

## EMPLOYMENT

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### *Background*

**11.1** Milton Keynes City is one of the main sources of employment in the sub-region, recognised in RPG9 as one of the “powerhouses” of the South East Region. When the new town was designated in 1967, there were 21,350 jobs. Upon completion of all the employment land within the original City boundary, there will be around 136,550 jobs in the City. This reflects the success of Milton Keynes in attracting companies and supporting economic growth.

RPG9, March 2001–  
para 12.61

**11.2** Some of the factors contributing to this success include:

- the location of the City and the quality of its road and rail links
- the availability of land, including a wide range of sites capable of accommodating a variety of uses
- the provision of advanced infrastructure
- a balanced development of employment and housing
- a high quality environment

The assumptions  
behind this figure are  
set out in the  
Directions Paper.

### *National, Regional and Local Planning Objectives*

**11.3** PPGs 1, 4, 7 and 13 all include advice in relation to employment development. This advice encourages:

- Economic development compatible with environmental objectives
- Employment development concentrated in urban and suburban areas, to maximise opportunities to travel by public transport
- A better balance between housing and employment
- Taking into account the locational demands of industry when identifying sites for development
- The carriage of freight by rail or water

**11.4** RPG9 identifies Milton Keynes as a potential growth area in the long term and the subsequent Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy (March 2005) sets out the scale of this growth. Both assume that the City and the surrounding area will continue to play a major role in the provision of employment in the area over the next 20 to 30 years. The policies in this Plan aim to provide sufficient opportunities for employment growth for the period to 2011.

### *This Local Plan*

**11.5** The Local Plan vision refers to promoting a dynamic, knowledge-based economy, stimulating diversity and innovation and strengthening Milton Keynes’ role as a regional centre. Plan Aim No12 relates to the provision of employment opportunities for a range of needs in different locations.

**11.6** Recognising the developing role of the City as a regional employment centre, the relevant Plan targets are that by 2011 there will be 3% more jobs than resident labour force in the Borough and 12% more in the City. In quantitative terms this would amount to 150,000 jobs in the Borough as a whole and 138,000 jobs in the City, compared to a labour force of 145,650 in the Borough and 123,150 in the City.

These figures are based on the most recent populations projections for MK (based on housing growth) and estimates regarding those of working age and economic activity rates.

## *Other Economic Strategies*

**11.7** There are economic strategies produced by various local and regional bodies that are important to note. These strategies contain initiatives to encourage economic growth but they do not include the allocation or protection of employment land uses. That is the role of the Local Plan.

**11.8** The Regional Development Agency for the South East (SEEDA) produces a Regional Economic Strategy to encourage inward investment, business support and training in the region as a whole. It recognises Milton Keynes strengths and the important links it has with other parts of the country. It also acknowledges the constraints to future growth. The strategy focuses on initiatives to promote economic growth, such as training and the formation of business networks.

**11.9** The Council is a member of the Milton Keynes Economy and Learning Partnership. The Partnership aims to encourage inward investment, promote the growth of companies and develop opportunities for education and training. These objectives are set out in a combined Joint Economic Development Strategy (JEDS) for the period to 2006 which the Council has signed up to. The objectives of JEDS are reflected in the Council's Community, Economy and Culture Team Plan for delivery at a local level.

## *Policies*

### **PROTECTION OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT LAND**

#### Objectives of policy

- To achieve an overall balance of jobs over labour supply in the City and the Borough
- To maintain the dispersed pattern of employment opportunities across the City
- To protect the employment function of the 4 Key Settlements
- To provide criteria for assessing proposals for other land uses in employment areas

**11.10** In the City, the remaining employment land in the former Designated Area has sufficient capacity to accommodate enough jobs to meet the forecast labour force of the City and also provide a surplus of jobs. (the rationale behind additional employment land allocations made in the expansion areas is set out in 8.7).

**11.11** This will enable a range of job opportunities for a range of skills to be provided. Developing the City as a sub-regional employment centre may curb the need for workers in neighbouring counties to commute to London and other parts of the South East.

**11.12** The way the City has been planned means that employment development is dispersed across the City. This helps to:

- Minimise congestion at peak times by spreading traffic movements across the City

SEEDA has been set up to encourage greater GDP and economic growth, reduce social exclusion and help to protect the environment.

MKELP was established formally on 1 January 2004 and is the result of the merger of the Milton Keynes Economic Partnership and the Milton Keynes Lifelong Learning Partnership

The 'Designated Area' is the area originally allocated for New Town development in 1967.

The figures and the methodology behind the jobs and labour force projections are set out in the Directions Paper.

- Offer employment opportunities close to where people live
- Potentially shorten car journeys

**11.13** However, the dispersed pattern means that it is more difficult to provide fast, frequent and viable bus services than if employment were concentrated in fewer locations. The ease with which those with cars can currently travel around the City also reduces the incentive for people to live close to where they work.

**11.14** Employment uses are defined as Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order, 1987, as amended.

**B1** = offices, research premises, light industry  
**B2** = general industry  
**B8** = wholesale warehouses, distribution, repositories.

## PROTECTION OF EXISTING EMPLOYMENT LAND

### POLICY E1

Within the City of Milton Keynes and the three Key Settlements, planning permission will be refused for the change of use or redevelopment of any land identified for employment use on the Proposals Map to other purposes, unless there would be no conflict with existing or potential neighbouring uses and:

- (i) The proposal would result in a significant reduction in the detrimental environmental impact of an existing use; or
- (ii) The proposed use is one that cannot be satisfactorily accommodated other than in an employment area; or
- (iii) The proposed use will not significantly reduce the provision of local employment opportunities.

## NEW EMPLOYMENT SITES IN MILTON KEYNES CITY

### Objective of policy

- To ensure development of the employment land stock for a variety of employment uses

**11.15** The remaining undeveloped employment land stock in the former Designated Area and the new allocations in the City Expansion Areas are listed in Table E1. Within the Eastern Expansion Area the majority of land is allocated for “large footprint” employment uses, whilst the allocations in the Western and Northern Expansion Areas are smaller and cover B1, B2 and B8 uses.

See Policies EA3  
EA5 and EA6

**11.16** The vacant land information in Table E1 is based on the Council’s Employment Commitments Monitoring System (ECMS). The ECMS provides information about the permitted use of individual sites, based on the most recent planning approvals.

**11.17** Table E1 does not include an entry for CMK but the continuing development of the city centre through the implementation of the Development Framework is seen as key to the success of the local economy. The Development Framework estimated that over 30 years a further 20,000 jobs will be created in CMK. CMK will be the place where higher job densities are most likely to be achieved and where there will be the greatest mix of uses, providing the opportunity to work and live in the centre. The pattern of development envisaged for the city centre (taller building

and mixed uses) means that it is not considered appropriate to include a land area figure for CMK in Table E1.

## NEW EMPLOYMENT SITES IN MILTON KEYNES CITY

### POLICY E2

Planning permission will be granted for employment uses in the areas listed in Table E1 and shown on the Proposals Map. In considering proposals for these areas, the Council will take into account:

- (i) The guidance on uses in Table E1
- (ii) The physical and locational attributes of particular sites
- (iii) The need for a variety of sites to meet the differing requirements of a wide range of employment uses
- (iv) Proposals for employment uses other than those listed for a specific area in Table E1 will be assessed against the criteria in Policy E2.

## NEW EMPLOYMENT SITE IN OLNEY KEY SETTLEMENT

### Objective of policy

- To enable provision of local work opportunities in Olney as part of a sustainable strategy for development

**11.18** The majority of new employment development over the plan period will be located in the City. However, a limited amount of land has been allocated outside the City at Olney.

**11.19** A small site is allocated for B1 employment use. This is partly to improve the number of local jobs compared to the resident workforce, and partly to offset the loss of employment land at Cowper Tannery. Some off-site highway works are required, which will help to resolve local traffic problems. If there proves to be no demand for employment development, an alternative use will only be considered in a review of this Plan.

**11.20** No new allocations are proposed in the other Key Settlements of Newport Pagnell or Woburn Sands. It is considered that no new employment land is needed to match the level of housing growth at Newport Pagnell. In Woburn Sands, part of the Nampak site will remain in employment use. Evidence from Nampak at the Directions Paper stage showed that only about 10% of their workforce lived within Woburn Sands, suggesting that significant new employment allocations in these smaller settlements may have limited impact in improving the local relationship between jobs and labour supply.

## NEW EMPLOYMENT SITE IN OLNEY KEY SETTLEMENT

### POLICY E3

Land north of the disused railway (approx 2.5 hectares) is allocated for B1 employment use. Planning permission will only be granted for development following agreement of:

- (i) A satisfactory road access to the site
- (ii) A financial contribution towards off-site highway works in accordance with a Transport Assessment

## EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE TOWN, DISTRICT AND LOCAL CENTRES

### Objective of policy

- To encourage mixed-use development and increase employment development in centres best served by public transport

**11.21** Town, District and Local Centres provide a valuable retail function for local communities but there is scope for diversifying this function to provide other employment opportunities, securing a greater mix of uses and potentially reducing car-borne travel.

Employment uses (eg offices, workshops) may also be acceptable on some Reserve Sites. See Policy C9 and App C2

The Shopping Chapter sets out the retail hierarchy of centres.

## EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE TOWN, DISTRICT, AND LOCAL CENTRES

### POLICY E4

Planning permission will be granted for employment uses within Town, District, and Local Centres provided that there is no significant detrimental effect on the surrounding area by means of scale, siting, noise, air emissions, or hours of operation.

## RE-USE OF RURAL BUILDINGS

### Objective of policy

- To encourage the employment re-use of rural buildings

**11.22** The re-use of buildings in the rural area for employment purposes is preferable to residential conversion for two reasons:

- conversion to employment is generally less detrimental to the fabric of historic buildings; and
- conversion can help to diversify the rural economic base in relatively low-cost accommodation, generating small-scale local employment opportunities.

Annex G to PPG7 gives more guidance on the conversion of redundant buildings.

PPG7, para 3.8.

**11.23** This is supported by PPG7, which acknowledges that many businesses can be carried out in rural areas without detriment to the surrounding locality. Grant aid for the conversion of rural buildings is available under the England Rural

Development Programme. Policy E5 represents an exception to the generally restrictive approach to development in the open countryside set out in Policy S10 of the Plan.

**11.24** Where the building has previously been used for agricultural purposes, proof will be required to demonstrate that the building has been used for at least three years for this purpose. The permitted development rights associated with an agricultural building will also be withdrawn where change of use is approved.

**11.25** Proposals for a non-employment re-use will only be permitted where it is can be shown over a sustained period that all reasonable attempts to secure an employment re-use have failed. Any such proposals will be assessed against criteria (ii) to (v) of Policy E5 and other policies in the Local Plan. Planning permission for residential conversion may be permitted where it is a subordinate part of an employment re-use.

More information relating to for grant aid schemes under the England Rural Development Programme can be obtained from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). See para 11.27 for more information on the ERDP

## RE-USE OF RURAL BUILDINGS

### POLICY E5

In the open countryside and within the settlement limits of villages, planning permission will be granted for the re-use of rural buildings for employment use if the proposal meets all of the following criteria:

- (i) It would provide a scale and type of employment consistent with rural needs;
- (ii) Adequate survey information is submitted to show that the building is not so derelict as to require complete or substantial reconstruction;
- (iii) The proposed use can be accommodated within the existing building, without substantial reconstruction, extension or alteration;
- (iv) Agricultural buildings proposed for conversion have been designed, constructed and used for agricultural purposes for at least 3 years;
- (v) There would be no significant detrimental effect on the surrounding area by means of scale, siting, noise, air emissions or hours of operation

## NEW BUILDINGS FOR EMPLOYMENT USES IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE

### Objective of policy

- To allow for necessary new employment buildings as part of farm diversification schemes

**11.26** In 1999 agreement was reached on the Agenda 2000 package for Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform. As a result farmers received reduced direct financial support for crops and livestock and instead receive non-production related payments. Further agreement in 2003 led to the Single Payment Scheme. The Rural Development Regulation, or the “second pillar” of CAP, provides measures and funds for the improvement of the rural environment, economy and communities. The Rural Development Programme is the vehicle for implementing this in England.

**11.27** The diversification of agricultural activities has become an important way of counteracting the general economic decline felt by many farmers. The Council will

Retailing proposals in the countryside will be assessed against relevant policies in the Town Centres and Shopping Chapter including:

- R5: Garden centres
- R6: Retail uses in the open countryside

support schemes for farm diversification where the proposal is compatible with a countryside location.

**11.28** New buildings may be a necessary part of a scheme. The Council will allow sensitively designed development if it is essential to the viability of the proposal, and as an exception to the generally restrictive approach to development in the open countryside in Policy S10. New buildings for employment in the open countryside will not be permitted other than as part of farm diversification schemes.

## NEW BUILDINGS FOR EMPLOYMENT USES IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE

### POLICY E6

In the open countryside, planning permission will only be granted for new buildings for employment purposes related to farm diversification schemes if:

- (i) The proposal is ancillary to the agricultural activities on a farm and operated as part of the farm holding
- (ii) It can be adequately demonstrated by survey that there are no existing buildings suitable for the operation on the farm
- (iii) They are sited within or adjacent to an existing group of buildings which are to be retained and are of compatible scale and design

Proposals for leisure development in the countryside will be assessed against relevant policies in the Leisure Chapter including:

- L1: Linear Parks
- L5: Golf courses
- L6: Horse-related development
- L7: Water sports
- L8: Noisy sports
- L11: Camping and touring caravans

New buildings in the Open Countryside will also be assessed against policies in the Design and Natural Environment chapters

## RETAILING ON EMPLOYMENT LAND

### Objective of policy

- To ensure that new retail development is directed towards town, district and local centres.

**11.29** The latest Retail Capacity Study (2003) indicates that there is sufficient land allocated for retail in the Borough to meet demand in the Local Plan period, although this will be reviewed before 2011.

**11.30** It is therefore unnecessary to allow retail development outside existing centres, and would be contrary to the sequential approach set out in PPG6.

PPG6 para 1.10

**11.31** Ancillary uses include small 'factory' shops, selling imperfect goods (or 'seconds') manufactured on the site, or a small area of floorspace for trade sales. The ancillary use must be related to the main use of the premises.

## RETAILING ON EMPLOYMENT LAND

### POLICY E7

Planning permission will be refused for retail development on employment land, unless the retail use is either:

- (i) Ancillary to on-site production or storage; or
- (ii) Satisfies Policy R3 concerning car-related retail uses

## SITES FOR BAD NEIGHBOUR USES

### Objective of policy

- To control the location of bad neighbour uses

**11.32** “Bad neighbour” uses are those uses or industrial processes which may cause nuisance by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit; they include uses which are visually unattractive such as those involving large areas of open storage.

**11.33** There are three areas in the City suitable for these industries. They are well related to existing main roads and the railway network and are separated from housing and other industry.

**11.34** This type of development may be acceptable in other employment areas but applicants will need to demonstrate that the proposal will not adversely affect the amenity of adjoining occupiers.

See policies in the Design chapter

## SITES FOR BAD NEIGHBOUR USES

### POLICY E8

Bad neighbour uses will be directed to the following locations:

- 1 Bleakhall
- 2 Old Wolverton
- 3 Stonebridge

## CONTROLLING THE RISK OF POLLUTION

### Objectives of policy

- To ensure adequate protection of the environment from pollution generated by industrial uses
- To ensure that industrial uses do not pose a threat to surrounding land uses

**11.35** There are many legislative controls in place to deal with pollution. IPC is being replaced by Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC). There are currently transitional arrangements to implement IPPC by 2007. The new regulations are overseen by the Environment Agency and Local Authorities.

**11.36** In terms of planning for development, the main advice is contained in PPS23 (Planning and Pollution Control) and PPG24 (Planning and Noise). The advice is to control the location of new development to avoid conflict with surrounding uses.

**11.37** When determining development proposals the Council will consider the effects of schemes on local level initiatives, such as Local Air Quality Management in areas of poor air quality.

## CONTROLLING THE RISK OF POLLUTION

## POLICY E9

Planning permission will be granted for industrial uses within employment areas if all of the following criteria are met:

- (i) Ground water, surface water and soil are protected
- (ii) Adequate controls are proposed to deal with air pollution and noise
- (iii) Adequate controls are proposed to deal with vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust, grit, gases, heat, light and visual intrusion
- (iv) The site and surrounding land are protected from contamination
- (v) The proposed use is compatible with existing or potential surrounding uses

## WORKING FROM HOME

### Objective of policy

- To provide guidance on working from home

**11.38** Home working is a small but important feature of today's pattern of employment but it is a trend that could increase in the future given significant advances in technology. It can, where appropriate, reduce the need to travel distances to work and therefore help to cut peak time traffic congestion.

For example, e-mail and the Internet.

**11.39** Some businesses can satisfactorily be home based providing that the business is low key and would not give rise to any disturbance in the neighbourhood. The exact nature and scale of the proposed activity and the relationship of the house to neighbouring properties will all affect the acceptability of the proposal.

PPG13, para 34, bullet point 2.

**11.40** Whether or not planning permission will be required for working from home will depend on the specific circumstances of each business operation. The Council has produced a free leaflet on home working that goes into more detail and should be read in conjunction with this policy. Applicants are strongly advised to discuss their proposals with the Local Authority before submitting an application.

## WORKING FROM HOME

### POLICY E10

Where planning permission is required for business use within part of a dwelling the following criteria will be applied:

- (i) The property continues to be used primarily as a dwelling
- (ii) The proposed business use is restricted to the employment of the occupier of the dwelling
- (iii) The proposed business use would not adversely affect the amenities of adjacent residents and the character of the area generally
- (iv) Adequate parking and access is available

## PROTECTION OF SMALL BUSINESS UNITS

### Objective of policy

- To protect the current and future supply of small business units

**11.41** Nearly three quarters of business establishments in the City employ less than 10 people. It is necessary to ensure a continuing supply of such units to provide affordable start-up accommodation for new businesses, particularly as small, cheap premises are relatively limited.

Figures from the Milton Keynes Economic Partnership 1998 Employers Survey.

**11.42** Established firms can expand by using existing stock and vacant land. The smallest, cheapest units can then be maintained for businesses with limited space requirements. Small business units are defined in this Local Plan as having a gross internal floorspace no greater than 300 square metres. Small extensions that result in a building marginally larger than 300 square metres may be acceptable but cumulative expansion will be resisted.

## PROTECTION OF SMALL BUSINESS UNITS

### POLICY E11

Planning permission will be refused for proposals that include the loss of small business units by means of:

- (i) Change of use (from classes B of the Use Classes Order)
- (ii) Expansion or redevelopment of small units into larger units exceeding 300 metres square gross internal floorspace

ODPM publish a free booklet called 'Planning Permission – A Guide for Businesses': copies available from the Council.

## LARGE FOOTPRINT EMPLOYMENT

### Objectives of policies (E12-E15)

- To support the growth of a key sector of the local economy
- To secure a comprehensive proposal for development of the site, as part of the Eastern Expansion Area
- To ensure a sequential approach of land release

**11.43** Wholesale distribution and logistics accounts for a significant percentage of jobs in Milton Keynes, and this sector will probably grow. The position of Milton Keynes, relative to the South East, the East Midland, and the Channel and East Coast ports, continues to make the City an attractive location for distribution facilities.

**11.44** Land to the east of Kingston is allocated for 'large footprint' employment uses. Large footprint buildings are defined as units with a minimum of 9300 square metres (100,000 square feet) gross internal floorspace on a plot of at least 2 hectares (5 acres). This site will be restricted to distribution and manufacturing operations that require units of this size. B1 uses will not be permitted on this site unless they are ancillary to the uses defined above.

See also Policies EA1 – EA3.

## LAND FOR LARGE FOOTPRINT EMPLOYMENT

## **POLICY E12**

About 80 hectares of land, east of Kingston and north of the A421, is allocated for Large Footprint Employment development.

**11.45** Development must be part of a comprehensive strategy for expansion east of the City. It will be necessary for developers to enter into legal agreements to ensure that development occurs sequentially in relation to existing land supply and that the necessary infrastructure and environmental objectives are achieved.

'Sustainable  
Distribution:  
Strategy' (1999) A

## **LARGE FOOTPRINT EMPLOYMENT AREA: PLANNING REQUIREMENTS**

### **POLICY E13**

Development proposals for the Large Footprint Employment area shall include:

- (i) A site layout with individual plots (at least 2 hectares in size), roads, public transport routes, footpaths and cycleways
- (ii) An area of 1.0 hectare for a new Community Recycling Centre
- (iii) An area of 3.0 hectares (maximum) for the continued operation of the Lorry Park. This may be provided either on the site or on a suitable alternative site
- (iv) A building design strategy for the whole site
- (v) Measures to mitigate noise, from traffic and the operation of businesses on the site

See also Policies  
EA1-EA3, EA5 &  
EA6

Planning permission will only be granted for individual buildings when provision of public transport infrastructure and services to the site have been agreed

**11.46** Applications for units smaller than 9,300 square metres (100,000 square feet) will not be approved and conditions will be imposed to restrict the sub-division of premises. No retail uses will be permitted on the site.

PPG4, para 12.

## **LARGE FOOTPRINT EMPLOYMENT: INDIVIDUAL SITES AND BUILDINGS**

### **POLICY E15**

Individual buildings should meet the following criteria:

- (i) A minimum gross internal floorspace of 9,300 square metres
- (i) A height not exceeding 15-20 metres, depending on the relationship of the plot to neighbouring development and its visibility from the surrounding area
- (ii) A building to plot ratio not greater than 40%

**TABLE E1: EMPLOYMENT LAND ALLOCATIONS IN MILTON KEYNES CITY**

Grid Square / Area	Gross Area (hectares)	Vacant Land (hectares)	Use Class
Broughton / Atterbury	18.2	16.5	B1/B2/B8/C2
Caldecotte	14.7	4.2	B1/B8/C2
Bletchley – Denbigh <sup>1</sup>	32.4	9.3	B1/B2/B8
Kents Hill North	5.2	5.2	
Kiln Farm	51.2	1.1	B1/B2/B8
Knowlhill	33.1	10.0	B1/B2/B8
Linford Wood	39.1	7.0	B1
Mount Farm	48.0	1.9	B1/B2/B8
Old Wolverton	40.1	1.9	B2/B8
Redmoor	13.4	3.3	B2/B8
Rooksley	21.4	1.3	B1/B2/B8
Shenley Wood	37.4	25.3	B1/B2/B8/C2/D1
Tattenhoe / Snelshall East	16.0	8.5	B1/B2/B8
Tattenhoe Park / Snelshall West	20.6	1.1	B1/B2/B8/C1
Tongwell	52.1	1.4	B2/B8
Walton	26.3	15.9	B1/B2/B8
Wavendon Gate	13.9	9.2	B1/C2/D1
West Ashland	7.0	7.0	B1/B2/B8
Wolverton	37.0	2.4	B1/B2/B8
Wolverton Mill	35.4	8.7	B1/B2/B8
Wymbush	25.4	1.9	B1/B2/B8
Eastern Expansion Area (Site MK1)	97.0	97.0	B2/B8
Western Expansion Area (Site MK2)	16.8	16.8	B1
Northern Expansion Area (Site MK3)	3.4	3.4	B1/B2/B8
<b>TOTAL (hectares)</b>	<b>705.1</b>	<b>260.3</b>	

Source: MKC Employment Commitments Monitoring System (plus new Local Plan allocations) - remaining vacant sites in employment areas; excludes grid squares where total vacant land is less than 1ha, and land for mixed use development in CMK and Campbell Park. Base date: April 2005.

<sup>1</sup> This figure includes areas at Newton Leys (7ha), Old Bletchley, West Bletchley and Denbigh Hall.