

24 FEBRUARY 2000**BOROUGH OF MILTON KEYNES LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: UPDATE**

Accountable Officer: David Hackforth (Head of Planning)

Author: Caroline Clapson (Senior Planning Officer, Land Use and Transport Strategy) - MK252318

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Consultative Assembly on the progress of the Local Plan Review, with particular reference to allocations of land for development in the rural area outside the city.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Directions Paper published in January 1999 assumed that it would be possible to identify and allocate land for about 750 dwellings in the rural part of the Borough outside the city. Over 90 sites have been assessed for their potential to provide a sustainable form of development. This work has concentrated on the 4 Key Settlements of Newport Pagnell, Woburn Sands, Olney and Hanslope. Sites have also been assessed in Bow Brickhill and Castlethorpe where there is parish council support for limited development to improve/increase the viability of village services and facilities.
- 2.2 At the meeting on 8 December 1999, Members of the Local Plan Sub-Committee resolved to allocate 22 sites with the potential to accommodate 870 dwellings. These are listed in Annex A. Annex B contains plans for each of the 4 Key Settlements as well as Bow Brickhill and Castlethorpe, showing where the sites are.
- 2.3 At the same meeting Members considered the issue of how village schools in the remaining settlements of Emberton, Haversham, Lavendon, Newton Blossomville, North Crawley, Sherington, Stoke Goldington and Wavendon could be supported. There was also a more general concern expressed about the future sustainability of these villages. The Sub-Committee resolved that the relevant parish councils should be given the opportunity to reconsider whether some limited development should be permitted to help support the viability of their local schools.

- 2.4 The results of this consultation are to be reported to the 23 February meeting of the Local Plan Sub Committee, as part of a report examining the issues surrounding village schools and development. A verbal update on which villages (if any) are approved for further limited development, will be given to the Rural Affairs Consultative Assembly.
- 2.5 The Assembly will also receive an update on the Milton Keynes Landscape Character Study which is also due to be considered by the Local Plan Sub-Committee on 23 February 2000.
3. **Recommendations**
 - 3.1 The Consultative Assembly is requested to note the contents of this report.

4. **Background**

- 4.1 Two meetings of the Local Plan Sub Committee took place in December last year, to consider the allocation of land for development in the Borough (for the period up to 2011), for inclusion in the first Deposit version of the new Local Plan. The first meeting considered allocations of land around the edge of Milton Keynes city; the second meeting considered the allocation of land in the rural settlements outside the city. The Environment Committee confirmed the resolutions of both Sub- Committee meetings on 3 February 2000. This report will cover the resolutions from the second meeting of the LSPC.
- 4.2 The Local Plan Directions Paper published in January last year assumed that it would be possible to identify and allocate land for about 750 dwellings in the rest of the Borough outside the city. Over 90 sites have been assessed for their potential to provide a sustainable form of development. This work concentrated on the 4 Key Settlements of Newport Pagnell, Woburn Sands, Olney and Hanslope identified in the Directions Paper.
- 4.3 Sites were also assessed in Bow Brickhill and Castlethorpe, where there is parish council support for limited development, to support local facilities and meet local needs for affordable housing and housing for older persons. No assessment was made of sites in any of the other villages.

5. **Issues and Choices**

- 5.1 The assessment revealed that there are no major impediments to achieving the strategy and suggested that there was some scope for choice relating to the amount of development that could be allocated in the rural area and its location. From a list of 27 potential housing sites which could accommodate about 1240 dwellings, Members allocated 22 sites with the potential to accommodate 870 dwellings. These sites are listed in Annex A. Annex B contains plans for each of the 4 Key Settlements as well as Bow Brickhill and Castlethorpe, showing where the sites are.
- 5.2 Members made three other significant resolutions in relation to the Key Settlements:
- (a) At Woburn Sands it was resolved that the Environment Committee be recommended to consider the designation of Woburn Sands Town Centre as a Conservation Area.
 - (b) At Olney the Education Committee be requested to consider the provision of a secondary school to serve part of the northern rural area and to ease the demand on places at Ousedale School, Newport Pagnell.
 - (c) At Olney, that land rear of Stilebrook Road be considered for possible business use, including whether the existing, but disused, railway embankment should be protected from development.

- 5.3 At the same meeting Members considered the issue of how village schools in the remaining settlements could be supported. As part of the discussion, the Sub-Committee noted figures for school capacities and forecasts of school rolls contained in the School Organisation Plan (1999-2004) for the villages of Emberton, Haversham, Lavendon, Newton Blossomville, North Crawley, Sherington, Stoke Goldington and Wavendon. Concern was expressed at the implications of the differences between the theoretical capacities of schools and the projections of future school rolls.
- 5.4 Some Members were also concerned more generally about the sustainability of villages - the viability of other local facilities (not just the school), housing mix, employment and population.
- 5.5 Members resolved that the parish councils of these villages be given the opportunity to reconsider whether some limited development should be permitted to help support the viability of their local schools.
- 5.6 As a result of this resolution, a letter has been sent out to all of the relevant parish councils explaining the Sub-Committee's decision. Meetings have been held with 7 out of the 8 parish councils to allow them the opportunity to explore the issues further with officers from the Council's Development Plans team. Each parish council has been invited to send a letter to the Council which sets out their views on the matter.

6.0 **Future Progress**

Rural Settlements

- 6.1 A report will be put before the next meeting of the Local Plan Sub-Committee on 23 February 2000 (the day before this meeting of the Rural Affairs Consultative Assembly) which will explore the issue of village schools and development in more depth. This report will also include the views of the 8 parish councils and the Education and Early Years Department at Milton Keynes Council.
- 6.2 By the time the Assembly meets, decisions will have been made about which (if any) of the 8 villages should have sites allocated for a limited amount of development. A verbal update on the Sub-Committee's decisions, future Local Plan timetable and the next steps in the process will be given at the meeting.

Landscape Character Study

- 6.3 At the same meeting of the Local Plan Sub-Committee, Members will also be considering a Landscape Character Study which has been commissioned from experienced landscape consultants by the Council. The Study undertakes an examination of landscape character and wildlife in the Borough and will be used to inform the Local Plan process.
- 6.4 Of particular interest to this Assembly, will be matters relating to the Areas of Attractive Landscape. The Study upholds the Ouse Valley and Brickhills

AALs as the only landscapes of sufficient quality to merit the designation. However in order to improve the consistency of approach, some modifications to the boundaries of both AALs are suggested.

- 6.5 Two areas of land are recommended to be added to the current designation of the Ouse Valley AAL, east of Olney and south of Lavendon. A significant extension is also recommended to the Ouse Valley AAL in the Linford Lakes/Haversham area.
- 6.6 Three areas are also suggested for removal. In the Ouse Valley AAL these are: an area to the east of the A509 and north east of Sherington and an area around the head of a minor valley at Petsoe Manor. Land south of the A5 and west of Little Brickhill is suggested for removal from the Brickhills AAL.
- 6.7 A verbal update on the Local Plan Sub-Committee's resolutions in respect of the Study will be given to the Assembly. A full report on the Study will be submitted for information to the next meeting of the Rural Consultative Assembly.

7. **Conclusions**

- 7.1 Following the Local Plan Sub-Committee and Environment Committees' deliberations, the Council's position in relation to the scale and location of future development in the rural area outside the city has been clarified. The 22 approved sites will be allocated in the first Deposit Plan as proposed housing sites, although actual numbers for each site might vary following further detailed work. It is intended that a further report will be put before the Local Plan Sub Committee in due course, which will contain policies setting out development requirements and principles for the new sites.
- 7.2 However the allocation of development sites can be challenged through the submission of objections the Deposit Plan stage of the process. It will also be possible to submit representations in support of policies and proposals within the Plan, including if the parish council agrees with specific sites and/or policies.
- 7.3 There is uncertainty at the time of writing as to whether there will be allocated any further limited development in the remaining rural settlements with schools. If it is decided that these villages should be allocated further development, there will be further consultation with the relevant parish councils to discuss which sites would be appropriate.

8. **Implications**

8.1 Environmental

There will be environmental impacts arising from development at any of the Borough's rural settlements. The focus of development on the key settlements seeks to minimise such impacts by directing development to those areas that have the best level of services and facilities and public transport links. The

strategy also allows for the limited development in villages where there is concern about the future viability of services, therefore allowing the opportunity for such services to be maintained.

8.2 Equalities

Some sites and settlements fare better than others in allowing equal access to important community facilities. Rural public transport is poor, but has the potential to be improved through this strategy, thereby improving the access to key facilities. The strategy also has the potential to increase the amount of affordable housing available in the rural area outside the city on sites over 0.5ha.

8.3 Financial

Development in the Key Settlements in particular will have financial implications. The upgrading of existing infrastructure (e.g. roads, water supply network, schools) will be needed to accommodate the new development without causing adverse impact on existing users. Much of this will need to be met by contributions from developers through planning obligations. There will also be some scope to gain other benefits - e.g. contributions towards the improvement of public transport and local facilities.

8.4 Staff and Accommodation

None.

8.5 Legal

Legal agreements will be needed with developers on many of the sites to achieve the necessary planning obligations.

8.6 Cultural Planning

The development allocations do not have negative cultural implications and may enhance the vitality of some of the towns and villages outside the city.

Background Papers: Local Plan Sub-Committee Agenda 8 December 1999

Local Plan Sub-Committee Minutes 8 December 1999

School Organisation Plan (1999-2004), Milton Keynes Council