



PLAN:MK EXAMINATION

STAGE ONE

HEARING STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE SOCIETY OF MERCHANT VENTURERS

MATTER 5: ISSUE 2 EAST MILTON KEYNES

1. Introduction

1.1 The Society of Merchant Venturers (SMV) have been engaged with the Plan:MK process since its inception, making submissions to various stages during the preparation of the Plan and commenting on evidence base studies. SMV together with Gallagher Estates control land to the north of Milton Keynes which is capable of delivering strategic levels of growth, during the plan period and beyond to help meet the MK Futures 2050 Commission report and the National Infrastructure Commission's (NIC's) proposed Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc growth strategy.

1.2 This statement seeks to provide responses following the questions on Matter 5: Issue 2, East Milton Keynes, set out in the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions, dated May 2018.

2. Issue 2 – Milton Keynes East (MKE) (Policy SD14)

Q5.5 Based on all the evidence, is the Plan positively prepared in respect of MKE and is the identification of this long term strategic site/direction of growth adequately justified? Are the references to MKE as a long term option post 2031 justified?

2.1 As set out previously SMV is concerned that the short term vision and timeframe for Plan:MK does not provide the foundations to accommodate the longer term transformational growth requirements for the area. In this respect SMV welcomes concept of identifying strategic reserve sites. However, Milton Keynes East, is not considered to be the most sustainable option, particularly when compared with North Milton Keynes.

Q5.6 Is the overall size of the allocation and the quantity of development proposed appropriate? Is the proposed extension of the allocation in the proposed modifications (PM44) necessary for plan soundness? What would this modification mean in terms of site capacity and any delivery within the plan period?

2.2 This is primarily for MKC to answer. However, SMV notes that when looking at the transformational growth figures, development capacity of MKE is not high enough to meet the growth in the period to 2050. Therefore, even if it was found to be a suitable location, you would need to be further strategic reserve sites identified, which should include North Milton Keynes.

Q5.7 What is the latest situation on the HIF funding bid in relation to this site? Does this provide a justification for revisiting the development trajectories for this site for both homes and employment? With or without HIF funding is there any certainty that some development could be bought forward at MKE within the plan period?

2.3 SMV has no response to this question.

Q5.8 Noting the proposed modification, are there any other reasonable options for consolidating this strategic option that could expand delivery east of Milton Keynes, including in the short to medium term?

2.4 SMV has no response to this question.

Q5.9 Are the criteria in Policy SD14 justified and effective? Are the infrastructure requirements clearly set out and is it clear what developers are expected to provide to overcome constraints?

2.5 SMV notes that objections to this allocation were raised by ecology interests, including the local wildlife trust. SMV is also aware that as an extension to MK, this site has to overcome the separation issues caused by the M1, especially as J13 is particularly congested.

Q5.10 How will the site connect, particularly by walking, cycling and public transport, to (a) CMK and Newport Pagnell; (b) other strategic employment areas; and (c) potential Expressway corridor?

2.6 From observation, SMV believes that connection with CMK requires a new crossing of the M1 and will result in additional traffic on the already congested M1 J13, even if a new crossing is provided.

Q5.11 What is the 'fast mass-transit system' and is safeguarding a route for it justified?

2.7 SMV believes that this concept has not been defined to a level where it can be delivered, therefore the policy is unsound.

Q5.12 Are there potential transport implications arising from MKE for communities in Central Bedfordshire and, if so, has this formed part of the Duty to Co-operate dialogue?

2.8 SMV is unaware of any Duty to Co-operate dialogue with Central Bedfordshire in this regard.

Q5.13 Has the MKE location been considered as part of the MKMMM Local Model validation work and the Traffic Forecasting Report?

2.9 SMV notes that MKC has provided an update on this issue.

Q5.14 Are there any implications of growth to the east of MK on air quality in Olney (A509 traffic)? What is air quality monitoring revealing at Olney and would growth at MKE be at odds with measures identified in any relevant Air Quality Action Plan?

2.10 SMV has no comments on this question.

Q5.15 What will be the impact on the landscape character, biodiversity or any other special interests? Can any potentially adverse impacts be satisfactorily addressed?

2.11 SMV is aware that Natural England requires modifications to Policy SD14 in order to provide adequate Green Infrastructure.

Q5.16 Does Policy SD14 provide sufficient content to inform the preparation of a comprehensive development framework as required Policy SD12?

2.11 For the reasons stated above, SMV believes that Policy SD14 is deficient reflecting the location of the site and the lack of strategic thought that accompanies this choice of allocation.