

OFFICE AND HIGH TECHNOLOGY USES IN MILTON KEYNES

WHAT IS THE COUNCIL TRYING TO DO?

- Make Central Milton Keynes (CMK) the main office and employment centre in the Borough consistent with its regional role.
- Promote the development of science & technology /research and development type uses in the Borough to help develop the knowledge economy

BACKGROUND

The Milton Keynes Employment Land Strategy produced in 2007 forms part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy and informed its development. Guidance in PPS1, Creating Sustainable Communities is that economic development should be in sustainable locations. In the context of Milton Keynes CMK is the most sustainable location.

The dilemma highlighted in the Employment Land Study was that a balance needed to be struck between CMK and out of centre office/high technology locations, which acknowledges that out of centre locations will be required to accommodate economic growth, but CMK is the favoured location and priority for development.

Three options were highlighted in the Employment Land Study

Option 1: A level playing field between in town and out of town business locations leaving it to the market and the wishes of landowners on the extent of land brought forward in CMK and elsewhere.

Option 2: The adoption of a policy explicitly favouring CMK using a threshold size for office developments and a criteria based policy with a presumption in favour of CMK.

Option 3: To halt all out of town office developments with a requirement for all office development within CMK

Option 1 would promote peripheral growth without supporting CMK. Option 3 would be difficult to deliver because it ignores the fact that:-

1. There are potential uses which would find it difficult to locate in CMK for various reasons including cost and size of premises required and
2. Unless capacity in CMK can be increased significantly development of out town office and technology locations will be required
3. It ignores the quantity of land with outline planning permission for development outside CMK.

Preferred Strategy

The authors of the study recommended option 2 (a policy explicitly favouring CMK) be supported, acknowledging it would require the support of HCA to work as their out of centre business park locations would be impacted on in the short term. Most office development since 2001 has been outside CMK rather than inside it, so option 2 would help redress the balance in favour of CMK.

The LDF Panel accepted the main findings of the ELS report at its meeting on 12th September 2007. In the Preferred Options version of the Core Strategy published in 2007, the Council specifically identified that office and high technology development would be located within CMK and on other employment sites including science and business parks around the city. Public participation on the Core Strategy at Issues and Options document supported CMK developing as a regional centre and a focus for office development within the city.

Strategic Locations for B1 Development in the City 10 hectares or more

Location	Amount of Land Available in hectares	Type of Development
Knowlhill	10.5	Mixed employment area
Shenley Wood	28.2	Business Park
Walton /Kents Hill by OU	14.7	Science Parks
Wavendon Gate	10.9	Business Park
Western Expansion Area	18.1	Mixed Employment Area focus on B1 and technology uses

Other sites Linford Wood, Snelshall etc excluded as under 10 ha

In response to members concerns officers have amended policy CS3 to make it clear that office and high technology/R&D uses are acceptable both within CMK and outside it. Medical R&D is likely to want to locate to science parks proposed at Walton and Kents Hill by the Open University (OU). Other R&D uses may want to locate in CMK. Strategic sites of over 10ha for office/high technology uses have also been identified in the policy to reflect advice from PINS. The delivery strategy also identifies a threshold size for development (1000 sq m) and how a criteria based policy with a presumption in favour of CMK will work. Key text is underlined.

Revised Policy CS 3 Employment Land Supply

Planning permission will be granted for employment uses in the areas listed in Table E.1 'Employment Land Allocations in Milton Keynes' and shown on the Proposals Map. In considering proposals for these areas, the planning authority (18) will take into account:

1. The guidance on uses in Table E.1 'Employment Land Allocations in Milton Keynes'
2. The physical and locational attributes of particular sites
3. The need for a variety of sites to meet the differing requirements of a wide range of employment uses (should the employment needs of the Borough change dramatically and undermine the assumptions behind the Core Strategy, then a partial review could be considered)

Central Milton Keynes is the primary focus for the development of additional office (B1a) floorspace within the Borough. Office and high technology/research and development (B1b) floorspace will be permitted within CMK, and outside it in strategic locations such as Shenley Wood, the Western Expansion Area Kents Hill, Walton, Wavendon Gate and in locations to be identified in the Site Allocations DPD.

Planning applications for more than 1,000 sq metres of B1a/B1b uses on sites outside CMK will need to provide evidence to demonstrate why the development cannot occur in CMK.

Delivery Strategy

5.27 A balance needs to be struck between the provision of office and high technology floorspace within CMK and outside it, which acknowledges that while out of centre locations will be required to accommodate growth, the priority for development is within CMK.

Speculative development schemes of over 1000 sq metres should be directed to CMK. However, if development outside CMK is proposed, planning applications should be accompanied by evidence to show that there is no suitable site within CMK, which is available within a reasonable period of time and viable for the proposed development.

Michael Moore 23.9.2009

Glossary Use Classes

B1 Business class is split into three categories

- 1) B1 (a) Offices other than a use within class A2 (Financial Services banks, estate agents)
- 2) B1 (b) Research and development of products or processes
- 3) B1 (c) Light Industry