CORE STRATEGY DPD EXAMINATION

Matters and Issues for the Hearings

Note 1: It is implicit that in answering the following questions, if respondents identify a deficiency in the Core Strategy they should make clear how it should be changed.

Note 2: Policy references in brackets are to the principal policies but other sections of the Core Strategy may also be relevant.

Tuesday 5 July

Matter 1 – Overview (process and justification, legal compliance, national policy, sub-regional and wider context) (Core Strategy's vision, objectives and policies as a whole)

Issues

1.1 Has the overall spatial strategy emerged from a sound process of assessment including evaluation of alternatives and sustainability appraisal, and public involvement?

1.2 Is the Core Strategy in general conformity with the South East Plan and if not what are the implications?

1.3 Does it take appropriate account of the sub-regional and wider context?

1.4 Having regard to the vision, objectives, Policies CS 1, CS 6 and the rest of the policy framework, does the Core Strategy provide clearly articulated and justified guidance about the way in which cross-boundary issues and joint working will be addressed?

1.5 In the light of the proposed abolition of the regional strategy (South East Plan), are there any particular policy deficits that should be addressed by the Core Strategy?

1.6 Are any changes required to the Core Strategy to take account of the ‘Planning for Growth’ statement (issued by the Minister of State for Decentralisation, 23 March 2011)?

Wednesday 6 July (morning session)

Matter 2 – Development Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy (Policies CS 1 and 9, area-based policies generally, Table 5.7)

Issues

2.1 In general, does the Core Strategy provide clear, sound guidance about the roles that will be played by various parts of the borough in its future development?

2.2 Is the settlement hierarchy and broad scale and direction of growth as set out in Policy CS 1 properly justified?

2.3 Is there a sound policy framework for the Rural Areas of the borough?
2.4 In terms of their guidance and specificity, is the balance between the area-based policies and Table 5.7 appropriate?

Wednesday 6 July (afternoon session)

**Matter 5 – Transport** (Policy CS 11, Table 5.7)

**Issues**

5.1 Is the Core Strategy based on a sound assessment of the transport needs of the Borough and its hinterland? In particular, i) is there sufficient clarity about the transport implications of the revised strategy entailing the allocation of the Strategic Reserve Areas? ii) How does the spatial framework and policy content of the Core Strategy relate to the local transport plan (LTP3)?

5.2 Does the Core Strategy set out an integrated and achievable strategy for transport? In particular, i) are the priority schemes identified and are there adequate mechanisms for their implementation? ii) is it clear how the relative priorities for car-based and other modes of transport will be reconciled? iii) Is the aim (Vision, page 17) to reduce peak-hour commuting by car from 68% to 57% by 2026 clearly defined and achievable, and if so, is it sufficiently ambitious? iv) Is the commitment to expansion of the grid road system justified? v) What is the status of the park and ride proposals?

5.3 i) To what extent does the strategy depend on infrastructure development outside the Borough and are there mechanisms in place to secure delivery? ii) What weight should be attached to the proposed East-West rail link? iii) What is the status of the proposal for a new junction (J13a) on the M1 motorway?

Thursday 7 July

**Matter 3 – Overall Housing Provision** (Policies CS 2 and 10, Table 5.2, Chapters 17 and 18, Appendix D)

[Note: The Strategic Reserve Areas will be considered in detail under Matter 6]

**Issues**

3.1 Is the overall housing provision figure soundly based? i) In particular, has it been developed from robust assessments of local need and demand and the implications for affordable housing supply and ii) does it take appropriate account of economic, environmental and other relevant factors? iii) Is the approach consistent with national policy?

3.2 Are there reasonable prospects for delivery of the proposed level of housing? In particular, i) is enough suitable land identified and will the sites be brought forward on time? ii) Is the reliance on existing commitments adequately justified, and especially, dependence on the Western Expansion Area? iii) Are there any particular viability, infrastructure or other barriers to delivery that need to be addressed? iv) Will the sites offer reasonable choice and flexibility in market terms? v) Will a five-year supply of deliverable sites be secured?
3.3   i) Overall, do the proposals for housing provision take sufficient account of uncertainties and risks?  ii) Are the monitoring, managing and contingency measures adequate?  iii) On this basis, is the overall strategy reasonably flexible?

3.4   Does the Core Strategy give adequate consideration to the provision of affordable housing?  Is the reliance on saved local plan policies and supplementary planning advice a justified and effective means of securing an appropriate quantity and mix of affordable homes?

3.5   Taking account of the Government’s current and proposed guidance on meeting the housing needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople, does the Core Strategy give adequate consideration to this matter?  Pending completion of the steps referred to in paragraph 10.8 of the Core Strategy, how and on what basis will such needs be addressed?

Tuesday 12 July

Matter 4 – Economy and Town Centres (Policies CS 3-4, CS 5 (retail provision), CS 7, CS 16-17, Tables 5.3 - 5.7)

Issues

4.1   i) Is the proposed jobs per dwelling ratio properly justified?  ii) Is the Employment Land Study scenario 2 still relevant, given the economic downturn and is it supported by demographic evidence?  iii) Is the jobs per dwelling ratio consistent with wider planning objectives and strategies for the sub-region and beyond?  iv) How does it relate to the information in Table 5.3?

4.2   Is there a sound basis for the promotion of knowledge-based employment, and for less emphasis on logistics and warehousing employment?

4.3   Will the existing and proposed employment locations provide the quantity and range of sites that are required to meet the identified needs?

4.4   Is there sufficient guidance about how an appropriate balance between provision of office and high technology floorspace in Central Milton Keynes and outside it will be achieved?

4.5   Should Policy CS 3 provide a steer for the re-allocation of sites referred to in paragraph 5.25 of the Core Strategy and if so, how should this be done?

4.6   Is there clarity about the status of Central Milton Keynes in regional and sub-regional terms?  Is its role and potential for growth appropriately reflected in the Core Strategy?

4.7   With regard to the Borough’s town centres generally, i) given the need to update the evidence base, does the Core Strategy provide a reasonably robust but flexible policy framework for retail and leisure development in the interim period?  ii) Is it consistent with national policy?  iii) Is it clear how any existing deficiencies in provision will be addressed?  iv) Taking account of the reference to retail and other facilities in Policy CS 5, is there sufficient guidance in the Core Strategy on how the needs of the Strategic Reserve Areas will be met?
Wednesday 13 July

**Matter 6 – Strategic Reserve Areas** (Policy CS 5, Table 5.7)

**Issues**

6.1 Is the proposed allocation of the Strategic Reserve Areas (SRAs) consistent with the sustainable development of the Borough and (in the event that further expansion is required in the longer term) sustainable development of adjacent areas outside the Borough’s boundaries?

6.2 Have alternatives to the allocation of the SRAs been properly evaluated at an appropriate stage in the plan-making process?

6.3 With the allocation of the SRAs, does the Core Strategy represent the most appropriate strategy when considered against reasonable alternatives?

6.4 Is there capacity for and reasonable prospects for delivery of the required number of dwellings within the plan period? What is the justification for the maximum of 2,500 dwellings?

6.5 Are the other principles of development set out in Policy CS 5 clearly justified and deliverable? In particular:

   i) how would opportunities for sustainable travel patterns be maximised?
   ii) Is the safeguarding of land for a multi-modal transport hub justified and is the scheme deliverable?
   iii) Are the requirements/aims for zero carbon and water efficient development and a community energy network sufficiently clear, and are they justified and deliverable?
   iv) Are the requirements for strategic landscaping, integration with the city, and protection of the character and integrity of existing settlements mutually consistent and achievable?

6.6 Are the site boundaries adequately and appropriately defined?

6.7 Overall, does the Core Strategy provide sufficient guidance to bring forward the sites through a single Development Framework?

Thursday 14 July (morning session)

**Matter 7 – Other Areas of Change** (Policy CS 8, Table 5.7), **Sustainable Construction, Community Energy Networks and Renewable Energy** (Policies CS 14-15)

**Issues**

7.1 Having regard to the scale of growth expected in the Other Areas of Change, does Policy CS 8 give sufficient guidance about the planning priorities for them?
7.2 Are the interrelationships between these areas and the proposals for Central Milton Keynes and the SRAs properly considered?

7.3 Having regard to Policies CS 4 and CS 8, should the priorities for Bletchley and Wolverton town centres be set out more clearly in the Core Strategy? Is it appropriate that the development management policies DPD should set out priorities for the key centres (reference to Core Strategy paragraph 8.8)?

7.4 With reference to Policy CS 14, are the standards for sustainable construction in the respective areas of the Borough and in conversion/alteration of existing buildings justified and deliverable and in keeping with national planning policy? What would be required to demonstrate technical or financial non-viability?

7.5 Can financial contributions be expected to the carbon offset fund, given the statutory tests that apply to planning obligations?

7.6 Are the requirements of Policy CS 15 justified by substantive evidence of technical and financial feasibility?

Thursday 14 July (afternoon session)

**Matter 8 – Delivering Infrastructure** (Policy CS 22), **Monitoring and Managing** (Chapter 17, Table 17.1 and Appendix D)

**Issues**

8.1 Taking account of the existing Milton Keynes Tariff, Local Investment Plan and the other existing and proposed mechanisms for securing the delivery of infrastructure, i) is there reasonable certainty that the necessary infrastructure will be provided to support the timely implementation of the overall strategy? ii) Have the critical dependencies been identified and how are these being managed? iii) Is sufficient consideration given to infrastructure needs outside the Milton Keynes urban area?

8.2 How is the need for a 40,000+ stadium (paragraph 16.9) to be addressed? What is its relationship to the International Sports City concept? What are the implications for the Core Strategy and successor planning documents?

8.3 How is implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy expected to affect funding arrangements in the future?

8.4 With regard to effective monitoring of the Core Strategy, is there a need for comprehensive definition of measurable targets and trigger points for remedial action (in addition to measures for housing delivery)? Is the reliance on unspecified targets in other documents, for example the LTP, satisfactory?

Friday 15 July

Reserve day for any other matters