



GOVERNMENT OFFICES FOR THE
SOUTH EAST
EAST MIDLANDS
EAST OF ENGLAND

Milton Keynes & South Midlands

Growth area e-bulletin

April 2006, issue 6

This is the 6th 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 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, or any potential contributions for the next edition, please contact Urselle Mumford, email urselle.mumford@gose.gsi.gov.uk or telephone 01908 353733.

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Community Infrastructure Fund

On April 11th, the Government announced funding for transport projects in the Growth Areas under the Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF). The fund, established by the Department for Transport and the ODPM will provide funding for ten new transport schemes in Northamptonshire, Peterborough, Essex, Aylesbury and the Thames Gateway, worth a total of £51 million.

In Northamptonshire, provisional approval is being given to a £19.9 million scheme to upgrade three roads to the west of Northampton which will unlock development of 4,000 houses, ease traffic congestion in the centre of the town and create a more sustainable orbital transport system for the town. Further work will be taken forward on proposals from Northamptonshire County Council for a new Park & Ride scheme for Northampton

In Corby, £6.1 million has been allocated to support development to the north of the town and ease congestion at Corby Northern Orbital Road.

At Aylesbury North Station, £8.17 million has been earmarked to upgrade the existing single track and signalling to create a new parkway station serving the Berryfields and Weedon Hill developments.

Further information and a Press Notice about the CIF announcement can be found at: <http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1002882&PressNoticeID=2142>

MKSM Architecture and Built Environment Centre

The MKSM ABEC Board has appointed Carlton Roberts-James as Director. Carlton is currently Head of Skills at CAFE and took up this post as a one year secondment from CAFE on Monday 24th April.

Carlton is a chartered town planner and Fellow of the Institution of Highways & Transportation. He is a member of IHT's urban design panel and has led CAFE's skills activities for about two years. Carlton lives in Olney (12 miles from Milton Keynes) and has lived in the Milton Keynes area for six years. The MKSM Board will be writing to stakeholders in the near future with news of the progress of the architecture centre, the establishment of the Board and the appointment of the Director.

Contact: crjames@cabec.org.uk

Oxford to Cambridge Arc

Dr Nicholas Miles becomes the Executive Director of the Oxford to Cambridge (O2C) Arc this May. Dr Miles has previously worked for local government in the UK. More recently, as a Director and Deputy Chair, he has managed an economic consultancy firm based in Hong Kong, Toronto and London. His experience ranges from the promotion of the modern tertiary sector economy in Shanghai, to assisting the Government of Ontario in Canada devise its economic development vision and mission statement, to undertaking investment appraisals for the private sector in Asia and the UK. He has worked with international lending agencies, national governments and the private sector on programmes projects facilitating "globalisation".

Dr Miles said: "The O2C Arc is not a parochial initiative. It is extremely important for UK PLC. The Arc will become a major driver of the UK economy. As such the Arc will be one of the most important 'knowledge economy' heartlands in Europe and of huge significance to the EU project and the Lisbon agenda in particular. The success of the Arc is vital if the UK is to prosper in the global economy".

Dr Miles will be working on a work programme and plan for the Arc over the coming months. Contact: nicholas.miles@mkelp.co.uk

MKSM Growth Area stakeholder conference

Milton Keynes Council hosted a conference for senior stakeholders in MKSM on 23rd March, with support from ODPM and GOSE. Around 200 people attended the conference from a wide range of organisations within MKSM. Speakers from the Environment Agency, Housing Corporation, GOSE, Culture South East, Dept of Health, SEEDA, and the MKSM sub groups for Funding and Transport & Planning reviewed the achievements and challenges for the future in planning and cross-border infrastructure, transport, environment, health, funding, housing, culture, economy, learning and skills. Presentations were followed by Workshop Discussion Groups on the key themes. A conference report on the outcomes of the conference is being produced and will be available from www.mkweb.co.uk/mkgrowth. Government Offices plan to hold a follow-up major annual stakeholder conference for the growth area next spring.

Ministerial visit to MKSM

Baroness Andrews visited Aylesbury on 20th April. The Minister was given a tour of the local area and saw at first hand real evidence of growth being delivered on the ground. As part of the visit the Baroness unveiled a plaque at Whitehill Park, an area of open space that has benefited from ODPM growth funding for the planting of a number of oak trees to regenerate an area of waste land. This project has injected new life to the area and will leave a long lasting legacy for Aylesbury's green space strategy. A further £1m of Growth Area Funding has been awarded to Aylesbury for new green space projects helping to reinforce the department's policy of sustainable community development.

Following on from the tour and site visit the Baroness met with the key stakeholders and partners in Aylesbury. The Baroness expressed her enthusiasm and excitement surrounding the future plans for Aylesbury and her desire to return to the area in due course.

Local Delivery Vehicles

Milton Keynes Partnership

Public consultation on the six options on how and where Milton Keynes could grow to 2031 closed in January. The work to evaluate the Options for Growth is now virtually complete. The main Evaluation Report, Annexes and Executive Summary can be found on the MK2031 website. During April and May, MKP are consulting key stakeholders on the draft Growth Strategy. Their views will assist in developing the draft Growth Strategy up to 2031. The next stage of work will be presented to the Milton Keynes Partnership Committee at their next meeting on June 12th. It will provide evidence for the Public Examination on the draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England and form the basis of the Partnership's response to the government's consultation towards the end of June. The MK2031 Project website is at: www.mkweb.co.uk/mk2031

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

From 6th April, West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (WNDC) has new planning powers to help deliver the infrastructure and co-ordinate regeneration and development of West Northamptonshire. WNDC will deal with all strategic planning applications in the urban development areas of Northampton, Daventry and Towcester and with all applications for new development and change of use in Northampton town centre. Following the responses to public consultations on control powers, a decision document defining the new powers has been published and can be found at: <http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1164304>. Further information about the WNDC can be found at: www.wndc.org.uk.

Contact:

Roger Mendonca

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

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

Tel: 01604 586605

North Northamptonshire Together

A submission to Government presenting the case for the merger between North Northants Together and Catalyst Corby was made in late March 2006. If approved, a new Urban Regeneration Company would be formed, known as the North Northamptonshire Development Company. Further information about the merger position will be published in the near future. Information about the two organisations is available at:

www.nntogether.co.uk and www.catalyst-corby.co.uk.

Contact:

Martin Hammond

Interim Chief Executive

North Northamptonshire Together

SATRA House, Rockingham Road, Kettering, Northants NN16 9JH

info@thenp.org.uk

Tel: 01536 414645

Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis & Leighton Linlade

The local authorities' Joint Planning and Transport Committee met on 13th March. Further information can be found at: http://www.southbeds.gov.uk/your-council/committee_timetable.phtml?action=view2&id=476&csubitemid=4477

The local authorities continue to support the case for a UDC as the most appropriate vehicle for delivering growth. In the meantime, ODPM and GO East have been discussing with the local authorities options for adding capacity to the joint technical work and infrastructure delivery.

Contact:

Ian Slater

Luton Borough Council

Town Hall, George Street, Luton LU1 2BQ

slateri@luton.gov.uk

Tel: 01582 546 329

Aylesbury Vale Advantage

Buckinghamshire County Council is to receive £14.4 million of Government funding for two Aylesbury focused projects: the Aylesbury Public Transport hub and Aylesbury Southcourt Bridge.

A major piece of work is being carried out which will provide a long-term context and vision for Aylesbury and its town centre over the next twenty years. The Town Centre Vision Framework project is led by Aylesbury Vale Advantage in collaboration with SEEDA, English Partnerships, Aylesbury Vale District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council. Further information is available at: www.aylesburyvaleadvantage.co.uk

Contact:

Greg Lomax

Aylesbury Vale Advantage

Exchange Street, Aylesbury, HP20 1UB

greg.lomax@aylesburyvaleadvantage.co.uk

Tel: 01296 585896

Renaissance Bedford

Renaissance Bedford is a partnership of local stakeholders working together through its Board and adopted Business Plan to re-invigorate and renew the town of Bedford and the northern Marston Vale through sustainable housing and employment growth. The delivery team is now in place and working with local partners to deliver growth in the Bedford area. Key activities this month have included the first Infrastructure Providers forum. They have also initiated a tendering process for the delivery of a long-term growth prospectus and are commissioning an out-commuter study for railway users, to support its inward investment activity.

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

Strategic groups supporting delivery

Inter-regional Board

Chaired by an ODPM Minister, the Inter-regional Board brings together local authority leaders, senior management from Government agencies and other key stakeholders in the Growth Area. Yvette Cooper MP chaired the last meeting in Northampton in February, where the Board considered a range of delivery issues including Housing Corporation allocations and a framework for economic development. The next meeting of the Board is due to take place on the morning of 22nd June 2006, in the Council Chamber of South Bedfordshire District Council in Dunstable and will be chaired by ODPM Minister Baroness Andrews. Meetings are open to the public, who may submit questions. Further information about tabling questions, and minutes from previous Board meetings can be found at: <http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1140178>.

Growth Implementation Group

The GIG is a partnership grouping that shadows the Inter-regional Board and co-ordinates the detailed thematic work being undertaken in the growth areas by the sub-groups and others. Meetings of the GIG, which are currently quarterly, will in future take the form of an annual stakeholder conference focused on the findings of the statutory Annual Monitoring Report of the Sub-regional Strategy, and will include district councils and the private sector. A smaller GIG technical working group will guide the production of the AMR on behalf of the Regional Assemblies.

Regular meetings of the Chairs of the Sub-Groups will continue, and will be scheduled prior to each Inter-regional Board. In addition, the GIG is commissioning 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.

Mike Gwilliam, Chairman of the GIG and its predecessor bodies, retired from his position as Director of Planning at the South East England Regional Assembly earlier this year, along with his position as Chair of the GIG. Government Offices and GIG members wish

to thank Mike for his contribution to the growth agenda and wish him well in his retirement.

For further information on the GIG please contact Tim.Higginson@gose.gsi.gov.uk (Tel: 01908 353944). For specific enquiries on the CSR work please contact Ian Achurch at Northamptonshire County Council, iachurch@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Health and Social Care

This sub-group focuses on public health and planning for services delivery. The report commissioned by the Strategic Health Authorities in MKSM, 'Bridge to the Future' has been finalised. Contact: Leasha Perkins, 01536 494447.

(mksm.projectoffice@northants.nhs.uk). A conference is planned for the end of June to launch the document to senior appointees in the new SHAs. The HSC sub-group is also responsible for initiatives on public health including workshops and the development of a planning checklist and for work with the Housing Corporation on key worker housing requirements.

On 12th April, the Department of Health announced a reorganisation of the Strategic Health Authorities. Further information and a link to a map showing the new SHA boundaries can be found at:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/PressReleases/PressReleasesNotices/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4133759&chk=40QEXO

Sub-Group contact: Dawn Bason: (dawn.bason@northantsheartlandspct.nhs.uk)

Tel: 01536 494258

Transport and Planning

Key activities for this group are developing an action plan from issues emerging from the Annual Monitoring Report, leading on the GIG submission to Government on the Comprehensive Spending Review, and ongoing development of a transport and delivery programme for transport and sustainable growth.

Sub-Group contact: Ian Achurch (iachurch@northamptonshire.gov.uk). Tel: 01604 236057

Environment and Quality of Life

This group encompasses environmental issues, community safety and cultural dimensions. A task and finish group considering Water Services Infrastructure issues has been developing a best practice guide aimed at Local Authorities, LDVs, developers and others, for publication in May.

Sub-Group contact: Louise Johnson (louise.johnson@environment-agency.gov.uk)

Tel: 0115 8462619

Economy, Learning and Skills

This group has been re-aligned to focus more closely on economic considerations. Chaired by the RDAs in MKSM in rotation, it is currently working with the Oxford to Cambridge Arc to develop future relationships and responsibilities. On the Skills side, a Skills Masterplan is currently under development, funded by the LSCs. Once the work is signed off, the LSCs will work on the way forward to produce a 'Learning Plan' for the region.

Sub-Group contact: Mark Sloan (mark.sloan@gose.gsi.gov.uk) Tel: 01483 884843

Funding

The areas of focus for this group are on driving forward the potential of the strategic tariff principles and addressing the revenue needs of growth areas. New areas of work will include the submission to CSR07, the need for a consistent approach to funding affordable housing across the growth areas and tackling how revenue funding in public services can better respond to growth. Some of the growth areas that face similar funding issues to those in MKSM are to be invited to join the group. In the first instance, these will be Cambridge and Ashford.

Sub-Group contact: John Walker (tonjwalker@aol.com) Tel: 01908 234348

In addition to these groups, there is also a **Local Delivery Vehicle Reference Group** to facilitate interaction and help MKSM LDVs shape a common strategic agenda for the growth area. Meetings of this group take the form of workshops on specific themes and they additionally provide opportunities for networking.

Contact: Urselle Mumford (urselle.mumford@gose.gsi.gov.uk) Tel: 01908 353733

Government Office contacts

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:

Head of Growth Areas: Nigel Welbourn (nigel.welbourn@gose.gsi.gov.uk) Tel: 01483 882402

Government Office for the East of England:

Team Leader: Michael Bingham (michael.bingham@goeast.gsi.gov.uk) Tel: 01223 372569

Government Office for the East Midlands:

Team Leader: Giles Hughes (giles.hughes@goem.gsi.gov.uk) Tel: 0115 9714733

In addition, a Government Office team based within the growth area deals with strategic MKSM-wide issues and promotes development of partnerships to support delivery, including acting as secretariat to the IRB and GIG.

Contacts:

Team Leader: Tim Higginson (tim.higginson@gose.gsi.gov.uk) Tel: 01908 353944

Urselle Mumford (urselle.mumford@gose.gsi.gov.uk) Tel: 01908 353733

Diary – forthcoming events

- 9th May West Northamptonshire Development Corporation Board meeting, 6.30pm-8.30pm, venue to be confirmed. Contact: Tracey Anthony-Winter on 01604 586604 or email: tracey.anthony-winter@wndc.org.uk.
- 22nd May Aylesbury Vale Advantage Board meeting, 2.00pm, Holiday Inn, Aston Clinton Road, Aylesbury. Contact: liz.clowe@aylesburyvleadvantage.co.uk
- 6th June West Northamptonshire Development Corporation Board meeting, 1.00pm-3.00pm, venue to be confirmed. Contact: Tracey Anthony-Winter on 01604 586604 or email: tracey.anthony-winter@wndc.org.uk.
- 7th June Gala Business Dinner 2006, hosted by Catalyst Corby and Northamptonshire Chamber at Rockingham Performance Park. Contact: The Events Team on 01604 490490 or email: events@northants-chamber.co.uk
- 12th June Milton Keynes Partnership Committee meeting, 3.00pm-5.00pm, Christ the Cornerstone Church, Milton Keynes. Contact: mkpc@englishpartnerships.co.uk
- 16th June South Bedfordshire Joint Planning and Transport Committee meeting, 9.30am, South Bedfordshire District Council Offices, Dunstable
- 22nd June MKSM Inter-regional Board, South Bedfordshire District Council offices, Dunstable. Contact: Tim Higginson (tim.higginson@gose.gsi.gov.uk) Tel: 01908 353944