

# Plan:MK Topic Paper - Issues Consultation “The Way Forward” Preparing a Vision and Development Strategy for Plan:MK

September 2014



[www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/PlanMK](http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/PlanMK)

Plan:MK



## Plan:MK Topic Papers - Issues Consultation

### Introduction

Plan:MK, a new Local Plan for Milton Keynes, will set out a development strategy for Milton Keynes up to 2031 with a range of detailed policies to guide development over this period.

It will replace the Core Strategy, adopted in 2013 and the existing Local Plan (2005) which together currently form the part of development plan for the Borough.

Once complete, Plan:MK and any Neighbourhood Plans, will be the starting point for planning advice, (other than for Minerals and Waste) and decisions made by the Council. It will set out how much development is expected over the plan period and the location of development sites across the Borough. It will also include detailed policies to ensure that all development is of high quality and respectful to the character of Milton Keynes, and that unplanned development only occurs where it is appropriate.

Plan:MK has to be prepared within the context of national planning policy and within the legislative framework set out by the Government. This Topic Paper is part of the first stage in the process where we are seeking initial view of the public and other interested parties on what should be in Plan:MK.



### What is the purpose of the Topic Papers?

This is one of a series of Topic Papers published by the Council at this time. In total there are twelve Topic Papers covering:

- Growth in Housing
- Employment and Economic Development
- Town Centres and Retail
- Transport and Travel
- Rural Issues
- Provision of Physical and Social Infrastructure
- Quality of Place
- Culture, Recreation and Quality of Life
- Open Space and the Natural Environment
- Climate Change and Sustainability
- Duty to Cooperate
- The Way Forward: Preparing a Vision and Development Strategy for Plan:MK

Each of the Topic Papers is available on the Council website at <http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planmk>

The aim of the papers is to engage everyone with a stake in the future growth and development of Milton Keynes in the preparation of Plan:MK. They cover a range of topics, sometimes interlinked, which the Council have identified as being key to the development of the Plan.

Each paper summarises the background to the topic, setting out data and policy context, before highlighting key issues and posing questions for the reader - the responses to which will help the Council in the development of Plan:MK.



The final topic paper, "The Way Forward" draws together issues raised in the preceding papers and considers what they mean for the Vision and Development Strategy.

When we produce the final version of Plan:MK, the Vision and Development Strategy will be at the start of the Plan, setting the scene for the policies that will follow.

These Topic Papers are being published for consultation in accordance with Regulation 18 'Preparation of a local plan' of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.



## How to respond

The Council would appreciate any feedback you have on the Topic Papers. In particular, if you can focus on the questions posed it will help with the development of the plan. Feedback can be submitted:

- Online via our consultation portal: <http://miltonkeynes-consult.objective.co.uk>
- Via email: [PlanMK@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:PlanMK@milton-keynes.gov.uk)
- In writing: Development Plans, Civic Offices, 1 Saxon Gate East, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ

All comments should be received by **5pm on Wednesday 3rd December 2014.**

## How will the feedback be used?

The next stage of the process will be to develop a Preferred Options document, which will set out the Council's initial draft of Plan:MK.

Feedback from this Issues consultation will help to shape the options considered as part of the development of the Preferred Options. These options will evolve through further focused consultation with key stakeholders.

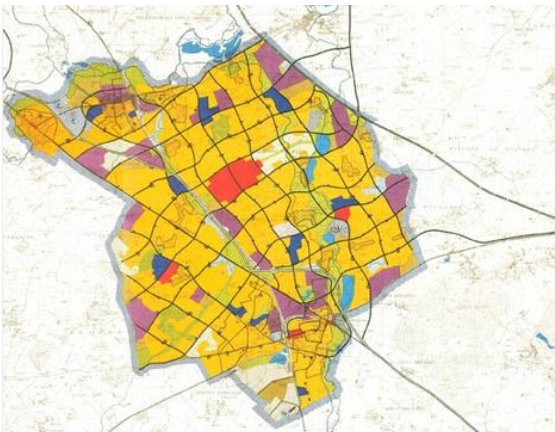
The Council expects to publish the Preferred Options document for consultation in 2015.

The overall aim is to get a final plan prepared by early 2016, at which time it will be submitted to the Government and be subject to independent examination.



## Vision: Introduction

**1** The Plan:MK Vision for Milton Keynes should look forward to how we want the Borough to be in the future. It will help us to develop a strategy of how we achieve that Vision and how we can guide development to achieve the overall aims of the plan. In many ways it sets a philosophy for the rest of the plan, to influence the development of the policies so that they are all focussed on achieving the Vision.



**2** The original Vision for Milton Keynes can be clearly seen on the ground, in a much more obvious way than in most places. The original 1970 Plan for Milton Keynes (referred to here as the masterplan) which guided the development of the new city, set out a series of goals for the plan to achieve (as discussed later in this paper) which were carried through into successive planning documents for the Borough. It is easy to see how some of those principles, for example "easy movement and access" and "an attractive city" have formed an integral part of the way the city has developed, through the grid roads, and the linear parks and large variety of green spaces across the city.

**3** The Vision for Plan:MK will guide the development of the Borough for the coming years, up to 2031 and potentially beyond. There are options over what form that Vision should take; something short and focussed, or something longer, covering a wide range of points. Whatever form it takes, it will need to be developed by bringing together a wide variety of considerations, for example; the views of people who live, work and spend time here; the way the elected Members of the Council and other stakeholders think the Borough should develop; the implications of the issues explored in the other Plan:MK topic papers; the outcomes of our evidence gathering; and taking account of what is already here and planned for in previous plans and strategies.

**4** When prepared, the Development Strategy will set out the detail of how the vision will be achieved. As we form the Development Strategy, there will be choices to be made over the approaches we take to various issues, and some of these considerations are discussed later in the paper. The Development Strategy will form the overall approach to development in the Borough over the plan period, and any policies in Plan:MK will need to be developed in accordance with that strategy, and will be part of the way it is delivered.

**5** The first part of this paper looks at the policy background for preparing a Vision, the nature and content of Visions for the Borough that have gone before, and some issues and questions about how the Vision for Plan:MK should be prepared. The second part turns to look at the Development Strategy, and the considerations that will help to determine how the Vision is delivered.

# Vision: Policy Background

## Vision: Policy Background

### National Policy

6 The Government sets out its approach to all aspects of planning in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, March 2012). The foreword states that planning must not simply be about scrutiny, but it should be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which we live our lives.

7 Local Planning Authorities have a statutory responsibility for plan-making, which has a role in delivering the twelve core planning principles in the NPPF. The importance of a Vision is stated in the first of those principles, that planning should

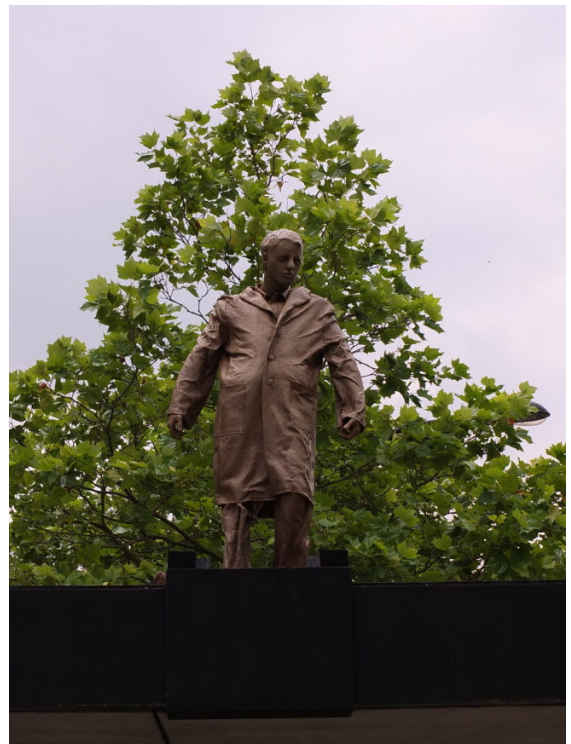
*" - be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area."*

8 The Government's Planning Practice Guidance provides further interpretation to the NPPF, stating that *"Local Plans set out a vision and a framework for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure - as well as a basis for safeguarding the environment, adapting to climate change and securing good design."*

9 The Vision for Plan:MK will need to be prepared with this national policy and guidance in mind.

### Local Policy

10 As discussed later in this paper, the Local Plan (adopted 2005) and the Core Strategy (adopted 2013) both include their own Visions for the Borough. The policies within those documents have been prepared to support the delivery of those plan Visions, to ensure that decisions on planning proposals are made in pursuit of achieving the aims of the plan. This hierarchy, of policies delivering the Vision of the plan, will be the same for Plan:MK.



## Vision: Context

**11** A future Vision for the Borough will always need to take account of what has gone before and the impact that has had on the ground. While it should be ambitious, inspirational and visionary, there still needs to be an element of pragmatism and deliverability for it to have a chance of being realised.



**12** There may be elements of the existing planning policies and the Vision that sits behind them which should be maintained and carried forward for the future. Or there may be some that have been unsuccessful or may no longer be appropriate, which may need to be reconsidered.

**13** It is also the case that over time, priorities and policies have changed, and approaches have evolved. The independent Planning Inspector who examined the Core Strategy (adopted in 2013) said that if Milton Keynes was being designed today, it would be a very different place, because over the passage of time the way we plan and the way we live has changed. For example, there is a greater pressure on ensuring the most efficient use is made of available land so overall development densities in the city would most likely be significantly higher than they are now. The climate change agenda has also changed the way we build and sustainability is a far greater priority than it was in the past.

**14** Nevertheless, Milton Keynes is a unique place and the Vision we develop for Plan:MK should reflect that. It should be locally-specific, not a generic Vision that could relate to anywhere in the country. And the Vision moving forward should reflect current priorities, yet be flexible enough to deal with further changes in the future.

## Previous Visions

**15** This section looks at the Visions that have been included in previous plans for the city and the Borough, the format they took and what impact they had on development, i.e. how they were reflected on the ground.



## 1970 'The Plan for Milton Keynes'

**16** This was the original masterplan for the city<sup>(1)</sup> prepared by the Milton Keynes Development Corporation, which set out the guiding principles and a broad framework for its future development. The Vision was laid out as a series of six goals which the rest of the plan was intended to achieve. These goals are explained in a little more detail in 'Annex: Visions from Previous Plans', but in summary they are:

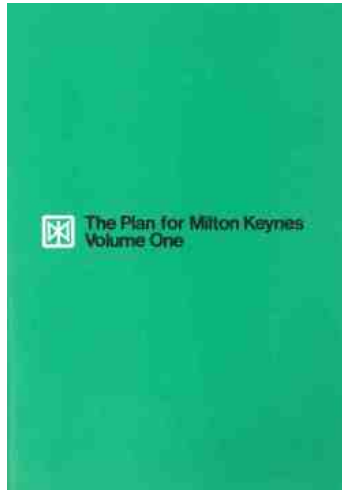
- i. *Opportunity and freedom of choice*
- ii. *Easy movement and access, and good communications*
- iii. *Balance and variety*
- iv. *An attractive city*

<sup>1</sup> The plan only covered the area now part of the city, not the rural area



## Vision: Context

- v. *Public awareness and participation*
- vi. *Efficient and imaginative use of resources.*



### 1995 'Borough of Milton Keynes Local Plan'

**20** The 1995 Local Plan was the first plan to cover the whole of the Borough, prepared by the Milton Keynes Borough Council (before it became a Unitary Authority), and it set out a series of eight 'Broad Aims', which stated that the Borough should be a place of:

- *Opportunity and choice*
- *Balance and variety*
- *An attractive and ecologically sound environment*
- *Effective communications*
- *Awareness and participation*
- *Efficient and imaginative use of resources*
- *Health and security*
- *Civic pride.*



**17** It is easy to see how these goals have influenced the way the city has developed, in its built form and layout. The masterplan translated these goals into the framework of the city, including the network of grid roads and redways; multi-functional linear parks and open spaces; dispersed locations of employment uses; local centres with a variety of day-to-day facilities; and a city centre with a mix of uses, built to a higher density.

**18** The masterplan allowed for flexibility, rather than setting a strict structure on the way the city developed. In many ways, these goals are still relevant and could provide the basis for a Vision moving forward. In fact, these goals did form a key part of Visions in successive planning documents.

**19** The Quality of Place Topic Paper considers these goals further, looking at how they have influenced the design principles of the city, how it has been built on the ground and what that means for the people who live, work and spend time here.

**21** The 1995 Local Plan discusses that these aims, and the six broad strategies that came out of them, had gained general support through the widespread consultation that was held as part of the plan-preparation process. There is clearly an overlap with the goals in the original masterplan for the city, and the 1995 Plan aimed to maintain the high standards and quality of development proposals that had been delivered through the Development Corporation.

**22** The way these 'Broad Aims' were translated into a Development Strategy for the Borough is discussed in more detail in the second part of this paper.

### 2005 Milton Keynes Local Plan

**23** This was the second plan to cover the whole of the Borough, and was prepared after the Borough became a Unitary Authority. The 2005 Vision built on the principle of sustainability, the original goals of the masterplan and the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy. The Vision was quite short and succinct, and again, the original masterplan principles can be easily spotted, although they have been expanded and rephrased.



Adopted December 2005



*"We want a Milton Keynes that...*

- provides a high quality of life for all*
- encourages sustainable lifestyles*
- offers real choices for transport*
- promotes a dynamic, knowledge-based economy*
- creates attractive, vibrant, successful town centres*
- enjoys a clean, green environment*
- stimulates diversity and innovation*
- welcomes growth to meet local needs*
- strengthens its role as a regional centre."*

**24** A series of aims followed the Vision, which provided guidance for developing detailed policies in the plan and could be used to help monitor the performance of policies and the plan.

**25** The 2005 Local Plan is still used in the determination of planning applications, and the Vision continues to have an influence on the way the Borough develops. The way that the Vision has been interpreted through the Development Strategy is detailed later in this paper.



## 2004-2034 Milton Keynes Sustainable Community Strategy, Our Handbook for Change (2008 Refresh)

**26** The Sustainable Community Strategy was prepared in 2004 by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)<sup>(2)</sup> was quite long, but many elements of it could be influenced through the planning system and planning policies had a role in delivering the aims of the Strategy. The Milton Keynes Core Strategy subsequently used the aspirations of the Sustainable Community Strategy as a key input into the preparation of its own Vision.

## 2012-2016 Milton Keynes Council Corporate Plan

**27** The Corporate Plan Vision is written as five bullet points, supported by a series of themes, each with a set of Outcomes and Priorities in order to deliver the Vision. The Vision is intended to capture the type of place Milton Keynes aspires to be for all those who live, work, learn and visit here, and it recognises that the Corporate Plan is an important vehicle for delivering the ambitions of the Core Strategy and other key strategies.

### "Council's Vision

- *To ensure Milton Keynes is the premier 'can do' place of the 21st century. The city, together with the rural parts of our Borough, will continue to be a wonderful place to live, work, learn, shop and relax.*
- *To secure sustainable housing and employment growth that is advantageous for Milton Keynes subject to the timely provision of infrastructure and proactive regeneration to ensure no areas*

*are left behind and that a two-speed city does not result.*

- *That people and firms will want to move here and stay here, and visitors will want to come here and come back often. Milton Keynes will have a compelling 'offer' that includes rising standards of living and a safe and good quality of life for all.*
- *To create homes and neighbourhoods in new areas or through regeneration that help make our compelling 'offer' a reality.*
- *That our residents have access to all the services they need and have the support to access opportunities and enjoy a healthy and good quality of life. Above all we must ensure that Milton Keynes offers job and career opportunities for all through an enterprising and thriving economy."*



**28** There is a hierarchy of Visions within Council documents and strategies. The planning service is one of many services within the Council, so the Vision that we include within our planning documents sits under the Corporate Plan Vision in the hierarchy; planning helps to address the

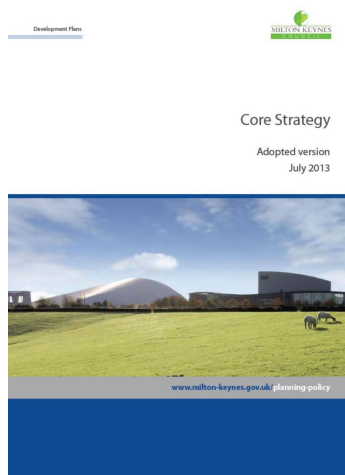
2 The LSP was a group of organisations including the Council, the Police and the Primary Care (NHS) Trust, and representatives from the business community, the voluntary sector and Central Government] to set out the Community Vision for the future of the Borough. The Vision in the Sustainable Community Strategy is repeated in 'Annex: Visions from Previous Plans'



overall aims of the Council. Plan:MK, and the Core Strategy and previous Local Plans before it, would therefore be a key delivery mechanism for the spatial elements of the Corporate Plan. However, within a statutory planning framework, the Corporate Plan wouldn't have any formal status, and in these circumstances, Plan:MK as a key document in the Development Plan will take precedence.

## 2013 Milton Keynes Core Strategy

**29** The Core Strategy moved away from the style of the Visions in previous planning documents for Milton Keynes. The Core Strategy Vision is a statement of 14 points, and while it is clearly very specific to Milton Keynes, it is rather long. The full Vision is repeated in the Annex to this paper. Within the 14 points, the general principles from the original masterplan goals are no longer as apparent as they were in previous visions.



**30** The Core Strategy still relies on the majority of policies in the existing Local Plan from 2005 for determining planning applications, but it does provide the overarching Development Strategy and strategic policies to guide development. The Core Strategy allocated a site for 2,900 homes in the south east of the city, with other development following the settlement hierarchy from the existing

Local Plan. Further discussion of how the Core Strategy has been manifested on the ground is included later in this paper.

## Other relevant visions



**31** Milton Keynes sits at the heart of the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) area. SEMLEP has a central role in determining local economic priorities and supports activities that drive economic growth and the creation of local jobs, as a partnership between local authorities and the business sector. The Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) published in 2014 aims to deliver the necessary infrastructure to enable the new homes to be built; to provide support to new and existing businesses to enable them to grow; to encourage inward investment; and to ensure that young people improve their skill levels to offer what businesses in the area are seeking. The SEP Vision is very focussed on economic aims, and while the Plan:MK Vision will need to take account of that, it will need to consider wider issues, beyond development of the local economy.

**32** There are other Milton Keynes Council strategies, and those prepared by some of our key partners, that contain Visions for the Borough, but that normally focus on a specific issue. This includes, for example, the Heritage, Museums and Archives Strategy, the Sport and Active Communities Strategy and the Arts and Public Art

## Vision: Context

Strategy (all 2014-2023). The vision and aims of these strategies do not necessarily need to be reflected in the Plan:MK Vision, however we need to be aware of them and be sure that Plan:MK does not undermine the delivery of those visions.



## Vision: Developing a Future Vision

**33** The Vision that will be developed for Plan:MK could follow the form of any of the previous Visions, by being short and succinct; a series of bullet points; a long and detailed statement; a set of goals and priorities for achieving them; or a concise, punchy statement of intent.

### Question 1

#### Format of the Vision

What format do you think the Vision for Plan:MK should take?

**34** Many of the previous Visions have visibly built upon the original goals from the 1970 masterplan for the development of the city, expanding on them and adding new points as necessary and to reflect changes in priorities and policy approaches. A future Vision for the Borough through Plan:MK could again use these original goals as a starting point, updated as appropriate to reflect what is important now.



**35** Another option would be to use the principles that have been included in an alternative previous Vision as a starting point. This could be the Corporate Plan Vision which would be effective as a planning Vision, should members of the

public and other stakeholders agree with its content, because it comes from a document that has very clear links with spatial planning since the Core Strategy is part of its delivery mechanism. Similarly, the Core Strategy Vision itself, with its very locally-specific and detailed bullet points, could be updated and rolled forward over the Plan:MK plan period.

**36** Alternatively, the new Vision could start afresh, without using the masterplan goals, or the Corporate Plan or Core Strategy Visions as a base.

**37** This is your opportunity to put forward the key principles and aims that you think need to be included in the Vision for the future of the Borough.

### Question 2

#### Content of the Vision

- Do you think the Plan:MK Vision should be based on a Vision from the past?
- If so, which Vision should form the starting point?
- And what updates or additions would you propose to make it fit for purpose moving forward?
- Are there any principles or elements from the existing Visions that you think should be carried through to the Plan:MK Vision?
- Alternatively, do you think the Plan:MK Vision should start afresh?
- What should a new Vision contain?
- What are the key principles or goals that future development in the Borough should be aiming to achieve?

**38** The second half of this paper looks at the Development Strategy and the options available to us for delivering and managing future development in the Borough.



# Development Strategy: Introduction

## Development Strategy: Introduction

**39** The Development Strategy in Plan:MK will take as its starting point the Vision and will need to show **how much** growth and change will take place across the Borough up to 2031; **where** and **when** this will occur as well as **how** it will be delivered.

**40** The Development Strategy will ultimately provide the overall approach to development in the Borough over the plan period and will provide the context for the rest of the policies in the Plan, many of which will be instrumental in the delivery of that development, for example by guiding the provision of other services and land uses (such as roads, schools, parks and health and community facilities), which are so important to maintain and improve everyday life in Milton Keynes.



**41** In arriving at an agreed approach the Council must show that it has explored all reasonable options and has explained the reasons why the preferred strategy is taken forward and why the alternatives are rejected.

**42** Therefore, at this early stage in the plan making process the role of this section of the Topic Paper is to start a discussion about what the Development Strategy for Plan:MK should eventually include. Looking at the information and issues that have been raised in the preceding Topic Papers, together with current planning policy and the approach taken in previous plans, this section outlines a number of different ways in which these issues could be addressed. The various alternatives that are included below are not exhaustive and, as is made clear later in the paper, we are keen to receive your views on these, as well as other suggestions that you may have.

## Development Strategy: Policy Background

### National Policy

**43** The role of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been explained in the Vision section above. As well as showing how the Vision of Plan:MK can be delivered, the Development Strategy will need to be prepared in accordance with the NPPF. The NPPF (paragraph 156) states that the Local Plan should set out *“the strategic priorities for the area and that this should include strategic policies to deliver:*

- *The homes and jobs needed in the area;*
- *The provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;*
- *The provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and the provision of minerals and energy<sup>(3)</sup>*
- *The provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities and*
- *Climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.”*

**44** The issues associated with each of the above matters have been discussed in the preceding Topic Papers and as Plan:MK progresses, the Development Strategy will have to evolve in order to demonstrate that the plan can deliver these strategic priorities. For now, the range of possible approaches discussed in the following sections start to outline how these strategic priorities would be met.



**45** At the end of the plan making process, Plan:MK will be considered at an independent examination where it will be assessed for its compliance with the Duty to Co-operate, legal and procedural requirements and whether it is sound. In order to be found sound, the plan needs to be:

- **Positively prepared** - ie based on a strategy which seeks to meet the objectively assessed needs for development and associated infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities.
- **Justified** - the plan's strategy should be the most appropriate one when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence. This is one of the reasons why we are exploring a range of possible ways of meeting our future development needs across the Borough at this early stage. Plan:MK will ultimately need to demonstrate that reasonable alternatives have been considered during its preparation before arriving at the final chosen Development Strategy.
- **Effective** - the plan should be deliverable over the plan period and based on effective joint working on

3 Note: Waste management and minerals are addressed in separate local plans in Milton Keynes

cross-boundary strategic priorities. The deliverability of the plan will be one of the important considerations when looking at the alternative approaches to development, a major site or new settlement could, depending on the circumstances, take longer than the plan period to deliver, resulting in a need to find other smaller development sites which could meet the shortfall in the meantime.

- **Consistent with national policy** - the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies of the NPPF.



## Local Policy

**46** Existing policy is set out in the Core Strategy, adopted in 2013. The current Development Strategy for Milton Keynes is set out in Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy, adopted in 2013<sup>(4)</sup>.

**47** The Development Strategy in the Core Strategy closely follows that in the previous Milton Keynes Local Plan (2005) and the Borough of Milton Keynes Local Plan (1995). These approaches will be expanded upon in the following "Context" section.

**48** As the detailed policies in Plan:MK evolve they will need to deliver the Development Strategy in order to ensure that the plan is effective and can successfully bring forward the amount and types of development required within the plan period.

4 See <http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/adopted-core-strategy>



## Development Strategy: Context



**49** The current Development Strategy is, as explained in “Local Policy” above, set out in Core Strategy Policy CS1. The Strategy takes account of the Settlement Hierarchy in Milton Keynes which concentrates development in the most sustainable locations - ie the city and settlements with the most facilities and the best public transport links.

**50** The Development Strategy distributes development according to the settlement hierarchy with the majority of new development focussed on and adjacent to the urban area of Milton Keynes City including a new Strategic Land Allocation adjoining the existing city boundary. Moving down the settlement hierarchy, development in the rural area is focussed on the key rural settlements (Newport Pagnell, Olney and Woburn Sands), then selected villages, with only small scale redevelopment in other villages with development boundaries.

**51** In starting to think about what the Development Strategy for Plan:MK should include, it is worth looking back over previous development strategies for Milton Keynes to see if there are any common and enduring principles that could form the starting point for the discussion.



## Development Strategy: Previous Approaches

### 1970 'The Plan for Milton Keynes'

**52** As has been explained in the Vision section above, the masterplan for the development of the city included six goals which the rest of the plan was intended to achieve. The physical strategic plan for Milton Keynes was intended to provide a framework for the realisation of those goals whilst providing the greatest possible freedom of choice for the future, given the uncertainty over the length of time it would take to build the new city and how people's needs and aspirations would change over that time.



**53** The Foreword to the Plan notes that:

*"It is a masterplan in the sense that it provides a strategic framework in which the city can be developed, but - as with all good strategies - it defines the main aims, while retaining flexibility to allow adjustment to the new situations as they develop".*

**54** The Strategic Plan, in presenting firm proposals for the start of construction work on the new city, provided a framework for transport and the provision of services as well as for the broad distribution of land-use for various purposes.



**55** The strategy in the Plan evolved from consideration of a large range of alternatives based on the goals, outlined in the Vision section above, and the characteristics of the Milton Keynes area. The strategy took account of:

- the desire to maximise opportunities and increase choice through a dispersed pattern of employment and social development;
- the need to accommodate a wide variety of housing types, including average net densities of between 15 and 25 dwellings per hectare;
- the need to respect the character and qualities of existing centres and to create a new centre.

**56** Although as the Plan predicted, adjustments and changes have been made to the location of certain land uses from those shown in the 1970 Plan, the fundamentals of the original strategy can still be seen today in the structure of the city as defined by the grid roads and the relatively low (by modern standards) densities of the older grid squares, although more recent developments have been built to a higher density in line with changing national policy.

# Development Strategy: Previous Approaches



## 1995 Borough of Milton Keynes Local Plan

**57** The Development Strategy chapter of the 1995 Local Plan set out how the plan fitted in with national, regional and local planning policies and how development should be distributed, including policies for major development areas.

**58** The Local Plan drew on earlier work in 1988 undertaken on the Borough Council's corporate plan at the time, the "Strategy for Milton Keynes". The Strategy was prepared following widespread consultation and set a context for assessing and influencing a wide range of decision makers. The Strategy included six broad strategies which were:

1. To continue with a policy of support for the development of the new town and constraint in the rural areas.
2. To try to balance the provision of jobs and houses so that both work and homes are always available locally.
3. To take an interventionist role in the local economy by trying to promote the economic development of the area, broaden the employment base and minimise unemployment.
4. To accept that new towns have an untypical social mix and to adopt policies that address the consequences and opportunities.

5. To maintain and enhance the environment of the urban and rural areas.
6. To ensure a smooth transition of roles in the wind-up of the Development Corporation and to keep the Council's role and structure under permanent review.



**59** The Development Strategy in the 1995 Local Plan reflected these strategies and applied them to land-use planning. In terms of the broad distribution of new development, the Local Plan sought the following:

- In order to secure the completion of the new city, all new urban growth was to be channelled within the Designated Area of the city of Milton Keynes<sup>(5)</sup>, particularly on the east and west sides of the city and Central Milton Keynes
- A balance to be maintained between homes and jobs
- All new development to be built to at least the same standards and quality as applied during the life of the Development Corporation.
- Redevelopment of three major sites within the urban area.
- Restriction of new urban development in the rural settlements of Newport Pagnell and Olney to sites within the limits of development.

<sup>5</sup> The Designated Area was the extent of the original New Town designation, the area that the city was intended to cover when complete



# Development Strategy: Previous Approaches

- Very limited development in other rural settlements
- Protection of all, and extension to some, of the linear parks.



## 2005 Milton Keynes Local Plan

**60** The Strategic Policies in the 2005 Local Plan took forward the approach of concentrating most new development on the City. The Strategy also set out where new development would take place, not only in and adjoining the City but also elsewhere in the Borough.

**61** The scale and distribution of new development in the Local Plan was based on several general principles which identify some key ways in which sustainability can be maintained and improved in the Borough. These principles are:

- The pursuit of greater environmental, social and economic sustainability
- Concentrating new development at Milton Keynes City
- Maintaining the existing balance between jobs and homes
- Seeking to reduce the need for and length of journeys by car

- Adopting a sequential approach to identifying new development opportunities
- Concentrating new development in or around existing centres and around nodes on public transport corridors
- Respecting key environmental constraints.

**62** These principles manifested themselves in the continued channelling of the majority of new development to Central Milton Keynes and to the east and west flanks of the city although the Plan now extended the original limits of development of the original city in the allocation of the "City Expansion Areas" to the east, west and north of the city.



**63** The City Expansion Areas were selected based on a strategy of concentrating new development in a few large areas, rather than dispersing smaller amounts of development around more, but smaller, sites. The reason behind this was that larger sites maximise the potential to adopt new approaches to layout, density and design, and encouraging greater use of public transport, cycling and walking.

**64** A particular feature of the City Expansion Areas in the 2005 Plan was the move away from grid roads to the "City Street" concept which arose from the need to ensure that the transport system supported the sustainability of the Expansion Areas and took advantage of the fact that the substantial and concentrated development in these areas (around 10,000

new homes in the Eastern and Western Expansion Areas combined) provided opportunities to contribute to the achievement of the Council's public transport strategy. The public transport strategy depended to a large extent on substantial and concentrated development at both ends of an east-west mass transit corridor.

**65** The Strategy continued the approach of limiting the amount of new development in the rural areas, channelling the majority of any new rural development to the three Key Settlements of Newport Pagnell, Olney and Woburn Sands.



### Conclusions

**66** Looking at the evolution of the development strategy for Milton Keynes over the years from the 1970 masterplan there are a number of enduring features:

- Concentration of development on the urban area, with a particular focus on Central Milton Keynes and the east and west flanks;
- Limiting the amount of new development in the rural areas and channelling the majority of any such development to the Key Settlements (initially Newport Pagnell and Olney, latterly including Woburn Sands);
- Seeking to maintain a balance between jobs and homes
- Protection and enhancement of the environment, especially the linear parks.

**67** The following section starts to explore what form the new Development Strategy for Plan:MK should take. Cognisant of the strategies that have gone before and the issues that have been raised in the preceding Topic Papers, the Issues and Considerations section below starts a discussion as to whether features such as the concentration of the majority of new development on the urban area should continue, or whether there are other alternatives that might serve us better as we take Milton Keynes forward over the coming years.



**68** Some of the discussion in the next section is a bit complex in places, as numerous issues start to be drawn together. At the current time there is no preferred option as to how we move forward with the development strategy. Before we get to that stage we need your input to help us shape options for further consideration.

## Development Strategy: Issues and Considerations

**69** Plan:MK will have to consider how we can meet the need for a wide range of different land uses in a cohesive Development Strategy to ensure Milton Keynes continues to function as an attractive, sustainable regional centre. The two land uses with the most significant land requirements are housing and employment. These were also the two main areas where the Inspector of the Core Strategy suggested the strategy needed to be reviewed at the earliest opportunity. These two issues are dealt with individually in the next two sections.



**70** There are, however, links between the two main land uses and others such as transport, open space, education and retailing, which need to be knitted together to ensure a comprehensive strategy for the future of Milton Keynes. This strategy needs to build on the original Masterplan for Milton Keynes and decisions taken in the preparation of the Local Plan (2005) and the Core Strategy in 2013, to ensure a consistent, cohesive and forward thinking plan is developed for the future of Milton Keynes.

## Meeting housing need

**71** As set out in the Growth in Housing Topic Paper, the initial evidence suggests that there is a need to plan for around 1,650 - 1,750 new homes per year across the Borough between 2011 and 2031. This is between 33,000 and 35,000 homes over the plan period. Whilst this figure will be revised over time through consultation, refinement of evidence, including work undertaken with neighbouring areas across the wider Milton Keynes Housing Market Area, and potentially through the granting of planning permission on new sites ahead of finalisation of the plan, the Council needs to start considering how and where this housing need will be met.

**72** At the current time there is land identified for nearly 24,000 new homes across the Borough and there were just under 4,000 completions between April 2011 and the end of March 2014, meaning the total existing land supply is 27,800 homes<sup>(6)</sup>. The Site Allocations Plan, being consulted upon alongside Plan:MK, should also allocate land for around a further 1,000 homes on small sites around the Borough. This means that to meet housing need across the Borough up to 2031, initial estimates are that land for an additional 4,000 - 6,000 homes will need to be identified through the planning process.

**73** Details of the current land supply position are set out in the Council's latest five year land supply report. Appendix 2 of that report<sup>(7)</sup> includes a full breakdown of sites which make up future land supply.

6 See Five Year Land Supply Report for more details  
<http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/five-year-housing-land-supply-annual-monitoring-report>  
7 <http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/five-year-housing-land-supply-annual-monitoring-report>





**74** Outlined below are a range of options we need to take into consideration in considering how we meet this ongoing need for housing land. There are also implications for the development strategy resulting from the need to consider housing need across the wider Housing Market Area, as identified in the Growth in Housing Topic Paper (see add ref). This is discussed in more detail below.

## Question 3

### Land Requirements

Do you have any views on the total level of land that will need to be provided to meet housing need in the Borough up to 2031?

### The urban/rural split

**75** At the outset, it needs to be determined broadly how many homes will be provided in the different parts of the Borough. Traditionally there has been a split between the urban and rural areas, with the majority of new housing being planned in or adjoining the urban area. This policy was continued in the Core Strategy with the current target being to deliver 1,640 homes per year in the urban area, as the focus of growth, and 110 homes per year across the rural area. This means rural growth is planned to account for roughly 6% of the overall housing target.

**76** This is a continuation of the past rates of development experienced over the last 10 - 15 years, a period which has included the redevelopment of several large brownfield sites in the rural area such as the former Nampak site in Woburn Sands, Renny Lodge in Newport Pagnell and the Cowper Works in Olney, alongside some limited greenfield extensions.

**77** The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA, 2014<sup>(8)</sup>) suggests that across the rural area, there is a need to plan for around 80 new households each year (see SHMA figure 76, page 101). This equates to around 82 houses per year (allowing for vacant properties), which is less than the current target of 110 homes per year.

**78** However, this does not consider the need to accommodate homes to cater for inward migration. These homes need to be provided across the Borough and a decision will need to be made as to how many are planned in and around rural settlements.

# Development Strategy: Issues and Considerations

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**79** Redevelopment opportunities in the rural area such as those referred to above are now fairly limited, so to continue to deliver around 110 homes per year would probably require a greater amount of development to be accommodated on greenfield sites around rural settlements than has previously been the case.

## Question 4

### Urban/Rural Split

- Do you think we should continue/maintain the strategy of the urban area of Milton Keynes being the main focus of housing development?
- Of the overall housing need, broadly how many homes do you think it would be appropriate to plan for in the rural area and why?

## Urban development options

**80** Once the appropriate number of homes to be provided in the urban areas has been determined (see the Growth in Housing Topic Paper), a full range of planning solutions to accommodate the requirements need to be considered. The main areas for consideration are set out below.

**81** For each of these options, we need to consider all reasonable alternatives that could form part of a development strategy. We need to make sure we are aware of any sites that could be considered as part of the development strategy. If you have any land you would like to be considered as options are developed and refined, please submit details to us using the proforma included in 'Annex: Call for Sites Proforma'.

### a) Further urban extensions

**82** In the last two Plans for the Borough, the need for additional housing growth has primarily been met in urban expansion areas, with the 2005 Local Plan allocating major extensions to the east and west of the city as well as a range of smaller extensions to the south (Newton Leys) and the north (Oakridge Park and Redhouse Park), and the Core Strategy allocating the Strategic Land Allocation (SLA) to the south east of the city.



**83** These areas provided the opportunity to plan comprehensively for high quality, mixed use areas of a scale to contain employment floorspace, a range of community facilities and open space alongside housing to help deliver

sustainable communities, rather than simply planning for small scale, standalone housing sites.



**84** In the case of the Eastern and Western Expansion Areas, they also provided the opportunity to try and address issues regarding the effectiveness of public transport by introducing City Streets to complement the existing grid road system.

**85** In the main, these Expansion Areas have been on greenfield land around the city. From our land availability work<sup>(9)</sup>, we know that there are still a number of potential opportunities around the city where large scale urban extensions could potentially be accommodated.

**86** Each of these potential areas, which have been promoted to the Council previously and have previously been published in our Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), are shown

in blue on Figure 1 'Potential Urban Expansion Options around Milton Keynes' below. The map also shows in red the potential development areas outside of the Milton Keynes Borough boundary but on the edge of Milton Keynes that have been promoted as options to either the Council or one of our neighbouring authorities<sup>(10)</sup>. **Note: The purpose of this map is simply to illustrate the locations that have previously been promoted to either Milton Keynes Council or one of our neighbours, and does not predetermine whether development in these locations is considered acceptable.**

**87** There are historic pieces of work which have looked at how Milton Keynes could grow, such as the study which underpinned the production of the Core Strategy, MK2031, and the Llewellyn Davies study of the late 1990s which provided evidence for the 2005 Local Plan.

**88** At this time no new work has been undertaken or any decision made to establish a preference for growth in a particular area or direction, including those featured on the map below. The Council is seeking your views on the need for new urban extensions, the potential sites and seeking to establish if there is any preference for growth in a particular direction, if new urban extensions are chosen as part of the approach to delivering growth. It is also asking whether there are any other sites that should be considered, so that we can prepare the assessment of the suitability of all the strategic urban extension options, for consultation at the next stage in the Plan:MK process.

9 See Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

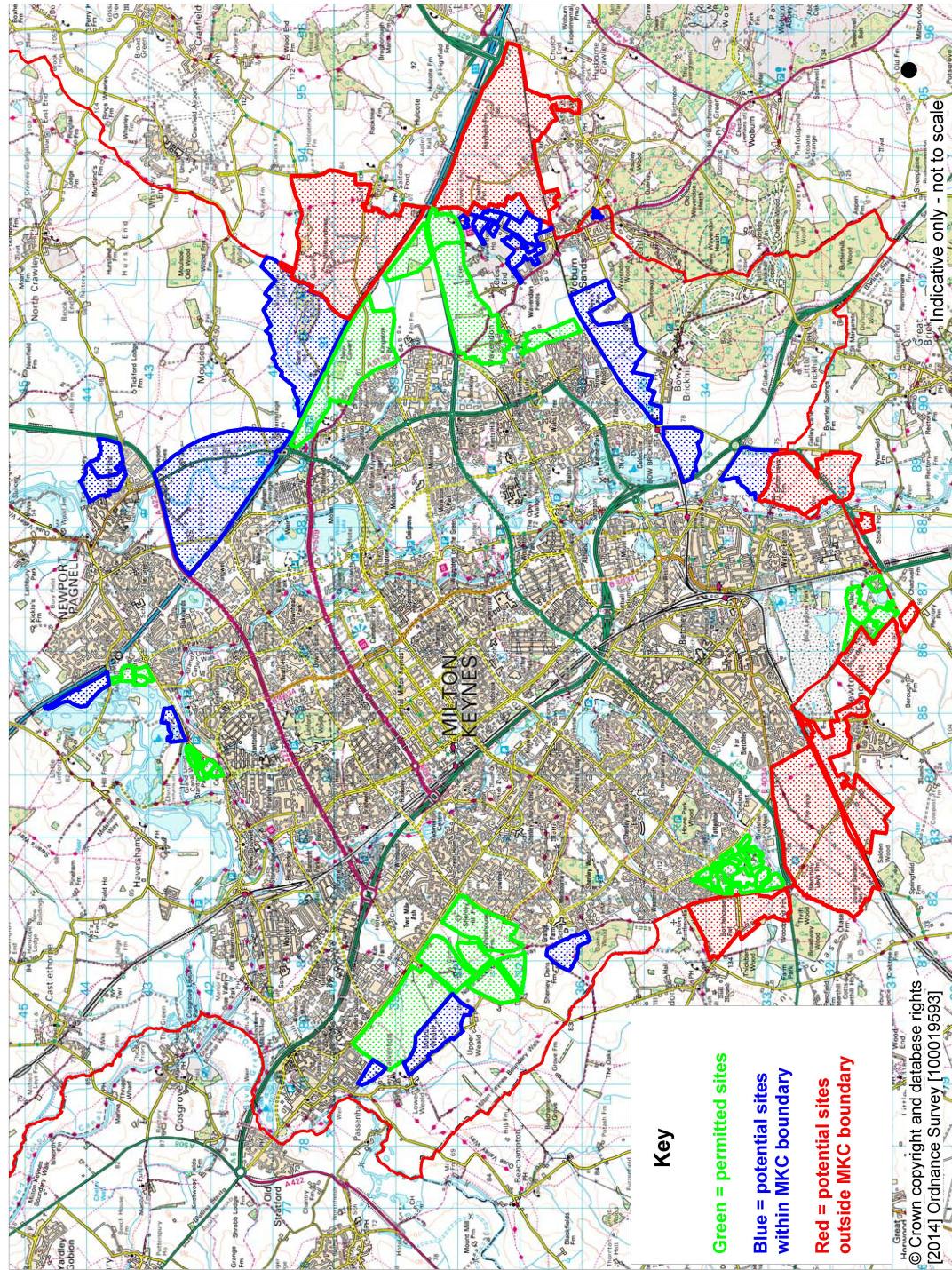
<http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/strategic-housing-land-availability-assessment>

10 Aylesbury Vale <http://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/planning-policy/vale-of-aylesbury-local-plan/vale-aylesbury-local-plan-call-sites-response/> Central Bedfordshire [http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/SA%20Assessment%20of%20Sites%20Part%201\\_tcm6-56252.pdf#False](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/SA%20Assessment%20of%20Sites%20Part%201_tcm6-56252.pdf#False) and [http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/SA%20Assessment%20of%20Sites%20Part%202\\_tcm6-56253.pdf#False](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/SA%20Assessment%20of%20Sites%20Part%202_tcm6-56253.pdf#False)



# Development Strategy: Issues and Considerations

Figure 1 Potential Urban Expansion Options around Milton Keynes





**89** We are also seeking ideas about the form of any potential expansions areas to enable them to be integrated well into the urban fabric of Milton Keynes and to ensure their sustainability. This could be in a similar way to the Local Plan Expansion Areas where the concept of City Streets was introduced.



**90** The approach to planning urban extensions would not be 'one size fits all'. Opportunities and constraints such as the location of sites, their characteristics in terms of landscape, topography, physical features, neighbouring uses and links to the existing urban area, would all need to be taken into account in planning the form of development on site.

**91** For example, the Western Expansion Area includes a significant landscape buffer to its outer edge, planned as a soft edge to the city on an important landscape ridge. Alongside residential development in the Eastern Expansion Area, a significant amount of land for large footprint employment floorspace has been allocated, reflecting its accessible location near to Junctions 13 and 14 of the M1.

**92** The nature of potential expansion areas is discussed in more detail later in this paper.

## Question 5

### Urban Extensions

- Do you think there is a case for further urban expansion areas? If so where do you think these are best planned and why? If you have land you want to be considered, please submit details using the proforma in 'Annex: Call for Sites Proforma'.
- Reflecting where you think urban extensions should be located, do you have any thoughts as to how they can be planned innovatively, for example, in the use of public transport, energy use, communications, construction techniques or other technologies?
- Do you have any views of the appropriate scale of any urban extensions? If required, do you think one larger site is preferable to several smaller sites.



## b) Better use of existing, undeveloped land assets

**93** Across the city there are a number of undeveloped pieces of land that are allocated for non-residential uses. These are mainly employment sites, such as at Walton (north of Caldecotte Lake) and Shenley Wood. These can be seen shaded dark purple of the existing Local Plan Proposals Map<sup>(11)</sup>.

**94** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that we shouldn't simply carry forward undeveloped employment allocations in reviews of Local Plans (see NPPF paragraph 22). As such, as discussed in the Employment and Economic Growth Topic Paper, the Council has commissioned an Economic Growth and Employment Land Study, which will assess the continued suitability of allocated employment sites to accommodate modern business demands.

**95** The outcomes of this work may highlight sites that are no longer suitable for employment use, for example due to their location or size. It may also establish that there is scope to reallocate some employment land without diminishing the potential for investment in Milton Keynes or that alternative, unallocated locations may provide better employment sites than those already planned (see later section on delivering employment growth).

**96** This potentially means that there will be sites available for alternative uses, including housing, within the existing urban area. If there are sites available, a judgement will need to be made as to the suitability for housing, but in general terms, the development of sites within the existing urban boundary is preferable to further greenfield growth.

**97** There are also other sources of potential sites within the urban area. Some of these are discussed as appropriate in later sections of this paper. Such sites could include redundant buildings, areas of underutilised or unkempt open space, or undeveloped sites allocated for other uses.

## Question 6

### Employment Sites

- Do you have any thoughts on the loss of allocated employment sites for housing?
- Are there any particular undeveloped sites where you think housing could be suitable? Please submit details using the proforma in 'Annex: Call for Sites Proforma'.

## c) The Contribution of Regeneration

**98** The Council is currently at the early stages of procuring a development partner to bring forward an extensive programme of housing-led regeneration across the city. Progress with the procurement was reported to Cabinet on 23rd July<sup>(12)</sup>.



<sup>11</sup> Some of the sites shaded dark purple will now have been developed.  
<http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/interactive-local-plan-proposals-map>

<sup>12</sup> <http://cmis.milton-keynes.gov.uk/CmisWebPublic/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=10760> Item 8



**99** The aim of the programme is to improve the future prospects of the city's most deprived areas and their residents, with a focus on those areas where there is poor quality housing and public realm, as well as other challenges such as low skills, employment and educational attainment.

**100** Appointment of a partner is planned for March 2015, meaning the programme is likely to be at an advanced stage by the time Plan:MK is adopted and the implications will be felt throughout the plan period to 2031 and beyond.

**101** The programme is likely to see an increase in the housing numbers in the regeneration areas. As the programme is yet to be fully developed, it is unclear how many homes regeneration will be able to deliver. However, it is important that due consideration is given to the regeneration programme and support for regeneration is built into the overall Development Strategy for the Borough to ensure the more deprived areas are not simply left behind as new areas are planned and developed.

**102** We will need to establish exactly how to make sure this happens. Key factors will be ensuring that:

- planning policy supports appropriate change in the likely regeneration estates, that can respond to the challenges faced by individual estates and the desires of residents,
- the overall Development Strategy does not compromise the delivery of the regeneration programme,
- that any new development areas planned could potentially support the regeneration programme.



**103** The Council will also need to make key decisions regarding how any homes delivered should be built into conclusions on land availability. The number of homes likely to be delivered through regeneration should become clearer over the next couple of years as the programme develops. At the current time, the greatest certainty exists on the Lakes Estate, where a Draft Neighbourhood Plan suggests that there is potential to increase the housing stock by around 300 houses through a programme of infilling and selective redevelopment. If this were to be continued over a further four or five estates over the next 15-16 years this would create 1,200 - 1,500 homes, which is equivalent to the size of 2.5 Oakridge Parks, a significant greenfield development.

## Question 7

### Regeneration

- Do you have any thoughts on how regeneration can best be supported through the Development Strategy and other Plan:MK policies?
- Do you think the Development Strategy should include regeneration to help meet housing need, or should any homes delivered through the Regeneration Programme be seen as windfall and additional to planned supply?

## d) Standalone Settlement

**104** As an alternative to focussing development on the urban area, one option could be to consider the development of a new standalone settlement in the open countryside.

**105** The Council has not undertaken any work on such a proposal but in considering the full range of planning solutions to accommodate housing need, it is reasonable to seek views on the approach.



**106** The location of any new settlement would be key to its success, ensuring there are good links with Milton Keynes as it is likely most residents would work in the city, whilst also minimising the impact of the development on the environment and the quality of life of existing residents. In the past, around 5,000 homes (just a bit smaller in terms of housing numbers than Newport Pagnell) has been suggested as the minimum size for any self-sufficient settlement as this is the number of homes that was previously been considered necessary to support a secondary school, which can be one of the main drivers for transport movements. An example of this is the new settlement of Cambourne near Cambridge which, at around 4,000 homes does not provide a secondary school resulting in higher car use than had been expected from the settlement<sup>(13)</sup>. More recently however, pupil yields from new development in Milton Keynes have resulted in a secondary school being required to serve the need arising from the 2,900 homes planned for the Strategic Land allocation. In April this year, the Government issued a consultation on locally

led garden cities<sup>(14)</sup>. The Government are inviting communities to put expressions of interest in developing new gardens cities on a rolling basis and this could be something that we could consider, if there was a realistic opportunity and local support.

**107** Whilst the scale of a new 'garden city' according to the prospectus would be 15,000 homes or more, even if this was not seen as a option for Milton Keynes, there may be opportunities to develop a settlement which reflected the opportunities and constraints in Milton Keynes.

## Question 8

### Standalone Settlement

- Do you have any views on planning for a standalone settlement somewhere around Milton Keynes?
- If you think it is a good idea, do you have any thoughts on where it would most suitably be located, what size it should be and the development principles that would underpin it?

## e) Housing need in the wider Housing Market Area

**108** As set out in the Growth in Housing and the Duty to Co-operate Topic Papers, in developing Plan:MK, consideration will need to be given to meeting housing need across the wider Milton Keynes Housing Market Area (HMA). The initial conclusion set out in the Growth in Housing topic paper is that this additional need amounts to around 550 additional homes each year across the Milton Keynes HMA, primarily to

13 Lessons from Cambourne - <http://www.carltd.com/article/Lessons-from-Cambourne>  
14 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/locally-led-garden-cities-prospectus>

ensure a balance between likely job growth and homes across the HMA (see the Growth in Housing Topic Paper).



**109** These 550 homes would technically be meeting the housing need of the growing population in our neighbouring authorities. However, because of the draw of Milton Keynes particularly for work, it is important that consideration is given to the relationship with the city to ensure sustainable development.

**110** In planning for these additional homes there are a number of points that will have to be worked through with neighbouring authorities under the duty to co-operate. These include:

1. Should some or all of the 550 homes be planned inside the Milton Keynes boundary, effectively increasing the initial target to be planned for in Plan:MK from 1,650 homes?
2. Should any of the 550 homes be planned on the edge of the Milton Keynes urban area but outside the borough boundary in neighbouring authority areas - whilst not increasing the level of need to be planned for in Plan:MK, increasing the pressure of the Milton Keynes housing market.
3. If growth areas on the edge of Milton Keynes were planned outside the Borough boundary, as well as meeting the needs of our neighbours, could they accommodate some of the Milton Keynes housing need, effectively reducing the target to be planned for

in Plan:MK from 1,650, whilst retaining provision around Milton Keynes.

4. Would the 550 homes be better planned away from Milton Keynes but still within the wider Milton Keynes HMA, maybe around market towns and other settlements?

**111** At the current time, no specific work has been undertaken on this issue. We are at the stage where we would like your thoughts on how best growth across the wider Milton Keynes HMA should be planned.

## Question 9

### Wider Housing Market Area

- Do you have any thoughts on how additional housing need across the HMA should be planned for?
- Is there scope for the MK housing market to support delivery of more than 1,650 homes per year on average up to 2031 if addition growth is planned on the edge of Milton Keynes?
- Do you think there is merit in seeking to provide some of Milton Keynes' 1,650 housing need in extensions into neighbouring areas (which would clearly need to be investigated and planned with our neighbours)? If so, what do you think the justification is for this?

### The Rural Settlement Hierarchy

**112** Once the need for an urban/rural split has been established and the number of homes to be planned has been finalised, consideration also needs to be given to where the homes in the rural area are located.



# Development Strategy: Issues and Considerations



**113** As set out in the 'Meeting Housing Need' section above, to continue to deliver the current rural housing target is likely to require more greenfield development than has been seen previously, as brownfield redevelopment or infill opportunities are becoming more scarce.

**114** The majority of rural growth has previously been in the Key Settlements of Newport Pagnell, Olney and Woburn Sands, with a limited amount of development in Selected Villages such as Hanslope and Sherington. This focus has meant that development has been concentrated on the most sustainable of the 28 rural settlements, in accordance with national planning policy, with only limited infilling in other villages. This strategy has ensured that the majority of new development has been in areas that are the best served by local facilities which, whilst being a sustainable approach, has also ensured that rural services have remained well supported.

**115** As part of the Development Strategy, consideration will need to be given to whether the settlement hierarchy, with Newport Pagnell, Olney and Woburn Sands as the focus of development outside of the city, remains appropriate, or if an alternative, perhaps more dispersed strategy should be followed.

## Question 10

### Rural Settlement Hierarchy

- Do you think the current settlement hierarchy with Newport Pagnell, Olney and Woburn Sands as Key Settlements remains appropriate?
- Should a more dispersed pattern of housing development be considered? If so, which other rural settlements do you think could take some new housing development?
- Are there any sites you think we should be considering in developing a strategy for accommodating rural housing need (please use the proforma in 'Annex: Call for Sites Proforma').



## Delivering employment growth

**116** The Employment and Economic Growth Topic Papers sets out the issues with regards to planning for employment growth. The key challenge is to ensure there is sufficient employment land available, of the right quality, size and in the right location to ensure continued investment in the Milton Keynes economy. Alongside this challenge is ensuring that the impact of the increased activity

associated with people getting to and from work is managed as part of the overall development strategy for the city.

**117** As set out in the Employment and Economic Growth Topic Paper, on average over the last 10 years, over 1,600 new jobs have been created across all employment sectors each year. This figure extends to 2,400 if the 15 year average is considered. These jobs require investment in new facilities, office space, warehouses, workshops etc, all of which require land.



**118** There are currently (May 2014) over 216 ha of vacant land allocated for employment use across the city. There is also 325,610 sq.m. of existing vacant floorspace that could be re-used (i.e. offices, industrial and warehousing space).

**119** Work is currently ongoing to establish the likely level of job growth in Milton Keynes over the next 15-16 years, to give the Council clarity of the number of jobs it should be planning to accommodate. This work will also give an indication of the likely types of jobs that investors will be seeking to bring to Milton Keynes, and the implications this has for the type of sites (primarily in terms of location and size) they will need for their premises.

**120** At this stage, we therefore don't have the detailed evidence to refine options for how we plan for employment floorspace. However, we can still seek views on some general principles that will

be key to developing a strategy to support economic investment whilst mitigating the future impacts of economic growth.

## Dispersal vs Concentration of sites

**121** The original 1970 plan for Milton Keynes (referred to as the masterplan) was based on the dispersal of land uses, including employment land, around the city. The masterplan set out that employment land would be dispersed 'fairly widely' with many sites 'located around the perimeter of the city to reduce the journey to work and spread the traffic load evenly' (Plan for Milton Keynes 1970, page 26).



**122** The masterplan provided for a range of employment sites in location, setting and size as part of the overall development strategy, which sought to secure a range and choice of accessible jobs for residents. As noted above, there is still around 216ha of undeveloped employment land across the city - of this around 75ha was land originally identified in the masterplan and has remained undeveloped for over 40 years. The remaining land is that which was planned as part of the new urban extensions in the Local Plan (2005) and the Core Strategy.

**123** As well as small parcels of larger employment areas, the remaining sites also include some relatively large (upwards of 5ha) areas in various locations around the city. Subject to the recommendations of the Economic Growth and Employment Land Study (EGELS) there is scope for some (or

all) of these sites to be reallocated for alternative uses. The impact of this would be that some of the original dispersal of employment sites would be lost.

**124** Considering alternative uses on such sites would be in accordance with the NPPF which says that 'planning policies should avoid the long term protection of a sites allocated for employment use when there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose' (NPPF, paragraph 22). However, we are aware that the loss of these sites would be a deviation from the original plan for the city and this needs to be a consideration.

## Question 11

### Employment Allocations

Do you have any thoughts on the reallocation of land allocated for employment use for alternative uses? Are there any employment allocations which you think would be better put to an alternative use?



**125** The concept of having a range of dispersed sites was largely predicated on the basis that sites would be readily accessible by public transport. This has not turned out to be the case with over 75% of people travelling to work in the city by car and only 6% by bus (see Transport and Travel Topic Paper).

**126** As set out in the Transport and Travel Topic Paper, people travelling to and from work is the main source of peaks in movement on the grid road network. The reliance on the car and the lack of a focus for public transport (aside from CMK) has led to peak hour congestion getting worse on the city's grid road system. There has been a slight improvement in the proportion of workers travelling to work via bus, however the impact of this is far outweighed by the population growth which has seen an increase of nearly 12,000 people travelling to work by car each day between 2001 and 2011 (an increase of 1,000 people year on year) both from within MK itself and surrounding areas. As this continues, there is likely to be a worsening in peak time congestion unless innovative approaches are taken to increase patronage on public transport.

**127** Therefore understanding how we can encourage more people to use public transport, particularly for the key journey to work, is essential. Alongside demand measures, such as reducing bus fare prices, increasing parking prices etc, the location and accessibility of new employment areas will be a key factor.

**128** The focus of employment is already Central Milton Keynes (discussed further below) where 24.4% (35,800 in total) of all jobs in the Borough are provided. This is the most accessible area in the city and is well served by public transport. There is a case for encouraging more jobs to be focused in CMK (as discussed in the Employment and Economic Growth Topic Paper, paragraphs 24 and 25) but not all uses (e.g. warehousing, manufacturing etc) are suitable for the city centre. Therefore alternative sites still need to be provided.





**129** Therefore decisions need to be made in Plan:MK as to how future land requirements are planned. As set out above there is already the option of re-designating some employment land which has remained undeveloped for over 40 years, for alternative uses if the EGELS suggests we have surplus land available or if that site is no longer considered suitable. However, there is also the option of doing this for qualitative reasons, and looking to find alternative sites that may be better in terms of the investment potential and importantly better located in terms of accessibility and their ability to support a particular development strategy.

**130** The study may also suggest that we need additional land. Again, if this is the case, in planning where this land should be provided its location and accessibility will need to be a key consideration (see the Employment and Economic Growth Topic Paper).

## Question 12

### Employment Land

- Do you think there is benefit in looking to provide larger employment areas, that may be easier to serve effectively by public transport?
- Do you have any thoughts on innovative approaches to incorporating employment land into the future Development Strategy for Milton Keynes?
- Would you support the reallocation (and re-provision elsewhere) of some existing vacant employment land to other uses to enable the provision of a more accessible development strategy, even if the EGELS suggest existing designations are sufficient in quantitative terms?

### Tying it all together

**131** As well as the two main land uses of homes and employment space, there are a number of other land uses that need to be factored in as part of a comprehensive development strategy. These land uses, which include open space, transport, retail and leisure, education are those that make Milton Keynes an attractive place for people to live, work and play. In particular open space, with the linear parks system, and transport, with the tree lined grid road system, are key to defining the character of Milton Keynes.

**132** These subjects are covered in more detail in each of the other topic papers, however there are a few points that need to be covered in this paper on the comprehensive development strategy.

# Development Strategy: Issues and Considerations

## Open Space and the Natural Environment

**133** As set out in the Open Space and Natural Environment Topic Paper, the NPPF sets out that the quality, quantity and accessibility of open space should be considered to ensure it meets the needs of the community it serves (NPPF, paragraph 73).



**134** Milton Keynes has a well-defined network of open spaces with the linear parks crossing the city, mainly along rivers and streams, being a defining characteristic of the original masterplan. These linear parks purposely follow water courses to allow a strategic approach to flood water management to be adopted, with lakes such as Willen, Furzton and Caldecotte forming a key part of the strategy, whilst also being important leisure destinations.

**135** There is a well-defined hierarchy of spaces with generous standards of provision set out to ensure that any new development is well served by good quality, accessible open spaces. The continued appropriateness of these standards is discussed in more detail in the Open Space and Natural Environment Topic Paper, but there are a couple of key, strategic issues that need to be reflected in this Development Strategy Paper.

**136** In the current Local Plan there are already proposed extensions to the linear parks identified beyond the original boundary of the city with the expectation that the parks will be extended for the enjoyment of local communities.

**137** In the last Local Plan some areas of linear park were removed to facilitate the delivery of development. These changes did not undermine the purpose of the linear park network and in fact in the case of changes to the north facilitated the delivery of linear park objectives by enabling the creation of the Stanton Low Country Park.



**138** As part of the delivery of the last Local Plan, additions were made to the linear park network with extensions through the Eastern Expansion Area to facilitate a potential link to the Marston Vale Community Forest to the East at some point in the future, and as part of the route for the Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway.

**139** There may be opportunities to tweak the boundaries of the linear parks to enable some development within the city, limiting the need for further greenfield growth. This would need to be considered through a separate study in line with the requirements of the NPPF, which would look at the quality, quantity and accessibility of public open space. Such a study has yet to take place but it would be helpful to understand if you feel that there are any areas of open space across the city that could be better used as a development site.

**140** Moving forward with the Development Strategy, we will ultimately need to consider if there are opportunities to enhance the park system. Key considerations will be:

# Development Strategy: Issues and Considerations

- Should opportunities to deliver extensions to the existing linear park system, particularly areas already identified for extension, be integral in the location of any future expansion areas if they are required?
- Is there a need to consider designating other areas as linear park extension either for recreation or flood water management
- Are there opportunities for some infilling on the edges of the parks system to limit the need for greenfield growth?

## Question 13

### Open Space

Do you have any views on the considerations set out above?

**141** The growth of Milton Keynes will potentially need to be into what is currently open countryside around the edge of the city and we will need to ensure that if greenfield growth is needed, due consideration is given to minimising the impact on the environment.



**142** Across the Borough there are numerous environmental constraints that would need to be considered. These include:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Nature Reserves

- Historic Parks and Gardens
- Ancient Woodland
- Conservation Areas
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments

**143** The landscape also falls in to different character areas, which have different levels of condition, sensitivity and capacity to accept new development. As set out in the Open Space and Natural Environment Topic Paper a new Landscape Character Assessment is already in production which would help to inform decisions about the ability of the landscape to accommodate new development.

**144** In making decisions on the new development strategy for Milton Keynes, this landscape character work will be a key consideration. At this time, we're looking to hear your views on any environment or landscape issues you think we should be taking into account as we start to develop Plan:MK. This could include any areas you think we should avoid and why and any particular issues we should be investigating.

## Question 14

### Environmental Constraints

Do you have any views on particular environmental constraints that limit where Milton Keynes could grow and the issues we should be investigating?





# Development Strategy: Issues and Considerations

## Transport

**145** As has already been partly covered under employment, one of the biggest challenges for the Development Strategy is to ensure that people can continue to move freely around the city at all times of day and by a range of transport methods.

**146** There is a continued trend towards increasing use of private cars on the grid roads each year, which is putting increasing strain on the road network. There are particular issues with the rush hour peaks in the morning and afternoon as workers travel to and from the various employment locations around the city.



**147** The spatial distribution of development can have a big impact on how people travel around the city, both at the high level strategic scale, but also at the local level by making key facilities, such as schools and shops, accessible by means other than the car.

**148** The Development Strategy has to look at both levels together - there is no point having a well located, well connected urban extension if it is then designed in such a way that everyone needs to travel by car.

**149** In the 2005 Local Plan, after much debate it was decided to allocate urban extensions to the east and west of the city, and deviate from the existing grid road

system with city streets, roads built to facilitate access to good quality public transport, as the main route through the areas with good connection to the main employment area of Central Milton Keynes. Transport considerations were therefore integral to the location and design of the Development Strategy at this time. The Core Strategy Strategic Land Allocation was planned in an area where key transport improvements had already taken place or were already planned, minimising the need for further investment.



**150** There has been some criticism of this approach and the deviation from the grid system, with people believing the grid pattern should simply be rolled out in any new expansion areas. This is one option but as the city expands, building in grid roads becomes an increasing challenge due to the location and nature of the potential expansion areas and the amount of land they potentially require (a grid road corridor can be up to 80m wide because of the amount of space taken up by the green verges either side of the carriageway and the design speed of the road).

**151** Grid roads are also very expensive to deliver, because they take up a significant amount of land compared to a conventional road layout. Traditional grid roads also have crossing either below or above the roads, rather than at grade, which further increases costs. The costs associated with grid road provision pressure on the ability of new developments to deliver funding for other

key facilities such as schools and affordable housing. Whilst good planning should not be simply dictated by what is affordable, the viability of development needs to be a consideration to ensure what is planned can be delivered on the ground.

**152** As was alluded to in the employment section, the location of any new expansion areas could be key to minimising the burden on the grid road system or facilitating innovative transport solutions. There may be areas of potential growth that would have the benefit of a lesser impact on the grid system as a result of access to existing public transport routes or proximity to employment areas and other day-to-day facilities. There may also be areas where it would be possible to investigate new and innovative opportunities to facilitate rapid transit systems.

**153** In the past, such opportunities have proved to be expensive to deliver but as we move forward, such options need to be considered.



**154** The general cost of providing standard transport infrastructure needs to be considered. Some development areas will have less 'additional' transport costs than others. Examples of additional costs could be bridges or tunnels over/under existing features or significant additional works needed to simply access a site. Again, along with the impact on the existing road network, such implications will need to be a consideration.

**155** Aside from the main grid network, improving walking and cycling needs to be a consideration. The city is already blessed with the Redway network which provides a walking and cycling network segregated from the main highway. The network however is under-used, particularly for cycling to work and one reason for this is that some of the existing routes are not direct, particularly when travelling through the middle of a grid square.

**156** Improving and extending the Redway network in the future should be a feature of any development planned through Plan:MK. One solution will be to extend the network in to any urban extensions in such a way that they are more attractive to cyclists. This will mean more direct routes, may be alongside grid roads, as is the case with the Redway alongside the V4 (Watling Street) opposite the Western Expansion Area, to form a 'Super Redway' commuter network. This is discussed further in the Transport and Travel Topic Paper.



**157** There is some limited scope to improve the existing network through plan making and improvements will mainly need to be achieved through management and maintenance. However, there may be opportunities to improve surveillance through enabling some development alongside the network at appropriate points.

## Question 15

### Transport

Do you have any views on the considerations set out above? In particular:

- If urban extensions are needed, do you think there are any areas we should be prioritising in terms of accessibility and wider transport implications?
- Do you believe Plan:MK should be seeking to extend the grid road pattern into any new development no matter what the cost?
- Do you have any views on realistic innovative transport solutions to support growth?
- What are your thoughts on how we can encourage cyclists to use the Redway network?

### Retail and Leisure

**158** As set out in the Town Centres and Retailing Topic paper, there is already a well established retail hierarchy serving the shopping needs of the Borough. The hierarchy seeks to shape decisions on where retailing is most appropriate and ensures different centres continue to fulfil the role for which they were planned (e.g. daily, weekly, or 'comparison' shopping needs).



**159** This hierarchy is integral to the overall Development Strategy with links to housing provision, employment and transport in particular. The key considerations that need to be taken are discussed in detail in the Town Centres and Retail Topic Paper, but there are a couple of points that need to be made in this paper.

**160** The existing retail hierarchy for the Borough is set out in Table 5.5 of the Council's Core Strategy adopted in 2013. The retail hierarchy categorises retail centres within the Borough broadly by their function, size and the type of shops and services they provide. At the top of the retail hierarchy is the primary shopping area of Central Milton Keynes. The largest retail centre within the Borough selling largely comparison goods and with luxury and specialist shops, it is identified within the retail hierarchy as a regional shopping centre. The second tier of the retail hierarchy consists of Bletchley, Wolverton, Kingston and Westcroft, which are classified as district centres. The third tier



of the retail hierarchy consists of the town centres of Newport Pagnell, Olney Stony Stratford and Woburn Sands and finally the fourth tier of the retail hierarchy consists of local and village shops selling mostly convenience (food) items.

**161** A key question highlighted in the Town Centres and Retailing Topic Paper is does the retail hierarchy within the Borough need to change? For example:

- Are there any centres whose role has changed since the last review of the retail hierarchy, whose position within the retail hierarchy needs to reflect this change?
- Are there other centres that should be elevated in the hierarchy as a result of changes since the last review?
- Is there a need to create new retail centres as Milton Keynes grows?
- Generally does the retail hierarchy still reflect modern shopping needs?



**162** These are important questions for the development strategy as the retail areas are places that people travel to on a regular basis. They can therefore have an impact on the transport network, as well as the quality of life of residents, both from the point of view of the ease of access to shops and their impact on people living near them.

**163** At the top of the retail hierarchy, Central Milton Keynes has the potential to attract visitors from the surrounding area. It also encourages trips for more than one

purpose. As a result, this brings investment and jobs into the city and it is important that we seek to continue to support the role of the centre. This is particularly important given the trend towards online retailing and the resultant change in emphasis from major retailer towards less, larger stores where they can showcase a full range of products and provide high quality customer service. To ensure Milton Keynes continues to be a location where retailers want to invest, Plan:MK needs to ensure the overall development strategy and retail hierarchy supports the role of the centre.

**164** There have been challenges to the established retail hierarchy in recent years. This includes developers proposing superstores-large foodstores above 2500 sqm gross in local centres (the fourth tier of the retail hierarchy) which are far bigger than is necessary to support their resident populations with regard to their daily convenience shopping needs. If more are developed, this could harm the viability of neighbouring centres by drawing shoppers away from existing facilities, potentially undermining the retail hierarchy. As the local centres are also largely embedded in residential areas, they also have the potential to have a negative impact on the amenity if residents.



**165** One of the key questions discussed in more detail in the Town Centres and Retail Topic Paper is should the Council restrict the size of a food store permitted in an existing and proposed local centre? This is important for the overall

development strategy because significant variation away from the rationale behind the existing hierarchy has the potential to fundamentally affect the continued viability and success of other centres and the way the hierarchy is set up to support the quality of life of residents.

## Question 16

### Retail and Leisure

- Do you think that the existing retail hierarchy is fit for purpose or does it need amending? If so, how should it change?
- How do you think the role of CMK as a regional centre is best protected and enhanced?
- Should we be seeking to limit the trend towards increased size of retail stores in local centres to protect their role?
- Are there any issues relating to retail and leisure that you think we should be taking into account in developing the overall development strategy?

### Flexibility of uses

**166** Over recent years, there have been a number of unforeseen uses that have found it difficult to find appropriate premises to operate in Milton Keynes due to the way the city is comprehensively planned. Such uses, including places of worship and gyms, have located in various employment locations around the city, such as Kiln Farm and Wolverton Mill, where there are vacant employment buildings.



**167** The majority of these uses are contrary to those allowed under the planning policies for these areas, however they often have no viable alternative location and the use of that site for such a purpose may not actually cause significant impact.

**168** Over time, there will be other challenges and unmet needs that emerge that will need to be accommodated. One such challenge at the moment is education, with additional schools needing to be provided in areas where no land is allocated for education - but where there are vacant, greenfield sites allocated for employment (mainly) where, subject to the findings of the Economic Growth and Employment Land Study (see the Employment and Economic Growth Topic Paper), may no longer be suitable for employment use. Flexibility in the use of land would make it easier to accommodate unforeseen requirements in areas where it is needed.

## Question 17

### Flexibility of Uses

- Would you support a more flexible use of undeveloped employment sites to meet unforeseen needs emerging in the future?
- If so, would you prefer a general, criteria based policy covering all sites, or would a more site specific approach be appropriate?



**172** Equally, their location needs to be considered. Reserve sites are often seen at the entrance to an estate, surrounded mainly by housing. Again, this often limits their use. Consideration needs to be given as to whether it would be more appropriate to plan new reserve sites in a different way, maybe as part of local centres or adjacent to schools.

### Use of reserve sites

**169** In the past, 0.75 ha per 1000 population of new development sites has been planned as 'reserve sites', land left vacant to allow for any unforeseen uses to be delivered at a later date. A number of the reserve sites are owned by the Community Foundation and are only released to non-profit making organisations, such as faith groups or charities. The others are now controlled by the Milton Keynes Development Partnership. These sites have fewer restrictions and tend to be developed for various forms of specialist housing.

**170** Take up of reserve sites over the years has been somewhat limited but the sites do provide a valuable resource in a planned new town where redevelopment opportunities are less prevalent than in other older settlements. A decision needs to be taken as to whether the need for new reserve sites is taken forward in Plan:MK

**171** There is some thought that some of the reserve sites are too small to fulfil their purpose. Most are around 0.5ha in size meaning the uses they can accommodate are limited. If Plan:MK is to continue to provide for reserve sites, a decision needs to be taken as to the appropriate size.

## Question 18

### Reserve Sites

Do you have any views on the future of community reserve sites?



## Annex: Call for Sites Proforma

### Annex: Call for Sites Proforma

The following proforma is also available to download from the Council's website or from the Supporting Documents tab on the Plan:MK Topic Paper - The Way Forward: Preparing a Vision and Development Strategy for Plan:MK part of the Consultation Portal at

[http://miltonkeynes-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/planmk/pmk\\_devstrategy](http://miltonkeynes-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/planmk/pmk_devstrategy)

### Plan:MK 'Call for Sites'

This proforma is provided to enable you to submit details of sites you wish to be considered for inclusion in the Plan:MK. Information provided will assist Officers with their own assessments as to whether sites are potentially suitable and available for housing, employment, leisure or other uses. Please provide as much detail as possible to enable a thorough site assessment to be carried out.

Assumptions regarding the suitability of sites and the potential development that could be delivered on a site will ultimately be based on observations of Officers, based on a thorough assessment of sites and feedback from the public and other stakeholders.

**It should not be assumed that sites put forward through this process will automatically be considered suitable for development, that they will be allocated or that planning permission would be granted for development. This remains a decision to be made through the plan-making process - this is simply a starting point and an opportunity to put land forward as a possible site for development for consideration alongside others.**

All proformas must be accompanied by:

- a site plan; and
- confirmation of land availability (e.g. in cases where sites are put forward by an agent, confirmation of consent to do so by the land owner must be provided). If you do not know who owns a site but would like us to look into it, please make this clear.

**Proformas without this information will not be accepted.**

*Permitted sites will already be included in the assessment as commitments, and sites currently allocated for a specific use through the existing Milton Keynes Local Plan (adopted 2005) will be reviewed through the Plan:MK process. However, if you feel these sites could or should be considered for an alternative use, then you are free to submit this new information.*

## Annex: Call for Sites Proforma

**Site Name and Address:**

--

### 1. Contact details

Name:
Organisation (if applicable)
Position (if applicable)
Address:
Postcode:
Telephone:
Email:

**Site owner** (if different from above)

Name:
Address:
Postcode:
Telephone:
Email:

**If you are an agent submitting information on behalf of a landowner, please provide conformation of their consent to do so, or clarify why this is not possible.**



## 2. Site details

Size (hectares)- if known	
Current use(s)	

Planning history (if any)

Summary of potential  
(e.g. uses, reasons for seeking  
(re)development)

## 3. Ownership and availability

I (or my client) is:

Sole owner of the site	
Part owner of the site	
Hold no (legal) interest in the site	

If you hold part/no interest in the site, do you know who owns the site/or remainder of the site? Please provide as much detail as possible.

Are any of the following relevant to the site?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Legal constraints (e.g. ransom strip, restrictive covenant)			
An existing use on site needs to be relocated			
Public rights of way			
Reliant on development of other land			
Contamination needs to be cleared			

## Annex: Call for Sites Proforma

If you answered Yes to any of the above, please give details. Also add details of any other factors which may affect the potential development of the site?

--

Is there any developer interest in the site? Please give details.

Nature of interest	Tick	Comments
Owned by a developer		
Under option to a developer		
Site is being marketed for sale		
Enquiries received from developers		

Please give an indication of when the site would be available for development, if it were to be identified in a future policy document.

Immediately	
Within 5 years	
5 - 10 years	
10 - 15 years	
Beyond 15 years	

#### 4. Suitability of the site for development

Are any of the following factors relevant to the site? If yes, please comment on how you believe they could be overcome.

	Tick	Comment
Flooding		
Listed building/building of historic importance/conservation area		
Nature conservation		
Ecology		
Archaeology		
High quality agricultural land		
Pollution/contamination		

Does the site have good access or how could access be effectively achieved? Please give details

Does the site benefit from any of the existing services?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Mains water supply			
Mains sewerage			
Gas supply			
Electric supply			
Landline telephone/broadband internet			
Other (please specify)			

5. Additional information

Please provide any further information which you feel would benefit the assessment of the site for development? Are there any other uses you feel would be suitable for the site?



## Annex: Call for Sites Proforma

### **6. How to respond**

Please return the questionnaire along with an up-to-date Ordnance Survey based map (**without this mapped information we are unable to register the site**) outlining the precise boundaries of the site in its entirety and the part which may be suitable for the use or purpose you propose (if this is less than the whole) no later than **5pm on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014** to one of the following addresses:

**Email:** [planmk@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:planmk@milton-keynes.gov.uk)

**Post:** Development Plans Team  
Planning and Transport  
Civic Offices  
1 Saxon Gate East  
Central Milton Keynes  
MK9 3EJ

**Fax:** 01908 252211

If you have any queries about this process please contact the Development Plans team using the details above or call **01908 252358**

#### **Important note**

Officers will need to access the site to carry out an assessment. Please confirm that this is acceptable to enter the site by signing below. If there are any issues of access, please let us know. If you do not hold an interest in the site and cannot grant access, please ensure question 3 is completed with as much detail as possible to allow us to investigate site ownership.

Signature.....

### Annex: Visions from Previous Plans

#### 1970 The Plan for Milton Keynes

The original masterplan for Milton Keynes set out six broad goals which the plan intended to achieve. These are expanded below using information from the masterplan, to try and demonstrate how these were interpreted in the planning of the city.

- **Opportunity and freedom of choice**
  - Providing residents with the greatest possible range of opportunities in education, work, housing, recreation, health care and other activities and services
  - Attracting a range of employers to Milton Keynes to provide jobs in a wide variety of industries and jobs for workers with different skill levels
  - Providing a choice of homes, of different sizes, tenures, types and character, and at different densities
  - Ensuring journeys in all directions across the city were equally convenient
  - Grouping facilities in accessible locations, walkable from home.
- **Easy movement and access, and good communications**
  - Providing a choice between public and private methods of transport, and provision should be made for free and safe movement for pedestrians and cyclists
  - Ensuring a high degree of accessibility between all activities and places.
- **Balance and variety**
  - Aiming to attract a wide spread of social, age and racial groups, and people with different incomes
  - Tenures and types of housing should be grouped to a degree, but with a mix maintained across an area
  - Existing communities should be integrated into the new city.
- **An attractive city**
  - Encourage variety by the mixing of land uses and densities, housing types and tenure, building forms and development over time
  - Areas of the city to have strong local character, and existing interesting buildings in the city to be incorporated into the new landscape
- **Public awareness and participation**
  - Making sure that the city's residents are fully aware of the freedom and opportunity available to them
  - Ensuring residents have the opportunity to become involved in the development of the city.
- **Efficient and imaginative use of resources**
  - Enabling investment by public bodies and from private sources to contribute towards growth in the most economic way.

#### 2004-2034 Milton Keynes Sustainable Community Strategy, Our Handbook for Change

##### A Vision for Milton Keynes

This is a City that Thinks Differently, Embraces Evolution and Champions Change.

The unique quality that defines Milton Keynes today will endure as we plan for the future. The city will continue to change and develop, to look ahead and to challenge convention. What is crucial is that we remember we are distinctive because of the way our city balances its urban centre with its rural environment. Our Sustainable Community Strategy embraces both these aspects ensuring they continue to flourish in harmony for the benefit of everyone.

Our vision is to create a city that has soul, energy and dynamism. Our towns, villages, neighbourhoods and spaces will be desirable, fun, affordable, safe and accessible. It will be a learning city, built and developed by a skilled and well-educated population. People will thrive financially and emotionally on the buzz of living or working in this international city of the future.

Service providers will develop sustainable methods of providing the best of services ensuring that the community is strengthened and evolves alongside the city.

This will be a city that celebrates diversity and cares for all its citizens, giving priority to those in greatest need. It will be renowned for its forward looking approach to community development, housing solutions, learning, health frameworks and social care facilities. A city that embraces change, it will pioneer new methods to ensure the best of services can thrive and be sustained. It will be a city where everyone has a say; where communities are actively involved in the workings of the city and help to manage change together.

The local economy will increasingly be driven by the knowledge based industries. The city's business ethos will be centred around flexible thinking and forward looking strategies which react well to change. The city will be the economic driving force and cultural heart of a prosperous rural region that is committed

to bettering itself, learning from past mistakes and improving areas that are inconsistent with its vision.

This will be an international city with a global reputation for innovation and talent. It will be respected and admired for its pioneering spirit and will show by example how cities will be run in the future.

In short, this will be a city that looks ahead and stays ahead.

*Challenge, Innovate, Create, Sustain.*

### 2013 Milton Keynes Core Strategy

#### Spatial Vision: Milton Keynes in 2026

1. To develop Milton Keynes as a major 21st century city.
2. A wide variety of people will make Milton Keynes their home and will mix well in their neighbourhoods and across the city. As well as being an attractive place for families to live and grow, provision for those less well off will be improved. The Borough will attract and retain new residents who will make a positive contribution to growth and development through the skills that they bring with them.
3. Milton Keynes will have grown to a regional city with a population of c.300,000 and be among the UK's twenty biggest cities (in population). It will have an international profile and reputation as a modern and forward-thinking place to live. Over two million people will reside within 45 minutes travel time of the city.
4. As the centre of the region, newer parts of the city will have been developed to high environmental standards. Milton Keynes will continue to be an exciting and different place to live, work and visit. It will provide unparalleled opportunities for employment, shopping, leisure, medical facilities, training and education. The city's conference, sports, cultural and tourism facilities



will be of international, national and regional status and will add to the local facilities. Shopping will continue to be one of the major visitor attractions, with the primary focus being a vibrant Central Milton Keynes.

5. The supporting infrastructure (schools, roads and services, for example), will be provided as the growth takes place.
6. There will be continued success in environmental excellence and reducing the carbon footprint of new development. This will apply particularly to transport and building projects where there are real local opportunities to make a difference. All new buildings will benefit from increased energy efficiency standards and incorporate a range of low carbon technologies.
7. The Borough's range of local employment opportunities will have been augmented by business diversification and growth (continuing a growth rate of 1.5 jobs to every 1 new home). A Science and Innovation initiative close to the Open University, will attract many knowledge-intensive businesses (from start-up companies to large corporations). The skills of the local workforce will have been improved significantly by higher education and training standards and encouragement to take further training. The University Campus will have achieved full university status by 2020.
8. A wide range of house tenure and types (including larger executive homes, 'lifetime homes' and managed shared accommodation) will suit the changing needs of the population and ensure everyone has access to an appropriate home. The high design standards for new housing will have anticipated an increase in home working with improved IT systems, so helping to reduce the demand for travel to work.
9. The city's iconic grid road system will have been conserved and extended into any major new development areas. The layout of development areas will route through-traffic onto suitable arteries whilst providing direct routes for public transport and a network of redways for convenient cycling and walking.
10. New public transport routes for low carbon vehicles (such as guided electric buses) will link new and existing communities to the city centre and other important centres and facilities. This will have reduced overall congestion and lowered peak hour commuting by car from 68% to 57% by 2026. Low carbon personal transport such as electric cars will also be supported.
11. Transport links to other towns, including Aylesbury, Bedford, Luton and Northampton, will have been improved. These include the East - West rail link between Oxford and Cambridge via Milton Keynes, the A421 corridor through the city (linking the A1, M1 and M40). Promotion of a direct train service from Milton Keynes to the European rail network will be underway.
12. The linear parks will be extended along the Broughton, Caldecotte and Loughton brooks into the city extensions, and along the Ouse and Ouzel valleys to the north. These multi-purpose open spaces will provide extended leisure routes, strategic flood management, improved wildlife habitats and new sports provision, helping provide the population with opportunities for more healthy lifestyles.
13. Older town centres such as Bletchley and Wolverton, will have experienced a renaissance as a result of new housing, facilities and environmental improvements. Older housing estates will benefit from regeneration and investment to redress problems of deprivation. The natural and historic built environment will be protected,

## Annex: Visions from Previous Plans

- and where appropriate enhanced, and treated sensitively by any growth.
14. In the rural area, some limited development will have occurred in Newport Pagnell, Olney and Woburn Sands to support provision of services and facilities for the Borough's rural community. Any development in the towns and villages will have reflected the distinct character of its surroundings.





**Milton Keynes Council**

Development Plans

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Plan: **MK**