

SP2ACN

SPEAKING NOTES FOR LUNCH AT POST HOUSE HOTEL

MILTON KEYNES

FRIDAY 26 SEPTEMBER



I was very pleased to be able to open Energy World

Business Week this morning, not only

because of its importance for Energy

Efficiency year, but also to mark yet

another major success for Milton Keynes -

now the fastest growing urban district in

Britain.

Milton Keynes is clearly an outstanding

success.

All can take pride in annual growth rates



of 3,500 new jobs net each year and 2,500 new homes.

It demonstrates clearly both the confidence of the private investor and success of the Development Corporation and other agencies in providing the basic infrastructure, environment and liaison with businesses.

The outstanding location must also take some credit of course.



I would like to consider briefly some reasons for this success.

First, a willingness to clear the way for a potential investor by reducing to the minimum the number of applications necessary to achieve the necessary planning and other consents before development can begin.

Development Corporations rightly make much of their "one stop shop" service to



businesses so that an investor can talk about all his main requirements with one agency.

This emphasis on putting the investor's needs first has yielded rich results.

It is interesting that 7,000 out of a total of 40,000 new jobs in Milton Keynes represent foreign investors often setting up their first manufacturing or service facility in Britain.



Also notable are the number of small businesses for which Milton Keynes offers great flexibility as to sites and premises and of course excellent communications.

Another factor has been the Development

Corporation's help in creating a sympathetic environment for new technology and innovation. Energy World exhibition is a part of this but it extends more



widely into provision for cable  
communication throughout the town and a  
determination to exploit information  
technology possibilities wherever  
possible.

Your Chairman, with a distinguished interest in this  
field, earlier this year announced the  
launch of the new Institute for  
Information Technology in Milton Keynes,



financed by £3.5 million contributions from industry which will have a major impact on training and research in this vital sector.

But these are not the only reasons a business chooses to locate in this new town which many, understandably, regard as a new city.

A critical factor is environment and



particularly housing.

Energy World is more than just a tribute to innovation and the ability of architects and developers to provide attractive solutions to the problem of rising energy costs.

It is also a tribute to the extraordinary diversity and quality of building possible when the right conditions allow a wide range of developers to compete.



One of Milton Keynes greatest strengths is the diversity of its housing choice with over 55 developers working throughout the new town and more wishing to acquire sites.

This compares with the situation less than 10 years ago when after a number of years of public sector housing programmes, there were no private housing developers in the town.



For those unable to buy, the Development Corporation have recently shown pioneering skill and ingenuity in launching, with the Halifax Building Society, the first entirely privately funded shared ownership housing schemes in the country.

Changes in housing reflect a general evolution in the building of Milton Keynes.

A programme reliant largely on public



sector funding for housing and industrial and commercial property has given way to one in which the private sector has almost entirely taken over those roles.

There is still a vital task of completing the basic infrastructure of roads and services to ensure that all the great development opportunities remaining can be taken up in due course, but only the private developer can determine the type



of housing, factory or office premises required.

This has to be the right balance.

The public sector can create the conditions for this growth but it cannot compel it to happen.

In the substantial opportunities which remain, I urge you to give the widest possible scope to private investors to complete



imaginatively the remaining development of  
the city.

I am quite sure that future generations will regard  
Milton Keynes as one of the most  
successful new urban developments  
undertaken in this period of our history.