



Plan:MK Examination Hearing Sessions July 2018

On Behalf Of

Wyevale Garden Centre – ID665018

Hearing Statement – Matter 2

June 2018

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Hearing Statement is submitted on behalf of our client, Wyevalle Garden Centre, who have been promoting their site at Newport Road, Woburn Sands, through the emerging Plan:MK process.
- 1.1.2 It is considered necessary to provide updated comment around previously submitted representations given the changing housing supply context in Milton Keynes, ahead of the upcoming Hearing sessions.
- 1.1.3 Please note that specific site references to Wyevalle are only in respect of their Woburn Sands site, and not the allocated CMK site.

2.0 Matter 2 – Issue 4: Role of Neighbourhood Plans (NPs)

- 2.1.1 There are serious misgivings about the reliance on Neighbourhood Plans (NPs) to deliver housing in the non-urban settlements given the lack of power that Plan:MK currently wields in making sure that NPs do indeed deliver housing on suitable sites.
- 2.1.2 Reliance on a reference within supporting text at Paragraph 1.10 (and not included within policy text) that NPs will be “strongly encouraged” to make housing allocations is not a sound and robust approach, given the very specific reliance on NPs as the tool to deliver small to medium sites outside the urban area.
- 2.1.3 It is clear that Plan:MK must provide the strategic context for Neighbourhood Plans to be prepared under, to ensure conformity. This must take the form of the identification of potential development sites as ‘reserve sites’ should NPs not progressed; or, at the very least, a housing number that each of the non-urban settlements should seek to deliver and which an NP should be based on, if being progressed.
- 2.1.4 Without this there is absolutely no mechanism to ensure new and updated NPs will deliver.
- 2.1.5 Our client has interests in Woburn Sands – an area with a track record of preparing a NP, being the first to do so in Milton Keynes in 2014. However, even in the adopted Plan, Policy WS2 relating to new development states:



Policy WS6: The housing developments in Parklands and on the Greens' site are expected to meet the needs for large scale housing development in Woburn Sands during the plan period. Additional housing in the plan area will therefore be limited to small scale infilling between existing properties or redevelopment of existing properties other than in the following circumstances:

- The review of the MK Core Strategy identifies a specific housing need in Woburn Sands, and*
- Land proposed for development is brought forward after consultation, and agreement, with Woburn Sands Town Council, and*
- Development is of a scale and in a location that complies with the Vision and policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, and*
- Any such development is phased to take place in the latter part of the plan period in order to allow the assimilation of the increased population created by the already approved substantial developments*

- 2.1.6 Even in this pro-active NP, there is no specific allocations of housing, and no flexibility to consider others, with a specific policy reference to only moving forward with another large site should one be proposed for allocation in the Plan:MK process.
- 2.1.7 There is a concerning disconnect here – the NP looking to the Plan:MK to secure allocations; but Plan:MK leaving NPs to allocate new housing sites.
- 2.1.8 At present, there is nothing in Plan:MK to encourage allocation of sites though Neighbourhood Plans, with the lack of any guidance as to what individual Neighbourhood Plans would need to seek to secure, in order to facilitate growth.
- 2.1.9 To see achievable sites come forward, in sustainable settlement locations such as Woburn Sands but which happen to be outside the urban area, Plan:MK needs to take the lead through making allocations of some nature in such key settlements, or providing clear guidance setting a number to be delivered within settlements.
- 2.1.10 Ultimately, the position as currently proposed by Plan:MK would have a detrimental effect on housing land supply across MKC.

