1. Introduction

Scope and Purpose

1.1 This Statement has been prepared on behalf of Sainsbury’s Supermarkets Ltd in relation to Matter 1 (Overview) of the Milton Keynes Core Strategy Development Plan Document. Sainsbury’s is a key investor in Milton Keynes having stores at Witan Gate and Bletchley and is keen to provide further investment within the Borough. In particular, Sainsbury’s is currently preparing a planning application for the creation of a district centre facility at Stantonbury alongside a major investment in new school buildings at Stantonbury Campus.

1.2 This representation should be read in conjunction with previous representations to the Core Strategy made by Sainsbury’s in March 2010 and November 2010.

1.3 The issues that are examined in this Statement reflect the questions of most relevance to Sainsbury’s Supermarkets Ltd asked in the ‘Matters and Issues for the Hearings’ (July 2012).

Matter 1

1.2 Taken as a whole, is the Core Strategy consistent with the principles and policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development? If it is not, how might any inconsistencies be rectified?

1.4 The main thrust of the NPPF is to promote sustainable economic development and for local planning authorities to positively seek opportunities to meet the needs of their area.

1.5 Such an approach is not reflected in the Core Strategy. For example, in dealing with new retail development the policy approach seeks to restrict retail development by setting out retail floorspace requirements for the Borough, based upon evidence and a methodology that we consider to be flawed.

1.6 In light of this, we believe that the retail floorspace requirements should be revised or removed from the Core Strategy and a policy introduced that outlines that the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF.
1.7 In addition, in accordance with the thrust of the NPPF, such a policy should also indicate that the Council will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.