

# **MILTON KEYNES CITY COUNCIL WEST BLETCHLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

## **Decision Statement – 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025**

### **Summary**

Milton Keynes City Council will make the West Bletchley Neighbourhood Plan part of the Milton Keynes City Council Development Plan on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

### **Background**

West Bletchley Council, as the qualifying body, successfully applied for its area to be designated a Neighbourhood Area, under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012). The area was designated on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

The current West Bletchley Neighbourhood Plan was made by the Milton Keynes City Council on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

The West Bletchley Neighbourhood Plan Review was submitted to Milton Keynes City Council for examination in February 2025 and was subsequently publicised for a six-week period, ending on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025. All comments received were then passed to the Independent Examiner, Christopher Lockhart-Mummery, who submitted his report on the Plan in June 2025, stating that the plan met relevant basic conditions and requirements, subject to modifications.

Modification of existing neighbourhood plans is governed by Schedule A2 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA). Where it is considered that the modifications contained in the draft plan would not be so significant or substantial as to change the nature of a plan, a referendum is not required. The examiner stated that the modifications to the draft plan would not change the nature of the plan and that the plan should be made with the modifications specified in his report.

Paragraph 14 (3) of Schedule A2 of the PCPA states that *“if the examiner's report recommends that the authority should make the draft plan with the modifications specified in the report, the authority must make the draft plan with those modifications.”* The Council must accept the independent examiner's recommendations, except where there are concerns in relation to breach of any retained EU obligation or Convention rights, or to correct errors. That is not the case here.

This Decision Statement confirms that the modifications proposed by the examiner's report have been accepted (see Table 1). Accordingly, the draft West Bletchley Neighbourhood Plan Review has been amended taking into account these modifications.

## **Decision**

The Council makes the West Bletchley Neighbourhood Plan part of the Milton Keynes City Council Development Plan, replacing the current 'made' plan. In doing so, the Council is of the opinion that the West Bletchley Neighbourhood Plan Review is compatible with all relevant retained European Union obligations and Convention rights, as incorporated into UK law, and is legally compliant.

**Table 1**

Examiner's recommendations		Modifications to submission draft Neighbourhood Plan
Para 36	<p>The Foreword contains a concise description of why this NP has been produced. It twice uses the term “adopted” in relation to the 1<sup>st</sup> NP, whereas the correct term is “made”. This minor error also occurs in other sections of the NP. I <b>Recommend</b> that, to conform with the statutory background, these errors should be corrected. Likewise, there are references to the 1<sup>st</sup> NP being made/adopted in October 2018, whereas the correct date is March 2019. These should be corrected. Likewise, there are references to the 1<sup>st</sup> NP being made/adopted in October 2018, whereas the correct date is March 2019. These should be corrected.</p>	<p>Amend Foreword second paragraph to read: “The Neighbourhood Plan was <del>adopted</del> <b>made</b> in 2018<del>9</del>, following an extensive consultation process and an independent examination. The Plan’s policies have been used since to inform West Bletchley Council’s comments on planning applications in our area. Since the plan was <del>adopted</del> <b>made</b>, there have been a number of changes to national and local planning policy, with updates to the National Planning Policy Framework and the adoption of a new local plan – Plan:MK.”</p> <p>Amend paragraph 1.4 first sentence: “The Neighbourhood Plan was originally <del>adopted</del> <b>made</b> in 2018<del>9</del> and was prepared over a four year period through significant engagement and consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and many local residents and businesses.”</p> <p>Amend paragraph 16.2 second sentence: “The Plan, when <del>adopted</del> <b>made</b>, will form part of the development plan applying to the neighbourhood area and will, along with other approved borough-wide policies, be used by Milton Keynes City Council to determine planning applications.”</p>

Para 37	In paragraph 1.11, to comply with the Habitats Regulations, after the last word there should be inserted “or Appropriate Assessment”. I so <b>Recommend</b> .	Amend paragraph 1.11 to read: “The Plan must also be in line with Regulations on Strategic Environmental Assessment and habitat regulations. We have determined with Milton Keynes City Council that the Plan would not give rise to significant environmental effects and therefore it does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment <b><u>or Appropriate Assessment.</u></b> ”
Para 47	The absence of any reference to viability considerations is not consistent with Policy HN2D of Plan: MK (and its supporting text). It is not consistent with the deliverability objectives of national policy and guidance. It is inconsistent with the supporting text in paragraph 7.3. It therefore would not comply with the basic conditions. I therefore <b>Recommend</b> that the following should be added to the end of the second sentence of BNH3: <i>Acknowledging viability considerations, a small amount of shared ownership homes may be permissible to cross-subsidise the social rent homes.</i>	Amend Policy BNH3 (Redevelopment of REEMA blocks and Mellish Court) to read: “The development of new affordable housing, including social housing, that reflects both MKCC and national planning policy will be supported on the site of the former Mellish Court and on sites where REEMA blocks are demolished. The parish council wishes to see these sites redeveloped with 100% social housing. <b><u>Acknowledging viability considerations, a small amount of shared ownership homes may be permissible to cross-subsidise the social rent homes.</u></b> ”