Milton Keynes Core Strategy Examination
RPS Planning & Development on behalf of Old Road Securities 273017

Examination Matter 6: Strategic Reserve Areas

Issues: 6.1 – 6.3
Matter 6: Strategic Reserve Areas

1. RPS Planning & Development (RPS) is retained by Old Road Securities (ORS) to present evidence on several Examination Matters in relation to their specific land interests at Newport Pagnell concerning residential development proposals on the Strategic Reserve site at Tickford Fields Farm to the east of the settlement. The focus of ORS' concerns in relation to the Core Strategy is within the context of Policies CS1, CS2, CS5 and CS9 and the proposed vision for the rural area in particular.

2. ORS has sought allocation of the Newport Pagnell Strategic Reserve to accommodate rural housing growth through the Core Strategy (MKCS) or at very least recognition of the saved Local Plan policy through the text of the document. ORS is prepared to work with the Council as part owner in delivering the Strategic Reserve site and has sought collaboration on initial technical investigations so that a development brief for the site can be prepared. The confidence in promoting this Strategic Reserve site is borne about from its previous assessment through the Local Plan Inquiry and the conclusions of the Plan Inspector who considered that the reserve land would be a reasonable expansion area for the town in the longer term as the site could be developed in a way that would relate in an acceptable way to the existing urban.

3. The MKCS consideration of alternatives has not considered all of the previous Strategic Reserve sites (SR) as previously allocated through the Local Plan. No analysis of need/delivery or site assessment has been made of the SR at Newport Pagnell and no explanation given of why the growth of the rural town is not as viable as urban expansions to the MUA, especially when taking into account the extent of housing supply required within the rest of the district. Therefore the consideration of alternatives has been flawed and has not considered all optimum sites. Indeed the size of the Tickford Fields SR is comparable to others that have been included and therefore of a scale sufficient to be considered through the Core Strategy policy and not left to be resolved through the Site Allocation DPD.
4. Indeed RPS expected that the Tickford Fields SR site would be scrutinized alongside the other SRs, as recorded in a report to the LDF Advisory Group on 26 August 2010:

“The Strategic Reserve Areas are effectively the first areas of search for new development after 2011. However, they are not allocated for development in the Local Plan. Policy EA4A states ‘they will only be considered for additional housing, employment or other development in a review of or alteration to this Plan’. Before the Strategic Reserve Areas can be advanced by way of development briefs they need to be allocated and this could be done through the Core Strategy. However, each Strategic Reserve Area is considerably smaller than the South East Strategic Development Area (SDA) as a whole and so should therefore be assessed against other similar sized sites around the edge of the urban area, to check that they remain the most sustainable locations for growth. This will introduce a new element into the Core Strategy given the fact these sites are smaller than the SDA. Effectively it is moving into the scale of development anticipated for the Site Allocations Development Plan Document. Therefore a decision about whether the Strategic Reserve Areas are allocated in this document or the Core Strategy will be required There is another Strategic Reserve Area at Tickford Fields, Newport Pagnell which should be included in this process.

It is important to decide whether the Strategic Reserve Areas should be developed in isolation or in combination. The question about whether these sites should be future proofed (to allow for more development in the surrounding area at some time in the future) should also be addressed.”
[Response to ‘motion’ presented to Core Strategy item, LDF Advisory Group on 26 August 2010]

5. The Council’s approach to development on its own land is delaying associated lands from being developed and has demoted consideration of the Tickford Fields SR. Failure to fully assess this site through the alternative site paper and to actively promote the site through the strategy as a long term solution for delivering rural affordable housing and infrastructure needs is contrary to the South East Plan Policy CC9 and government aspirations contained in the Planning for Growth statement. Recognition of the Tickford Fields SR site should be incorporated to resolve this alongside appraisal of its suitability in regard to accommodating rural housing growth.