Submission by Wavendon Parish Council

The village of Wavendon is named in the Domesday Book

Wauendene is the Doomsday name of this place.

Matter 3 – Overall Housing Provision (Policies Cs2 and 10, Table 5.2, Chapters 17 and 18, Appendix D)

Wavendon Parish Council is in complete support with the Milton Keynes Core Strategy as submitted by Milton Keynes Council for Inspection. The Parish Council makes the following observations in terms of Matter 3.

- The SHMA was conducted in 2008 at the height of the banking collapse, but at a time when economic recovery was thought to possible in short time – before the subsequent ongoing economic problems. Even then it showed Milton Keynes house prices falling, decrease in inward migration and increase in outward migration over a period before and during the banking problems. The SHMA put the housing annual requirement higher than even the examined RSS figure of 2,068 at 3,366 (never achieved even during the most booming of the booming years, and which in the foreseeable future is totally unrealistic, even taking into account the uncertainty of any gradual return to growth.

- It is therefore sensible to review the SHMA in the light of the current and the foreseeable future particularly taking into account the significant amount of land available, permissions in place to rapidly take advantage of an improved economic environment.

- To meet Milton Keynes Council’s indigenous needs requires an annual figure of 1,300 dwellings achievable based on current completion rate – the Government projections is a requirement of 1,600 dwellings per annum which is achievable over the plan period. The Core Strategy proposes 1,750 dwellings per annum which could realistically be achieved over the plan period.

- The South East Plan figures, in so far as it related to Milton Keynes, is seriously dated and has negligible relevance to the determination of appropriate levels for housing and employment provision in Milton Keynes to 2026

The key statistics for consideration are:

Average dwelling completions per annum between 2006 and 2010 – 1400 per annum
Current land availability (permissions and assumptions for permission) – 28,000
Therefore at current levels supply = 20 years land supply
At Core Strategy rate (i.e. 1750 pa) = 16 years land supply
Even at SE Plan rates (never achieved in MK!) of 2300 pa = 12 years land supply
• Therefore, without dispute, is that clear that there is sufficient land allocated, to cater for permissions full, outline or presumed and to provide a supply for the next 14-18 years, with no additional sites needed, and without taking into account windfall sites. To have had an unrealistic and unachievable housing target over the plan period would only lead to an increase in the unwanted but inevitable outcome of there being increased developer land banking and inappropriate sprawling countryside development proposals based on a failure to meet unachievable targets. The considerable work undertaken by Milton Keynes Council in the preparation of this Core Strategy clearly demonstrates sufficient land provision.

• The core strategy 2011 – 2026 has sensibly revised this figure to a more realistically and deliverable total of 28,000 annualised to 1,750 dwellings following and grounded in the change in economic and financial climate.

• It is of course perfectly acceptable for the Core Strategy (whilst being generally in conformity with the SE Plan – even given its limited weight in overall consideration) through periodic review to revise its housing targets. However and more importantly these proposed housing growth figures will still more than support and underpin the ongoing economic growth of Milton Keynes.

• There is enough suitable land identified for these levels of growth – and it is worth reiterating once again that there are 28,000 permissions (or presumptions of permission) still to be delivered and the focus on early delivery of sites is seen as being key to the deliverability of the selected sites by MK Council.

• This is of course always subject to national economic conditions that are out of the control of the Council. Should developers hold back land for tactical or commercial reasons, then that decision is not within the control of the local authority

• Developers on the western flank of MK have been coming forward with sites for development (see recent minutes from Milton Keynes Partnership planning sub committee – see: http://www.miltonkeynespartnership.info/committees/milton_keynes_partnership_sub-committee.php

• It is important for the balance of development and for the long term sustainability of the Borough that development on the east and west flanks take place in tandem. The western flank sites are closer by some distance to the major employment areas of the Borough (city centre) and to the key transport hub (Milton Keynes central rail station).

• Development of the western flank requires the straightforward extension of the existing grid road provision into predominately open countryside – east flank infrastructure (including grid road extensions) above and beyond what has already been identified would impact severely on the existing built communities (Wavendon village in particular) and in relative terms would be considerably more expensive (in times of public spending constraints). Western flank sites are more viable. Additional east flank developments above what has already been identified, would place inevitable strain upon the A421 for duelling as it would attract ‘a commuter investment’ from people living close to J13 and choosing not to work in Milton
Keynes but who take advantage of close private car transport opportunities to access the M1 (southbound). Not the sustainable vision Milton Keynes Council has for its future growth.

- Milton Keynes Council clearly seeks to reverse the trends towards the provision of homes with small and restrictive internal space, and argues that the costs of providing new lifetime homes should be minimal. Currently, private sector investment in house building continues to be low and developers commonly face demands for contributions towards affordable housing and essential infrastructure, whilst having to build more sustainable homes. However, one would hope that market conditions, will improve over the plan period, and Wavendon Parish Council would recommend that the policy adopted might concede that a Lifetime Homes Standard will be sought “where feasible and practical”. This one would reasonably assume would be seen to be suitably flexible.

- As previously stated, the NPPF requires a five year supply plus 20% which equates to six years supply. Wavendon Parish Council maintains that Milton Keynes Core Strategy and the evidence accompanying it shows beyond doubt that it exceeds this requirement considerably.

- The site allocations and capacity takes full account of risk and other foreseeable development related issues. Whilst this is a technical matter for MK Council planning officers to address the level of provision offers choices and alternatives and a suggested five year review of the Core Strategy would allow for additions / deletions to be made if and where appropriate. The reality of the situation is not that there is a shortage of identified land but that there is a shortage of available finance to develop that land and for people to purchase or lease said properties – with no sign (at time of writing - and given the so called double dip recession) of an end to that situation.

Alan Kemp
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