

**Agenda Item: 12**

---

**Meeting:** Executive

**Date:** 12 May 2009

**Subject:** Milton Keynes and Central Beds Memorandum of Understanding on Joint Working for the Milton Keynes South East Expansion Area

**Report of:** Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development

**Summary:** To outline the details and purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding on Joint Working with Milton Keynes Council regarding the growth of Milton Keynes in the South East Strategic Development Area (SE SDA) and seek Member endorsement of the joint working arrangements.

---

Advising Officer: Gary Alderson, Director of Sustainable Communities

Contact Officer: Sue Frost, Principal Planning Officer LDF Team (Rural Area)

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Cranfield, Woburn and Harlington

Function of: Executive

Key Decision Yes

Reason for urgency/  
Exemption from call-in  
(if appropriate) Not applicable

---

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1. That the Executive endorses the Joint Memorandum of Understanding (appendix A) as the basis for an agreement on joint working arrangements to support, implement and fund the production of a development framework for the whole of the Milton Keynes South East Strategic Development Area.**

*Reason for Recommendations: To seek Executive's formal endorsement of the arrangements for joint working through a Joint Memorandum of Understanding with Milton Keynes Council*

---

**Background**

1. A Strategic Development Area to the South East (SE SDA) of Milton Keynes has been identified in various planning policy documents as a sustainable urban extension to Milton Keynes to accommodate the future expected growth of Milton Keynes.

2. The SE SDA lies partially in Central Bedfordshire (former Mid Bedfordshire District) and partially in Milton Keynes and comprises 3 component parts: three Strategic Reserve Areas in Milton Keynes as identified in the Milton Keynes Local Plan 2001 to 2011, unallocated land in Milton Keynes and unallocated land in Central Bedfordshire.
3. The Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy (CBCS) covering the former Mid Beds area identifies that approximately 2000 new homes can be provided with a strategic gap to be designated as green belt in the administrative area of Central Beds. The area as a whole is expected to provide approximately 10,400 homes and will be a whole substantial new city neighbourhood with new community infrastructure, roads, schools, greenspaces and employment which sets high standards of sustainability. In this document the Council has committed in principle to joint working with Milton Keynes Council to take forward the SE SDA through the preparation of a joint development framework covering the whole area, to guide its development. The development framework for the SESDA, when complete, will be adopted as part of the Central Bedfordshire Local Development Framework (LDF).

### **Introduction**

4. Appendix A to this report sets out the proposed Memorandum of Understanding which Milton Keynes Council have approved through their Director of Planning and Cabinet Member. It sets out flexible joint working arrangements to support, implement and fund the production of a development framework for the whole SE SDA providing a comprehensive and flexible approach to the delivery of new homes in a timely manner. It is not a binding document and each organisation is able to withdraw from joint working should circumstances change. The purpose of the joint Memorandum of Understanding is to provide a framework within which joint working can occur. This will ensure the proper development of the SE SDA in a cohesive manner where infrastructure needs can be identified for the whole area to the benefit of the future residents rather than in a piecemeal way. Planning a larger development also offers more scope and brings greater advantages in terms of developer funding.

### **Joint Working Arrangements**

5. Joint working arrangements between Milton Keynes, Central Bedfordshire and others are already in place through the Cross Boundary Officer group and Member Reference Group, which meet quarterly. Both groups are informally structured but have formal meetings. The Memorandum of Understanding will enable further progress on joint working to be made. It is proposed that in due course, attention will be given to the implementation of the development framework and issues such as:
  - Appropriate and timely decision-making
  - The timely identification and delivery of infrastructure needs
  - The maximum potential from developer contributions and other funding
  - Completion of joint projects to accelerate delivery of growth and infrastructure

6. If the Memorandum of Agreement is agreed joint working arrangements will be progressed to deal with the following :
- Further liaison to initiate the development of a planning framework at an officer level through a Joint SE SDA Officer Steering Group.
  - The Steering Group will be co-ordinated and administrated by MKC, and will comprise officers from Central Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes Council and Milton Keynes Partnership (this group is a continuation of the present Cross Boundary Officer Group).
  - Meetings will be held at least quarterly
  - Formal decisions will be submitted to respective Councils for approval
  - All plan making / approval / adoption of documents will remain with individual Councils
  - Joint studies to be jointly commissioned and paid for where this is more efficient than being commissioned by the individual Councils
  - Development Plan Documents, where appropriate, will include jointly agreed common sections
  - Each organisation will be responsible for its direct joint working costs

### **Master Planning**

7. Once the respective Core Strategies have been adopted master planning of the SE SDA can proceed with the preparation of a development framework. It is envisaged that a single development framework will be prepared for the full extent of the SDA. No decision has been taken yet but it will probably be outsourced to independent consultants through a competitive tendering process to be prepared jointly by the parties. There will also be jointly prepared standards and specifications.
8. Arrangements to obtain funds for the production of a development framework for the whole SE SDA will be the responsibility of the Joint SE SDA Officer Steering Group. Consequently, agreement will have to be reached by the SE SDA Officer Steering Group as to the respective financial responsibility of each of the parties.

The Joint SE SDA Officer Steering Group will need to prepare a Business Plan to support any application for funding. The Business Plan will describe the objectives and strategies required to produce the development framework.

A broad list of possible sources of funding for the preparation of a development framework for the whole SE SDA could include the following:

- HPDG awards and internal local authority funds
- English Partnerships/Milton Keynes Partnership
- MKSM Funding
- University Planning Faculty Project
- Growth Area Funding
- Community Infrastructure Funding
- MKOB Capacity Funding
- Community Development Funding

## Conclusion and Next Steps

9. Officers are seeking Executive's formal endorsement of the arrangements for joint working through a Joint Memorandum of Understanding with Milton Keynes Council which is set out in appendix A to this report. This will enable the Council to make further progress on master planning for the SE SDA and show its commitment to the principle of joint working as set out in the Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy. Showing this level of commitment to the delivery of 2000 homes in the SE SDA could be of potential advantage to the Council at the forthcoming Examination in Public into the Core Strategy in June.

### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Council Priorities:**

The Memorandum of Understanding will progress the delivery of policies in relation to Milton Keynes expansion, part the Local development Framework which the Council has a statutory duty to implement.

#### **Financial:**

There are no direct financial implications as a result of endorsing the Memorandum of Agreement; however, there will be future costs in producing a joint development framework which are not currently known.

#### **Legal:**

none

#### **Risk Management:**

none

#### **Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

none

#### **Equalities/Human Rights:**

none

#### **Community Development/Safety:**

none

#### **Sustainability:**

The policies in the Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy (former Mid Beds Area) have been subject to a full sustainability appraisal

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix A – Memorandum of Understanding

**Background Papers** (open to public inspection): None