premature in relation to the ongoing reviews of the regional and local planning guidance.
10. The Government has considered these responses and has decided that English Partnerships should initially establish the committee until 2016, but with the expectation that its lifespan could be extended beyond this time if substantial development was still required in any original or newly designated area.

Boundary

Question 2: The area of the proposed UDA.

11. The consultation paper set out the proposed boundary of the Committee's responsibility across Milton Keynes, and within that the proposed boundary of the UDA. It proposed that the UDA would include expansion areas identified in the current review of the local plan, those greenfield areas in Milton Keynes that were identified as having development potential in the draft amendments to RPG9, and English Partnerships' remaining undeveloped land on the Western flank. The proposed UDA boundary excluded any part of Aylesbury Vale, which is to the south west of Milton Keynes.
12. Some respondents, including English Partnerships and Newton Longville and Emberton Parish Councils, accepted and supported the proposed UDA boundary. However, the majority of respondents suggested alterations to the boundary including:
 - 60% of respondents specifically asked for the removal of the area south and west of Calverton. Aylesbury Vale District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, the South Midlands Council for British Archaeology and the Green Party were amongst those who asked for this site to be removed;
 - The removal of Area 10 Land area (west of Watling Street - north of Crownhill) from the western expansion;

- Stony Stratford Town Council amongst others, suggested the removal Area 11 Land (west of Watling Street - south of Stony Stratford) from the western expansion area;
 - 60% of respondents specifically asked for the inclusion of land to the North East of the M1 although the vast majority of these respondents do not live in or represent this area;
 - The inclusion of Newport Pagnell;
 - The extension of the UDA boundary to include all expansion sites and include all necessary infrastructure sites rather than adding bit by bit at later dates;
 - Three respondents including Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council and West Bletchley Council suggested the inclusion of South Bletchley. In addition the Milton Keynes Labour Group thought that the areas surrounding Bletchley should be the focus of new development;
 - The Green Party and West Bletchley Council were amongst those who suggested the inclusion of South West Milton Keynes as it is mentioned in the draft MKSM Sub-Regional. Kier Land Limited suggested the specific inclusion of Newton Longville;
 - The inclusion of land at Stantonbury Park Farm;
 - The inclusion of Old Stratford;
 - The inclusion of land to the NW of the M1;
 - According to The Woodlands Trust, Oakhill and other new woodlands in the western expansion area should either be removed or protected. Aylesbury Vale District Council suggested that the land immediately south of Oakhill Wood should be removed;
 - West Bletchley Council were one of two respondents suggesting that a rail head facility in the eastern expansion area (to the east of the M1) should be built not housing developments;
 - The Woodlands Trust thought that the three broadleaf woods in the eastern expansion area should be protected;
 - Aylesbury Vale District Council were one of the two respondents that suggested the inclusion of Woburn Sands & Bow Brickhill which flank the proposed East-West rail;
 - The UDA should not include Woburn Sands, Aspley Guise and Wavendon; and
 - Milton Keynes Council suggested that the existing community within the Kingsmead grid square should be excluded from the UDA.
13. Over 58% of respondents thought that the proposals of the UDA were premature, as they should reflect the regional plans which are only in draft format at present. A number of these thought that areas identified in the proposals were incompatible and contradictory to the draft MKSM Sub-Regional Strategy. Aylesbury Vale District Council commented that it must be made clear that the proposals are "not opening up

land for development in advance of the outcome of the Local Plan Inquiry".

14. Around 6% of respondents raised concerns about how the proposals would promote unsustainable developments due to the 'edge-infilling'. Suggestions were made to develop a masterplan to gain a larger vision for Milton Keynes and help enable fully integrated and sustainable expansion of the area. In fact over 9% of all respondents mentioned somewhere in their replies the importance of a masterplan or well structured plan with a larger 'vision' to be created, to enable fully integrated and sustainable expansion of the area and Milton Keynes.
15. All of the proposals to amend the boundaries of the UDA have been carefully considered. Given the level of concern about the inclusion of the area south and west of Calverton, the Government has decided to remove this area from the UDA, The Government has also decided to remove the existing community in the Kingsmead grid square from the UDA, including a small area that has already been approved for development. Otherwise, the other boundaries of the UDA will be as specified in the consultation document.
16. Development in the UDA will need to have regard to the conclusions of the current local plan inquiry. The designated areas will also be reviewed in light of the final revisions to regional planning guidance (RPG) and amendments may be made to reflect the conclusions of the RPG process. Furthermore, in determining planning applications, the Committee, like other planning authorities, will have to have regard to material considerations, including Planning Policy Guidance (e.g. PPG3 and PPG6 which provide for sequential tests for housing and retail development).
17. The Government agrees that it is important for the Committee to be involved in the development of a masterplan for development across Milton Keynes. Masterplans are currently being developed and once in operation the Committee will be involved in the production of these.

Question 3: Whether the proposal for a UDA, and the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee, provide sufficient flexibility to maximise the regeneration and growth opportunities within the Milton Keynes area.

18. The consultation paper set out the role of the Committee and its characteristics, including that it would have an independent identity and the appropriate delegations from English Partnerships' main board, dedicated staffing and resources, local partner involvement and planning powers (development control) for major applications in the UDA. Views were sought about the flexibility of this delivery vehicle to maximise the regeneration and growth opportunities in the Milton Keynes area.
19. The majority of respondents suggested some alteration to the proposals to maximise the regeneration and growth opportunities within the Milton Keynes Area. Two respondents pointed to the need to ensure adequate funding and resources were provided to the UDA. Others commented that regular reviews would be needed to ensure that that the membership and operational structure would be able to reflect the changing pattern of regeneration and growth to provide a sufficiently flexible approach.

20. Nearly 7% of respondents thought that for the UDA to be successful, e.g. have full control of the phasing of development and ability to generate necessary infrastructure finance, the Committee would need to have powers to enable the compulsory acquisition of land.
21. Some respondents thought that the option of a different choice of delivery vehicle would be more suitable in providing the levels of growth required in Milton Keynes. Nearly 7% suggested an UDC while almost 5% preferred the option of a locally accountable New Towns Development Corporation. The Milton Keynes Labour Group thought that the choice of an UDA may be flawed and suggested if it did falter an UDC may be required. In addition 3% of respondents thought that if the boundary of the UDA was enlarged from the start then the proposals would have some merit.
22. 8% of respondents were less confident in the proposals and did not believe that the UDA structure was flexible enough to guarantee delivery.
23. The Government has considered the responses and believe that the proposals do provide sufficient flexibility to maximise the regeneration and growth opportunities within the Milton Keynes areas. For this location they do not believe that the benefits of an Urban Development Corporation outweigh the additional costs of this approach compared with the UDA proposal. The Committee will have powers to compulsorily purchase land in the UDA and will be subject to regular review.

Relationship with local authorities

Question 4: The best way for the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee to work with the local authorities, particularly in those areas where the local authority retains full planning powers.

24. The consultation paper set out the need for the Committee to operate closely with the local authorities, including Milton Keynes Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council. It also highlighted the importance of the Committee liaising closely with local planning and environmental health departments to ensure a balanced environmental approach when developing sites.
25. Nearly 14% of respondents thought that due to the potentially difficult nature and scale of the task it was essential that the Committee and the local authorities were fully supportive of each other and formed good, close working relationships. The need for the Committee to develop a good working relationship with the CMK Project Board, who oversee city centre expansion and other regeneration bodies in Milton Keynes, was specifically highlighted by over 11% of respondents (including Milton Keynes Council).
26. A number of respondents thought stated that the Committee and Milton Keynes Council should spend time formulating a masterplan for Milton Keynes as well as adopting local transport, structure and local plan policies.
27. Some respondents provided specific examples of the best ways that joint working

could be provided, including:

- Bi-annual public meetings;
- Councillor Paul Bartlett thought that the Committee could do a formal presentation to Milton Keynes Council every 6 months on the progress being made;
- Wavendon Parish Council suggested that a consultation process was developed which would be acceptable at Parish Council level; and
- Broughton and Milton Keynes Parish Council suggested establishing a joint committee to approve all new property developments outside the UDA.

28. The Government agrees that the Committee will need to work closely with Milton Keynes Council. The Council will be represented on the Committee with three out of 10 seats occupied by members of the Council. The Government would expect these members to ensure that the remainder of the Council are kept well informed about the work of the Committee. They also agree that the Committee will need to work closely with the CMK Project Board.
29. As mentioned previously, it is important for the Committee to be involved in the development of masterplans for development across Milton Keynes.

Relationship with existing government agencies

Question 5: The best way for the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee to work with existing Government agencies.

30. The consultation paper set out the need for the Committee to co-operate with Government agencies responsible for delivering regeneration. It also set out that the Committee would need to liaise closely with those Government agencies that, while not directly involved in growth and regeneration activity, will have an influence on its ability to deliver. These include the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), the Housing Corporation, the Countryside Agency, English Nature, the Strategic Rail Authority and the Highways Agency.
31. Nearly 18% of respondents commented that it was vital that there were good, efficient working relationships between the Committee and the Government Agencies for sustainable growth to occur in and around Milton Keynes. Regular, high level meetings were seen to be the best method of facilitating this and ensuring that other agencies recognise and prioritise the expansion issues effectively. Nearly 12% of respondents identified the need for securing of sufficient funding for relevant infrastructure schemes in the area as key to the success of the Committee.
32. Milton Keynes Council stated that they would welcome a growth Public Service Agreement in Milton Keynes which would articulate objective measures of "sustainable" growth against which can be matched the funding demands that will be placed on central Government and others.

33. Some respondents provided specific examples of Government Agencies that the Committee should work with, including:
- Emergency Services;
 - Health Agencies;
 - Hospital Trusts;
 - Strategic Rail Authority;
 - Highways Agency;
 - Environment Agency;
 - English Heritage;
 - SEEDA;
 - South East England Regional Assembly - SEERA;
 - Milton Keynes South Midlands Steering Group;
 - Housing Corporation;
 - Countryside Agency; and
 - Local Strategic Partnership.
34. The Government agrees with the majority of respondents about the importance of ensuring effective engagement with all of the government agencies identified above. The Committee should ensure that they establish regular contact with all of these agencies. In line with usual planning process all appropriate agencies will be consulted on a case by case basis.
35. The Committee should provide a new opportunity to ensure that new development reflects the concerns all sectors of the community and meets good design standards. The Committee should seek to use design coding as a means of achieving coherence, consistency and quality in the design and layout of new areas. The Committee will also work together with Milton Keynes Council to ensure that policy on Section 106 contributions provides appropriate benefit for the community.
36. In addition, the Milton Keynes South Midlands Inter-Regional Board will bring together the key agencies across the region and will ensure that these agencies are fully involved in the growth agenda at that level. In its early work the Board will be looking at strategic infrastructure issues.

Scrutiny

Question 6: The best way for the work of the Committee to be scrutinised.

37. The consultation paper proposed that the Committee would be managed in line with standard procedures as a committee of English Partnerships. It will agree a detailed business plan with both English Partnerships and ODPM. A range of outcome and

output targets would also be agreed which would be used by Government to monitor progress and the Committee would also be subjected to a quinquennial fundamental review.

38. The majority of respondents thought that the work of the committee must be transparent, target-driven, measurable and locally accountable. Over 15% of respondents commented on the importance of public openness and accountability, and suggested that the Committee meetings should be open to the public, the agendas/minutes should be available to all; and there should be Annual General Meetings. Nearly 8% thought that in addition an annual monitoring report should be produced to show progress. Milton Keynes' Friends of the Earth also suggested the potential need for the Committee to hold public accountability surgeries.
39. Respondents also provided more specific suggestions about the best way for the Committee to be scrutinised, including:
 - By a Government Agency;
 - Scrutiny based on agreed baseline criteria and targets;
 - By a formal 'scrutiny committee' or shadow committee;
 - By the Inter-Regional Board;
 - By a Minister or the Secretary of State;
 - Be undertaken through the local authority's own scrutiny committee structure. The Milton Keynes Labour Group believed that Ministers should require appropriate representatives of Government Agencies to appear before this Committee;
 - By independent, experienced and concerned local residents;
 - By a bi-annual referendum/public meeting;
 - By Councils affected by the activities of the UDA;
 - By an external body with some knowledge of MK issues e.g. South East Regional Assembly;
 - By the Councils affected by the activities of the UDA; and
 - By the Local Strategic Partnership well placed to review the work of the Committee suggested by Milton Keynes Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council.
40. The Government agrees that the work of the Committee should be target-driven, measurable and locally accountable. The Committee will agree a business plan and a range of outcome and output targets with Government and these targets would then be monitored by Government on a quarterly basis. The Committee would also be subject to quinquennial reviews by Government.
41. While the Committee is formally accountable to Ministers through English Partnerships, the Government believes that local accountability is important and therefore the Committee should work with the Local Authority and Local Strategic Partnership regularly so that they can scrutinise how partners are contributing to the

achievement of the Milton Keynes Community Strategy.

42. It is important for the work of the Committee to be transparent. In the same way as a local authority committee, the Committee will meet in public and papers will be publicly available except where confidential or exempt information would be disclosed for example, for legal, commercial or other permitted reasons. Transparency will also be achieved through an annual meeting in which the Committee will review its progress and receive public views in response.

Planning Powers

Question 7: The area for which the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee would be the local planning authority and the development control functions that it ought to undertake.

43. The consultation paper proposed to designate an area in Milton Keynes, under section 170 of the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993, within which English Partnerships would become the local planning authority for all major planning applications. The local planning authority would continue to control development within the remaining areas of Milton Keynes and non-strategic applications in the UDA.
44. Nearly 14% (including Calverton Parish Council) thought that planning powers should remain with Milton Keynes Council and that the Committee should have no planning powers.
45. In contrast over 18% of respondents generally supported the Committee having strategic planning powers and thought that it should have full control and determination of all major applications within the UDA as defined in paragraph 3.4. Preserve Bow Brickhill suggested that the local authority should be able to veto any plans that would have a severe effect on their land.
46. Concerns were raised again (by around 25% of respondents including Buckinghamshire County Council and CPRE) about the creation of two planning authorities, which could lead to confusion and a less efficient planning system. Inter MK suggested that the role of both the local authority and the Committee needed to be resolved and clarified while English Partnerships thought that these roles could be re-examined as part of the quinquennial reviews.
47. Wavendon Parish Council suggested that the local authority should remain the ultimate planning authority, with the Committee taking on development work as prescribed by Milton Keynes Council.
48. In contrast, Broughton and Milton Keynes Parish Council suggested that in addition to the UDA, developments in Milton Keynes involving new properties outside the UDA should be approved by a joint committee of Milton Keynes Council and Milton Keynes Partnership Committee members. Some respondents commented that the roles of Milton Keynes Council and the Committee needed to be more clearly defined for the area outside the UDA.

49. Nearly 14% highlighted the importance of archaeological survey and involvement, and also the importance of the Committee 's role in protecting the green, open spaces rather than excessively developing on the greenfield sites.
50. The Government remains committed to the development control functions described in the consultation document and does not wish to extend or contract these. Milton Keynes Council and English Partnerships have raised the need to clarify the treatment of minerals and waste applications. Responsibility for these will remain with Milton Keynes Council. They recognise the need to avoid confusion over the handling of planning cases. They believe that the specific definition of planning cases to be decided by the Committee, as defined by the order, will prevent such confusion. The Committee, like other local planning authorities, will have to have regard to material considerations including any relevant policies, such as those relating to greenfield development and archaeological survey work.

Question 8: How the section 170 order might best identify strategic and significant planning decisions to be taken on by the Committee within the UDA.

51. The consultation paper set out that the powers available under Part III of the Town and County Planning Act 1990 should only apply to major applications. The proposals stated that major applications would be defined in the Order as those involving 10 or more new dwellings, office, industrial and retail developments involving 1,000 square metres of floor space and any development involving a site area of 1 hectare or more. Views were sought about how the Order might best identify strategic and significant planning decisions.
52. A few respondents failed to see the connection between the Section 170 order and the development methodology.
53. Other respondents provided various answers to this question, including:
 - the Order should recognise existing planning policies that are currently in place e.g. the Milton Keynes Drainage Strategy could, in the future, be used as a tool for the delivery of strategic infrastructure
 - the decisions of the Committee should be directed specifically towards growth e.g. major applications but should not deal with regimes such as the Historic Buildings and Conservation Area applications
 - Significant and strategic planning decisions can be defined as those which have a significant impact beyond the area to which the plan is to be applied. The provision of all types of infrastructure and facilities are key
54. A few respondents suggested the need to revise the definition of major planning applications from those set out in the proposals (paragraph 3.4). These included:
 - Raising the threshold to 2 hectares and 60 dwellings;
 - Increasing the thresholds by a factor of 5;

- Increasing the threshold to 25 dwellings, or 2,000m² of floor space would be more appropriate for identifying "significant" applications;
- Raising the threshold to 30 dwellings; and
- Non-housing developments with floorspaces over 2,500m² should be referred to the Secretary of State in the normal way.

55. It was also suggested that any other application which is part of a larger scheme will also come under the consideration of the UDA.

56. The Government remains committed to the definition of major applications contained in the consultation document, with a slight amendment to the definition of the area covered to be 1,000 square metres *or more* of floor space. This will provide an appropriate level of engagement for the Committee.

Committee membership

Question 9: The groups from whom membership of the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee should be drawn.

57. In the consultation paper it was proposed that the Committee needed to be representative of the local stakeholders and partners to ensure that it operated as a focused and effective organisation. It proposed that the composition would probably consist of ten members including two independent private sector appointments (one would be the chair), two English Partnerships Board members, three Milton Keynes Council members, and three Local Strategic Partnership members (one each from the Chamber of Commerce, the Health and the Community Sectors).

58. The majority of respondents suggested a number of potential additions to the committee membership, including:

- SEEDA;
- Housing Corporation;
- House Builders/Key developers;
- Parks Trust;
- Highways Agency;
- MK Drainage Strategy Group;
- EcoSE/ environmental representative;
- South East Forum of Sustainability;
- A Heritage group;
- Education representative; and
- Chamber of Commerce.

59. Nearly 10% of respondents stated that they would like to see a greater amount of local involvement and accountability on the Committee. The same percentage of respondents (almost 10%, including Nash, Woughton and Calverton Parish Councils) thought that this could be achieved by involving Parish and Town Councils. Nash Parish Council suggested allowing representation from the two consortia of Parish Councils in Bedfordshire and Aylesbury Vale - Mid-Beds Local Councils Consortium and North Bucks Parishes Planning Consortium. *See responses to Q10 for further details on other authorities involvement on the Committee.*
60. Three respondents (including Aylesbury Vale District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council) suggested that a sub-group or parallel body could be set up to provide broader, more local representation without making the size of the Committee unwieldy.
61. The Government recognises the desire to make the Committee as representative as possible but this must be balanced by the need to ensure that the Committee can operate effectively. Therefore the full membership of the Committee will not be altered. Instead the organisations offered observer status will be extended to include the Housing Corporation, and SEEDA, who should be fully involved in matters concerning economic development.

Question 10: The involvement of Aylesbury Vale and Buckinghamshire County Council as observers on the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee.

62. The consultation paper proposed that Buckinghamshire County Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council would be offered observer status on the Committee in recognition that growth and infrastructure provision would ultimately impact on the Aylesbury Vale area.
63. Over 10% of respondents were content with the proposals for Aylesbury Vale District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council to be observers on the Committee.
64. However, over 62% of respondents felt that Aylesbury Vale District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council should be full members. In addition over 6% of respondents thought that because the UDA boundary should include area of South West Milton Keynes from the outset they should receive full voting rights as well.
65. Just over 3% of respondents suggested that Aylesbury Vale District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council should be provided with the opportunity to vote on projects that would directly have an impact on their land but remain observer status for all other matters.
66. Buckinghamshire County Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council stated that they preferred the term 'non-voting' members rather than 'observer', and if they were involved they would expect to have "full and effective involvement in the Committee - although our representatives would not have the right to vote at this stage".
67. Milton Keynes Council commented that Parish and Town Councils and regeneration boards should be represented at the Committee when matters pertaining to their areas were being discussed should be included. Milton Keynes' Friends of the Earth

suggested the idea of a hot seat on the Committee, with voting powers, should be allocated to the adjacent local authorities, with the occupant of the seat being the relevant authority for the area or matter in question.

68. Over 4% of respondents (including the response from Stony Stratford Town Council) thought that all neighbouring principle authorities, including Town and Parish Councils, should be given observer status while others thought that Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire authorities should be observers from the outset. For example, Bedfordshire County Council thought that they should be included in the Committee with observer status. Nearly 57% specifically thought that Mid Bedfordshire District Council should be given observer or full status as their medium to long-term involvement should be both anticipated and welcomed.
69. In light of comments from Aylesbury Vale District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council, the Government has considered further the terms of observer status and believes that observer status should allow full involvement in the Committee but without the right to vote. This will apply to all observers on the Committee.
70. It is also recognised that on specific issues it may be appropriate for a parish council representative or representatives of key local groups to address the Committee.

Question 11: The skills and experience needed by members of the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee.

71. In the consultation paper, the role of the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee was defined to set the strategic vision for Milton Keynes and take the decisions required to deliver that vision. Views were sought on the skills and experience its members ought to possess.
72. A range of skills and experience was suggested:
 - Local knowledge;
 - Appreciation of the importance of community involvement;
 - Working knowledge of archaeology and basic conservation principles/ a "champion" for the historic and natural environment;
 - Knowledge and empathy towards, and understanding of rural communities;
 - Promotional and marketing skills (at national and international level);
 - Experience of disability design;
 - Knowledge of business;
 - Finance and administration skills;
 - Interest in design;
 - Widespread, overall knowledge;
 - Commitment;

- Town planning and design skills/experience;
- Experience of decision making on planning applications and relating such applications to development plan policies;
- Passion for MK and have the interests of its people foremost in their minds;
- Flair;
- Intelligence;
- Drive/Energy;
- Chair should be strong individual with excellent leadership skills;
- Detailed knowledge of, and currently active in, their particular sector;
- Sound understanding of the true meaning of sustainability and the constraints it imposes on economic growth;
- Capable of strategic thinking;
- Ability to analyse information;
- Ability to question and to be questioned;
- Fair and impartial;
- Comprehensive and rounded understanding of urban design and sustainable community issues;
- Experience of a national policy environment, with a sound understanding of the workings of relevant Government Departments and the private sector;
- Experience of dealing with the public sector, particularly at a local government level; and
- Experience of delivering large multi-agency projects, both inside and outside the public sector/external bodies.

73. In addition, the New Leys consortium suggested that members should be subject to an intense induction process. This should include briefings from the government side and also includes direct presentations from the agents responsible for delivery including house builders and their consultants. This would provide a good understanding of the development industry and the issues with regard to delivery the committee. Without this the Committee will fail to appreciate the timescales and complexities of the process.

74. In producing the specifications for the posts English Partnerships will try to reflect the skills and experience identified and in particular the need for the members to have a strong connection to the local area.

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