

Milton Keynes & South Midlands

Growth area e-bulletin

March 2007: issue 10

This is the 10th in a regular series of updates to keep key partners and stakeholders in touch with news, initiatives and developments across the Milton Keynes and South Midlands growth area. It is produced by Government News Network on behalf of the Government Offices for the South East, East Midlands and East of England. Editions of the e-bulletin are archived at:

www.gose.gov.uk/gose/ourRegion/growthAreas/mksmGrowth/?a=42496

If you have any questions or comments about this update, please contact Stuart Baird on 0115 971 2794, or stuart.baird@gnn.qsi.gov.uk

News round-up

Transport in Milton Keynes

Transport improvements in Milton Keynes are well underway with bus passengers set to benefit from the latest technology thanks to Milton Keynes Partnership.

Passengers will benefit from a £1.5m Real Time Passenger Information project run by Milton Keynes Council that will own and operate the RTPI System and will integrate all bus services timings throughout the borough by summer 2008. Passengers will be able to see the real time their bus is due on signs located at bus stops and on large screen displays located at key destinations. Information will also be available on the Internet and by using the SMS text messaging function on mobile phones.

Drivers will see improvements at M1 Jn13/A421 by the end of June following a £1.7million project to improve the flow of northbound traffic off the M1 into Milton Keynes.

Jane Hamilton, Chief Operating Officer of Milton Keynes Partnership, said, "This project marks a £1.7m investment to support the growth of Milton Keynes and is the beginning of major improvements to the city. It is essential that key infrastructure is in place before expansion happens."

Kettering transport gets £900,000 boost

Transport Minister Dr Stephen Ladyman announced a £900,000 project for Kettering during a visit to Northampton, Corby and Kettering where he met stakeholders from the county, district and borough councils, the Development Company and other organisations to discuss transport issues.

The funding from the department for Communities and Local Government's Growth Area Fund will go towards the Kettering Town Centre Intelligent Transport System Project.

Delivered by Northamptonshire County Council, some of the key elements of the project are: Improving the coordination of traffic signals within the town, allowing for the introduction of bus priority; installing CCTV at key strategic intersections on main routes, linking back to the County's traffic control centre; extending the existing Real Time Passenger Information system within the town and installing air quality monitoring stations.

Northamptonshire Transport

Northamptonshire County Council have revealed their draft plans for transport infrastructure in the county to keep pace with the rate of development. A public consultation on the Transport Strategy for Growth will continue until April 20 available on

<http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/Transport/TP/LTP/tsfg.htm>

Centre improvements

Major improvements have been approved in three of the growth area's key areas.

Milton Keynes' West End is set to be one of the city's most vibrant and exciting quarters following a programme of development works now underway. Milton Keynes Partnership will develop the area that will comprise some 1900 homes as well as offices and shops along with school and community facilities.

Work is already underway to revitalise Corby town centre after councillors approved the building of a new £32.6m Civic Hub, and an £18m swimming centre. Alongside the £35million Willow Place shopping mall, the north Northamptonshire town will be radically transformed by 2009. Work will start on site in early February.

The civic hub will include a 445-seat theatre and arts centre, new library, roof top restaurant, and a one-stop-shop for the Borough Council.

Meanwhile in Northampton, West Northamptonshire Development Corporation has approved a £6million development programme for the town's Gold Street area. The area, from the railway station to All Saints Church will provide a new attractive and vibrant gateway into the town.

Creative industries

The scope for creative industries to thrive within the growth area will become a fully fledged project commissioned by Arts Council East, East Midlands & South East. The project, to be completed by autumn this year, aims to provide a comprehensive map of the creative industries sector in the MKSM Growth Area enabling the support of growth to this industry.

Year of Culture

Milton Keynes Local Strategic Partnership has assigned 07/08 (from June) as the Year of Culture. Culture has been chosen as their focus due to Milton Keynes' 40th Birthday which is being celebrated through cultural activities throughout the year and the launch of Milton Keynes Cultural Strategy.

Culture Prospectus

Northamptonshire County Council is currently carrying out a mapping exercise to audit cultural provision within the County. The *Prospectus for Culture* aims to anticipate the needs of the growing population and recognise the value of joint working between our regional cultural agencies, the local delivery vehicles and key cultural sector organisations.

The *Prospectus for Culture* will highlight those venues, events and organisations identified by our partners as being essential to a cultural infrastructure that supports sustainable communities and, collectively, will provide an effective marketing and investment plan to maximise developer contributions for culture in Northamptonshire. Contact: Sue Grace

sgrace@northamptonshire.gov.uk for further details.

MKSM Conference

An autumn MKSM annual conference has been proposed in order to showcase the work in the growth area, provide an opportunity to share best practice and place MKSM on the national agenda. The conference will allow delegates to look in detail at delivery challenges as well as look at the main themes of planning, infrastructure, employment and sustainability.

Water infrastructure

The Water Service Infrastructure Group (WSIG) has produced a guide to promote the principles of sustainable development in the provision of local water and waste water services infrastructure. A two page summary leaflet and an introduction to Water Cycle Strategies will also be available.

The aim of the guide is to highlight principles and good practice. It also promotes a change in process, so that the quality and location of development is addressed in parallel with the provision of infrastructure in a more integrated way.

The guide and leaflets are aimed at a wide audience including local planning authorities, local delivery vehicles, water Companies, government departments and developers. The four-page introduction leaflet considers the benefits of Water Cycle Strategies and features a schematic 3-D diagram.

The introduction to Water Cycle Strategies will be available on 30th March 2007. Please download from the WSIG webpage below, or http://www.environmentagency.gov.uk/regions/anglian/484767/119_8793/?version=1&lang=_e

Contacts – Local delivery vehicles

Milton Keynes Partnership

Contact:

Jane Hamilton

Chief Operating Officer

Milton Keynes Partnership

1st Floor Central Business Exchange II, 414-428 Midsummer Boulevard, Milton Keynes, MK9 2EA

janehamilton@englishpartnerships.co.uk

Tel: 01908 353628

West Northamptonshire Development Corporation

Contact:

Mike Weir

P.O. Box 355, Franklin's Gardens, Weedon Road, Northampton NN5 5WW

<mailto:roger.mendonca@wndc.org.uk>

Tel: 01604 586605

North Northants Development Company

Contact:

Bob Lane

Chief Executive

North Northants Development Company

1 Exchange Court, Cottingham Road, Corby, Northamptonshire, NN17 1TY

Tel: 01536 274 979

Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis & Leighton Linlade

Contact

Liz Wade

Assistant Director (Economic Growth) Bedfordshire County Council

County Hall Cauldwell Street Bedford MK42 9AP Tel: 01234 228972

E mail: liz.wade@bedscc.gov.uk

Aylesbury Vale Advantage

Contact:

Greg Lomax

Managing Director

Aylesbury Vale Advantage

Exchange Street, Aylesbury, HP20 1UB

greg.lomax@aylesburyvleadvantage.co.uk

Tel: 01296 585896

Renaissance Bedford

Contact:

Chris Watts

Executive Director, Renaissance Bedford

Salamander House, 2-10 St John's Street, Bedford MK42 0DH

chris.watts@renaissancebedford.org.uk

Tel: 01234 440053

Contacts - Strategic groups

Inter-regional Board

A range of sub-groups undertaking detailed work in the growth area report to the IRB. Regular meetings of the chairs of these sub-groups take place prior to each meeting of the IRB. A smaller technical working group guides the production of the Annual Monitoring Report on behalf of the Regional Assemblies.

The IRB commissioned work to prepare a growth area submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR07), with a view to helping partners in the Growth Areas better deliver the services and infrastructure essential to the development of sustainable communities. This submission went forward to HMT at the end of September; for specific enquiries on the CSR work please contact Ian Achurch at Northamptonshire County Council, iachurch@northamptonshire.gov.uk

The current sub-groups cover Health and Social Care, Transport and Planning, Economy and Skills, Environment and Quality of Life, and Funding. A revised sub-group structure and terms of reference, as well as defining added value work programmes for the sub-groups need to be agreed by the IRB at its next meeting.

MKSM Culture Partnership

The partnership draws together cultural agencies and upper tier local authorities. The role of the partnership is to ensure a strategic and co-ordinated approach to the integration and promotion of culture in the planning for growth in the MKSM Growth Area. Shimul Haider is the MKSM Cultural Co-ordinator who facilitates the partnership. She is based at Northamptonshire County

Council offices and English Partnerships in Milton Keynes. For more information on Shimul's work please contact her on 07809 665184, or email; s.haider@culturesoutheast.org.uk

Contacts - Government Offices

Each of the three Government Offices in the growth area takes a locality lead on MKSM for those parts of the sub-region that lie within its boundary. *Contacts:*

Government Office for the South East:

Acting Director for Thames Valley and Locality Manager for MK and Buckinghamshire: Nigel Welbourn (nigel.welbourn@gose.gsi.gov.uk) Tel: 01483 882402

Government Office for the East of England:

Michael Bingham (michael.bingham@goeast.gsi.gov.uk) Tel: 01223 372569. From April 1: John Brown (john.brown@goeast.gsi.gov.uk) - tel. 01223 372752

Government Office for the East Midlands:

Until April 16: Alison Adams (Alison.adams@goem.gsi.gov.uk) Tel: 0115 971 4734. After April 16: Fiona Forgham (Fiona.forgham@goem.gsi.gov.uk) Tel: 0115 971 2541