

Response of the Housing and Community Committee to the Public Consultation on the Draft Plan:MK Document:

Chapter 13: Homes and Neighbourhoods

HN1: Housing Mix and Density

- The Committee considered this approach to be desirable but expressed concern that there was no legal requirement to enable the Council to enforce its proposals on Housing Mix and Density. There was a danger that developers would try and find ways to circumvent the proposals in Plan:MK so that developments suited their needs (ie maximising profits) and not those of the Council and residents of Milton Keynes.

Q1: Housing Mix and Older People

- The Committee did not comment on this question.

Q2: Alternative Approaches to Density

- The Committee did not comment on this question.

HN2: Affordable Housing

- The Committee would like to see the Council use every means open to it to enforce 33% as a minimum criteria for affordable housing on all developments where it considered this to be applicable.
- The middle paragraph about all new homes being required to meet accessible and adaptable homes standards:
“All new homes will be required to meet accessible and adaptable homes standards as defined by the Building Regulations applicable at the time of the application to enable people to stay in their homes as their needs change.”
was considered unnecessary as part of **HN2**, and should, more appropriately, be included in **HN6**.
- The second part of **HN2** was seen as a “get out” clause for developers and measures needed to be included in local planning policies to make sure that the 33% affordable housing aspiration was as tight as possible and that there were no loopholes going forward.
- The gap between shared ownership and market value housing was considered too great for many local people to bridge and therefore a step in the middle was desirable and should be considered.
- The Committee understood why starter homes were not classified as affordable housing, but felt that the provision of starter homes could make a valuable contribution to the local housing mix and increase the choice available to some buyers.

It recommends the Council consider developing a separate policy on the provision of some starter homes on new developments.

HN3: Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding

- The Committee agreed that this was uncontroversial and did not comment further.

HN4 & HN5: Supported Housing and Specialist Housing

- The Council should consider a policy to protect council bungalows and other adapted properties from the Right to Buy option.
- The Committee considered **HN5** to be an expression of need / aspirational statement, rather than a policy as it did not explain how this would be achieved.
- It also contradicted the information received by the Budget Scrutiny Committee in January 2017 from the Adult Social Care Team on what it considered to be the number of residential care bed-spaces required.
- The Committee considered it essential that the team working on developing Plan:MK discussed proposals with colleagues in other departments to ensure that they matched individual departmental policies and were achievable.

HN6: Accessible and Adaptable Homes

- The following paragraph should be moved from **HN2** and added to **HN6**:
“All new homes will be required to meet accessible and adaptable homes standards as defined by the Building Regulations applicable at the time of the application, to enable people to stay in their homes as their needs change.”

Q3: Targets for Wheelchair Users

- The Committee did not think that higher targets for Category M4(3) dwellings were necessary.

Q4: Temporary Accommodation

- The Committee strongly recommends that the Council develops a defined policy on temporary accommodation and that this is included in Plan:MK.
- The policy should be based on the work currently being done by the Milton Keynes Homelessness Partnership and developed in consultation with the Partnership.
- As YourMK had identified sites for up to 300 quick-build, temporary accommodation units across Milton Keynes, they should also be involved in the development of the policy.
- However, if the Council achieved the right balance of affordable housing, then the need for a large number of temporary accommodation units would be reduced, although a number would need to be retained for emergency rehousing (fire, flood, domestic abuse etc).

HN7: Houses in Multiple Occupation (HiMOs)

- Members of the public who attended the meeting expressed their concern that too many HiMOs in an area tended to have a negative effect on social cohesion. Badly managed and unregulated HiMOs caused a lot of misery to both occupants and neighbours and could be highly detrimental to the reputation of an area.

HN8: Purpose Built Student Accommodation

- The Committee considered that this would be demand led, as and when a large scale university presence had been established in Milton Keynes and was not, therefore, an immediate concern.

Q5: HiMO Exceptions

- The Committee would like it to be made clear in the Plan that there was a difference between converting a large property into a HiMO which would be occupied by a number of diverse “households” and specific student accommodation (either purpose built or a conversion), even though, technically, student accommodation buildings could be classed as being in multiple occupation.

HN9: Loss and Conversion of Residential

- Part B of this policy:

“Any net loss of authorised permanent sites or a reduction in the number of authorised pitches for Gypsies and Travellers or plots for Travelling Showpeople will only be permitted where it can be robustly demonstrated that the overall need for sites or pitches/plots no longer exists.”

should be transferred to **HN11** and the wording of the rest of **HN9** tightened up in order to provide clarity of purpose.

- The Policy needed to be clear that it this was nothing to do with the current regeneration programme, which should be the subject of a separate policy but was about the how the Council dealt with the need to demolish seriously dilapidated, individual, or a small group of properties.
- (i) This needed to be clear that it did not apply to the large scale demolition of whole estates.
- (ii) This was reasonable if it could be demonstrated that individual properties were falling down and beyond economic repair.

HN10: Rural Exception Sites

- The use of Rural Exception Sites for residential development should be ruled out unless they have been taken into account in an approved Local Neighbourhood Plan.

HN11: Gypsies and Travellers

- Part B of **HN9**:

“Any net loss of authorised permanent sites or a reduction in the number of authorised pitches for Gypsies and Travellers or plots for Travelling Show people will only be permitted where it can be robustly demonstrated that the overall need for sites or pitches/plots no longer exists.”

to be added to **HN11**.