



Democratic Services

Housing and Community Committee

Thursday, 04 May 2017

19:00

Council Chamber

Civic Offices

Williams (Chair) Ganatra (Vice-Chair) Wallis (Vice-Chair)
Burke Ferrans Geaney Geary Hosking Khan McCall Webb

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A G E N D A

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair to welcome councillors, officers of the Council, witnesses and the public to the meeting and introduce councillors, officers and witnesses who are present.

2. **Apologies**

To receive any apologies of absence.

3. **Disclosures of Interest**

Councillors to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests, or personal interests (including other pecuniary interests) they may have in the business to be transacted, and officers to disclose any interests they may have in any contract to be considered.

4. **Minutes**

7 - 14

To approve, and the Chair to sign as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting of the Housing and Community Committee held on 9 March 2017 (**Item 4**).

5. **Plan:MK**

15 - 32

Plan:MK is the new Local Plan for Milton Keynes up to 2031. It sets out a vision and development strategy for the future of the Borough, and includes development management policies and site allocations for all sizes and types of development to help deliver that vision. Plan:MK reviews and replaces the existing Core Strategy (adopted 2013) and the saved policies from the Local Plan (adopted 2005).

The draft version of Plan:MK sets out the Council's preferred strategy for meeting the Borough's needs until 2031. A 15-year lifespan for the plan has been chosen as it is anticipated that the plan will need to be reviewed prior to that end date in order to be able to respond to a number of emerging strategies and infrastructure developments, notably the MK Futures 2050 work, progress on East-West Rail and on the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford growth corridor. This will be consistent with national planning policy which states that local plans should be drawn up over an appropriate timescale, preferably a 15-year time horizon, should take account of longer term requirements and be kept up to date.

The draft Plan:MK is not the final plan but represents the Council's preferred approach based on the evidence currently available and the results of the previous consultations in 2014 and 2016. The plan has been prepared with input from a cross-party councillor working group.

At its meeting on 21 February 2017 Cabinet approved a period of public consultation on the draft Plan:MK which runs from 17 March to 9 June 2017.

At this stage in the preparation of the draft plan, the consultation is asking for views and feedback on what the plan ought to contain and, where a preferred approach has been identified, whether that is appropriate. The responses received during this period of consultation will, together with the outputs from ongoing evidence studies, shape the final version of the plan which is expected to be published for a final round of consultation at the end of 2017.

Chapter 13 of Plan:MK deals specifically with issues relating to Homes and Neighbourhoods, setting out a range of policies on various aspects of future housing provision in Milton Keynes. Chapter 13 also includes a number of questions on which the Council is seeking responses as part of the consultation process; the Committee may wish to use these questions as the starting point for its consideration of the Plan:MK proposals in relation to housing matters (**Item 5**).

Officer colleagues from the Council's Planning Team have been invited to the meeting in order to address any technical queries the Committee may have.

Minutes of the meeting of the HOUSING AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE held on THURSDAY 08 MARCH 2017 at 7:00 PM in ROOM 2, Civic Offices

Present: Councillor C Williams (Chair)
Councillors Ferrans, Ganatra, Geaney, Hosking, D McCall, Wallis and Webb

Officer: E Richardson (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

Apologies: Councillor Burke, P Geary and Khan

Also Present: L Ellen (Acting Service Director [Housing and Community]), J Cheston (Development Plans Team Leader), D Gleeson (Managing Director – YourMK), P Baldwin (Deputy Director – Mears plc) and Councillor Long (Cabinet for Member Adult Social Care and Housing)

Disclosure of Interests: Councillor D McCall declared an interest in Item 7 as an employee of the Milton Keynes Winter Night Shelter.

HAC36 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That once the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2017 were amended to show attendance by Councillors P Geary and Hosking as “until 7.50 pm” and not “from 7.50 pm” they be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

HAC37 YOURMK – MANAGING THE COUNCIL’S RESPONSIVE REPAIRS SERVICE AND PLANNED WORKS PROGRAMME

Witnesses: D Gleeson (Managing Director – YourMK), P Baldwin (Deputy Director – Mears plc)

Mr Gleeson and Mr Baldwin gave a presentation to the Committee which covered the establishment and purpose of YourMK, what had been achieved so far, handling void (empty) properties and its plans for the future based on a strategic asset management approach to looking after the Council’s housing stock.

The Committee then discussed how YourMK operated in detail with the witnesses and noted that:

- YourMK had a local, dedicated call-centre for reporting and triaging calls, with 5 full-time and 2 part-time staff;
- The call-centre telephone number was immediately responsive, providing personal interaction with the caller;
- YourMK was also investing in new technology for booking jobs, including SMS messaging to residents’ mobiles so that they could be kept up to date more quickly on when repair teams were likely to arrive etc. Working smarter and quicker meant the workforce was engaged

with what it was doing and consequently productivity and staff commitment had increased;

- They were also looking at other means of communication with the call-centre such as a dedicated app residents could use to request repairs and which would be particularly beneficial to those with hearing problems;
- Each defect report received an average of 1.8 calls to resolve;
- The call-centre received a large number of calls about works for which YourMK was not responsible and endeavoured to refer callers on to appropriate agencies;
- From 1 April 2017 YourMK would also be taking on the gas maintenance contract for the Council's housing stock and calls would be handled by the same call-centre;
- YourMK would also be responsible for issuing a Landlord's Gas Safety Certificate for each property every 12 months;
- The partnership with Mears plc meant that YourMK was able to benefit from economies of scale when buying materials;
- They had reduced the turn around on voids from 15 to 8.7 days;
- However, the number of voids had halved over the past year as people were more reluctant to move on, particularly into the private rental sector;
- Although YourMK was dealing with fewer voids per year, those that they were handling were much more challenging and YourMK was working hard to understand why some voids were in such a bad condition;
- Some were down to straightforward abuse, but there was a range of other factors as well. All the YourMK operatives had been trained in safeguarding and were able to identify and report possible problems before they escalated;
- The average cost of bringing a void back into a habitable condition was £4k, but this was still more than expected;
- When benchmarked against other local authorities the turnaround on void properties in Milton Keynes was below the national average. The local turnaround was 18 days, including 8.7 days of works by the contractors, as opposed to the national average of 20 days. The Council and YourMK were working together to try and reduce this even further;
- YourMK thought a 60 year cycle for planned maintenance for the Council's housing stock was more realistic than the usual 30 year plan as the shorter timescale did not allow time to pick up the need for repairs to roofing or the general fabric of a building;
- YourMK confirmed that the current stock condition survey would be completed by the end of April 2017;

- Both the Council and YourMK were committed to avoiding a policy of just “patching things up”; they were working to find the causes of defects in the housing stock and then resolving the issues so as to provide proper, long-term solutions.

The Committee then heard from the Council’s Acting Service Director (Housing and Community) who explained that some residents were reluctant to move to more appropriate accommodation for their needs. There was work to be done in persuading people that when moving to another council property a secure tenancy would be maintained.

She also reported that the Council was working to try and understand the social factors that caused some tenants to abuse their properties and was liaising with other appropriate agencies to provide help as soon as possible.

Financial management of public areas which were part of the Council’s housing stock had been transferred from the Housing Revenue Account to the Housing and Community General Fund.

RESOLVED -

1. That the representatives from YourMK be thanked for their attendance at the meeting, their very thorough and informative presentation and their contribution to the Committee’s discussions.
2. That all councillors be reminded of the repairs service helpline so that they can pass it on to residents who contact them about council house repairs and who may be unsure of the correct number to call.
3. That the presentation slides, amended to include individual slides of the before and after void property photographs, together with contact details for YourMK, be circulated to all councillors.
4. That all councillors, not just members of the Committee, be offered the opportunity to visit YourMK Repairs Call Centre and possibly a site visit with a repairs team.
5. That YourMK circulates to the Committee its proposals for a future modular housing scheme for Milton Keynes.

HAC38

GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER: *FIXING OUR BROKEN HOUSING MARKET*

Witness: J Cheston (Development Plans Team Leader)

The Council’s Development Plans Team Leader highlighted the main points in the White Paper and the implications for Milton Keynes. The Paper was currently out for public consultation and the Council was working on submitting a co-ordinated response before the consultation period closed on 2 May 2017.

He explained that currently there was no legal requirement for local authorities to have a Local Plan in place, although Milton Keynes did have one. If the proposals in the White Paper became law the requirement for a Local Plan would become mandatory.

The White Paper was based on the premise that the Government considered the UK planning system to be broken. However one of the main factors limiting the supply of housing was that even where planning permissions had been granted, developers were not building and releasing houses into the market fast enough.

There were currently at least 11,000 approved planning permissions across the country outstanding and awaiting construction; developers claimed that one of the reasons for this lack of progress was a shortage of qualified labour.

The Committee also learnt that 80% of rental properties were owned by private landlords, whereas if developers constructed “build for rent” properties for institutional landlords such as pension funds, a fairer, long-term rental structure, giving tenant security, could be guaranteed.

Milton Keynes has had a Local Plan for some years and the latest version, Plan:MK, was currently out for public consultation. Once approved Plan:MK would be reviewed regularly and updated more frequently than the 5 year cycle proposed in the White Paper.

The Committee noted that although there were a lot of ideas in the White Paper, there was very little detail on how these could be achieved or how any of the proposals would be funded.

Neighbourhood Plans would also be important in the future delivery of an increased supply of housing and local parish councils were being encouraged to develop such plans. However, Neighbourhood Plans had to conform to the local authority’s main plan and could include plans for more housing than identified in the local plan but not less. They had to be approved by the local authority and could not be used as a tool to halt or limit development in a particular area.

Concern was expressed that local authorities were good at granting planning permissions for the development of houses, but not necessarily the development of real communities. Major developments should include bungalows for older people, hostels for young people, adapted housing for the disabled and whole life housing.

The Council’s Development Plans Team Leader brought the Committee’s attention to the requirement in the White Paper for Objectively Assessed Needs for Housing which he thought would be significant for Milton Keynes. Currently, there was no standardised method for local authorities to calculate housing need, but the Government was planning to devise and implement a standardised approach from April 2018. Once developed, the standardised method would be consulted upon and if agreed would result in changes to the National Planning Policy Framework. The recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Milton Keynes had undertaken a robust assessment of the objectively assessed needs for the area in order to provide evidence for Plan:MK. If the national guidance changed through further legislation in April 2018 the Council would have to respond through the work on Plan:MK.

Once granted planning permission, developers had three years in which to start work. However, ‘starting work’ could be as little as just digging an

initial trench on a site, after which there was no time limit for completion. The Committee was concerned that there were no sanctions local authorities could impose on builders in these circumstances and would have liked to have seen this addressed in the White Paper as a major cause of the delay in building more houses.

RESOLVED -

1. That the Council's Development Plans Team Leader be thanked for his attendance at the meeting, his explanation of the major points in the White Paper and his contributions to the Committee's discussions.
2. That any further questions members of the Committee might have on the contents of the White Paper, be sent to the Overview and Scrutiny Officer who will forward them on to the Development Plans Team Leader for a response which will be circulated to all members of the Committee.

HAC39

IMPLICATIONS OF THE HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION BILL

The Council's Acting Service Director (Housing and Community) introduced the briefing paper on the implications of the Homelessness Reduction Bill for Milton Keynes. The briefing paper set the context of the bill, outlined the key provisions and listed the possible impacts the legislation, if passed, might have on Milton Keynes.

She further explained that Welsh authorities already had a duty to prevent homelessness and that lessons were being learnt from the Welsh experience. Shelter Cymru had produced a report explaining the experience so far which she would forward to the Overview and Scrutiny Officer for circulation to the Committee.

RESOLVED -

That the article from Shelter Cymru on the Welsh experience, where a duty to prevent homelessness already exists, be circulated to the Committee for information.

HAC40

UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE MILTON KEYNES HOMELESSNESS PARTNERSHIP

The Council's Acting Service Director (Housing and Community) updated the Committee on the work done by the Homelessness Partnership since the last meeting.

The Partnership had been successful in a bid for Department for Communities and Local Government Rough Sleeper Grant Funding, in partnership with Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton Councils. This funding would help those who were new to the streets, or at imminent risk of sleeping rough, get rapid support and would include:

- A dedicated rough sleeper outreach service;
- Specialist mental health professionals;
- Crisis intervention workers to focus on working with those with complex mental health issues; and
- Rough sleeper assessment hubs.

Development of the Outreach Service was being led by Bedford Council and various appropriate organisations had been approached and asked to submit bids for a consortium to deliver the service by the end of March.

RESOLVED -

That the update on the work of the Milton Keynes Homelessness Partnership be received and noted.

HAC41

UPDATE ON THE USE OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

The Committee received a written update on the use of temporary accommodation by the Council to house homeless families and was advised that, as of Friday 3 March 2017, there were 647 households, which included 1,113 children, in temporary accommodation.

The Committee was also advised that the table presented in the written update did not include council owned hostels or refugees, who were housed under different schemes.

The Committee also noted that although the level of families in temporary accommodation was still high, much of this was now proper housing, albeit out of area, as the Council had achieved a 75% reduction in the use of room-only hotel accommodation in the last year.

RESOLVED -

That the update on the use of temporary accommodation, particularly the 75% reduction in the use of room-only hotel accommodation, be received and noted.

HAC42

SCRUTINY OF HOUSING ITEMS IN PLAN:MK

The Chair explained that at its meeting on 21 February 2017, Cabinet had agreed that the proposals in Plan:MK should be submitted for public consultation. The consultation would close on 9 June and he therefore proposed that the Housing and Community Committee should use its 'spare' meeting, currently scheduled for 26 April, to scrutinise the proposals in Plan:MK relating to housing. This would be a single item agenda and would be no more than 2 hours. However, as this was an extra meeting beyond the scope of the published Work Programme, members of the Committee were free to decide whether they wished to attend or not.

The Committee agreed to this proposal.

RESOLVED -

That the necessary arrangements be made for a further meeting of the Committee in April to consider the items relating to housing in Plan:MK.

HAC43

MENTAL HEALTH PROVISION FOR THE HOMELESS / ROUGH SLEEPERS TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Following a round-table discussion of the provision of health services for the homeless / rough sleepers at its meeting on 13 February 2017, the Health and Adult Social Care Committee agreed it would like to carry out a

more detailed scrutiny of the provision of Mental Health services for the homeless and rough sleepers.

The Chair of the Housing and Community Committee had also attended the meeting and suggested that a joint Task and Finish Group between the two committees be established. The request had been referred to the Scrutiny Management Committee on 8 March and was approved with a membership of 1:1:1 from each committee plus 2 representatives from the Milton Keynes Homelessness Partnership.

The Committee then considered which of its members should serve on the Task and Finish Group, nominating Councillors Ferrans, Geaney and Webb.

RESOLVED -

That the following be agreed as the Committee's representatives on the above Task and Finish Group:

Councillor Ferrans (LD)

Councillor Geaney (C)

Councillor Webb (L).

HAC44

ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2016/17

The Committee received the Housing and Community contribution to be included in the 2016/17 Scrutiny Report to be presented to Council on 22 March and thanked the Planning Group for their work in producing the report.

RESOLVED -

That the Committee's Planning Group be thanked for their work in producing a comprehensive contribution to the 2016/17 Annual Scrutiny Report on behalf of the Committee.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9.40 PM

CABINET
21 FEBRUARY 2017
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Approval of the Draft Plan:MK for Public Consultation

Revised Chapter 13 (Homes and Neighbourhoods) (**Pages 2 to 17**)

Addendum to Draft Plan:MK for Cabinet (21 February 2017)

Following the completion and receipt of an updated Draft Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), a number of changes have been made to Chapter 13 “Homes and Neighbourhoods” of the Draft Plan:MK document submitted for the Cabinet meeting on 21 February 2017, to reflect this updated evidence.

This addendum includes a revised version of Chapter 13 “Homes and Neighbourhoods” which incorporates all updates and should be read in place of the Chapter 13 included in the full Draft Plan:MK document. Please note that the paragraph numbers in the revised Chapter 13 will not correspond to those in the complete Draft Plan:MK document originally issued with the Agenda. The paragraph numbers cited in the table below refer to the original paragraph numbers in the complete Draft Plan:MK document. The following changes apply to Chapter 13:

Paragraph Number	Reason for Change
13.3	Sentence and paragraph deleted.
13.4	Percentage figures for house sizes and the total for large affordable homes adjusted to reflect updated evidence
13.8	Affordable housing figures adjusted to reflect updated evidence.
13.14	Growth figures for over 65 and over 75 populations adjusted to reflect updated evidence
13.15	Dwelling figures amended to correct error and reflect updated evidence
Policy HN4	Dwelling target adjusted to correct error and reflect updated evidence
Policy HN5	C2 Bedspace target adjusted to reflect updated evidence
13.31	Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirement adjusted to reflect updated evidence.
13.32	Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirement adjusted to reflect updated evidence.
13.33	Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirement adjusted to reflect updated evidence.
13.34	Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirement adjusted to reflect updated evidence.
Policy HN11	Policy split into sections A and B to aid referencing.
Policy HN11, third paragraph	Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirement adjusted to reflect updated evidence.
Policy HN11 (iii) first series of numerals	Text updated for clarity

Policy HN11(i) <i>second series of numerals</i>	Wording changed to clarify its application to new pitches, and the numerical limit on new pitches changed.
13.35	Text updated for clarity

13 Homes and Neighbourhoods

Housing

13.1 New development offers the opportunity to provide a range of housing to support the needs and requirements of different households in Milton Keynes, helping to maintain or expand the choice of homes and create or sustain inclusive and mixed communities.

13.2 Latest evidence produced by the Council on the need and demand of different household types⁽¹⁾ for housing, including the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment, should be used to inform the mix of type (e.g. detached, flats) and size (number of bedrooms) of dwellings across all tenures.

13.3 In percentage terms, the SHMA recommends that 57% of new market homes should be 3 bedroom houses, and only 13% should be 1-2 bedroom properties (including both flats and houses). This differs markedly to the affordable tenure, with the SHMA recommending 38% should be 3 bedroom houses and 51% should be 1-2 bedroom properties. It is also noted in the SHMA that there will be a need for over 900 large affordable homes (4 and 5+ bedrooms) that need to be provided over the plan period. Much of this need will be from existing households living in overcrowded accommodation.

13.4 It will be important for development proposals to take account of the changing demographic profile of Milton Keynes, as illustrated in the SHMA, when considering dwelling mix. Current evidence shows there will be a significant increase in households aged over 65 within Milton Keynes in contrast to other age groups. The majority of these households will already be established and living in Milton Keynes, and therefore this shift in the demographic profile raises questions around housing choice and suitability linked to issues of overcrowding and under occupancy of housing within the Borough.

13.5 The recommended housing mix in the SHMA is based upon a projection of current occupancy patterns amongst the different household types (e.g. single person, couple with dependents) and does not take account of the need or desire for older households in larger properties (for example single person or couples without dependents) to downsize to smaller properties. It therefore potentially overestimates the demand for 3-5 bedroom market houses and potentially underestimates the demand for 1-2 properties. However, it is difficult to quantify what the need and demand for downsizing will be, due to other factors that govern the ability and likelihood of households to downsize (such as finance and familial ties) alongside the availability of certain types and sizes of property within the housing stock. This issue will be considered further and kept under review (via the SHMA and other data and evidence where it is available) in order to inform a policy approach within the final Plan:MK; however, views are being sought on how Plan:MK can best address this trend in terms of housing provision.

13.6 What constitutes an appropriate mix and density of housing is influenced by a number of site-specific factors alongside wider trends and strategic objectives. Policy HN1 therefore adopts a flexible approach, with proposals to be considered on a case-by-case basis. However, alternative policy approaches could be taken, for instance a more prescriptive mix of property sizes and density where in certain areas of growth and change (for example priority estates within the regeneration programme), in order to achieve

1 Including single person households, couples, families with children, older people, and people with disabilities.

13 . Homes and Neighbourhoods

site-specific or wider strategic objectives. Alternatively, more detail on housing mix and density could be provided and adopted via Development Frameworks or Neighbourhood Plans.

Policy HN1

HOUSING MIX AND DENSITY

Proposals for 11 or more new dwellings will be expected to provide a mix of tenure, type and size of dwellings that:

- i. Reflects the Council's latest evidence of housing need and market demand;
- ii. Reflects the needs of different household types;
- iii. Avoids the over-concentration of certain types of residential development in an area; and
- iv. Takes account of the nature of the development proposal (e.g. flatted development).

Larger schemes will be expected to deliver a wider mix of housing commensurate with the greater opportunity they provide for creating and sustaining inclusive and mixed communities.

Net densities of proposals for 11 or more new dwellings should combine the efficient use of land with a high quality design that respects character and context. Higher density development will be encouraged in locations with good accessibility to services and public transport, such as within Central Milton Keynes, other town and neighbourhood centres, and around areas well served by public transport where this is appropriate.

Question 1

HOUSING MIX AND OLDER PEOPLE

Considering the projected demographic shift in the population of Milton Keynes, do you think Policy HN1 should adopt a more prescribed approach to facilitate the provision of general market and affordable housing that helps to meet the need and desire of different age groups and household types to find suitable accommodation within Milton Keynes? Please explain why or why not.

Question 2

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO DENSITY

Do you consider that a more prescribed approach to densities should be adopted in Plan:MK for certain areas of growth and change in the Borough? Please explain why or why not.

Affordable Housing

13.7 The Milton Keynes SHMA has established that over the plan period there is a requirement to provide additional affordable housing within the Borough for a total of 8,094 households. To account for these households Plan:MK needs to provide a minimum of 8,200 affordable dwellings. This would account for 30.9% of the Full Objectively Assessed Need for Housing in the Borough. However, in developing its approach to the delivery of affordable homes the Council needs to take into account the fact that not all development sites will contribute to the provision of affordable housing. It is therefore proposed that the provision of 33% affordable homes on sites of 11 or more dwellings would better support the delivery of the required amount of affordable housing over the plan period.

13.8 With regard to the tenure mix of affordable housing provision, based on evidence provided within the SHMA, the 33% affordable housing provision will consist of a mix of affordable rent provision, provided at a range of rent levels up to 80% of market rents, including a provision for properties at a level equivalent to social rent. Furthermore, a proportion of units will also be provided as Low Cost Home Ownership options (shared ownership) so as to widen opportunities for home ownership and support those households who wish to move out of affordable rent into home ownership.

13.9 The Housing and Planning Act 2016 has introduced a requirement for Starter Homes to be provided as part of all developments. For the purposes of policy development, the current NPPF definition of affordable housing does not include Starter Homes and evidence provided within the SHMA (2016) concluded that it is unlikely that starter homes would reduce the identified need for affordable rented housing products, as they are unlikely to be affordable to those households identified as being unable to afford market housing.

13.10 The Council will therefore await the introduction of proposed regulations, and undertake further work to consider the viability implications of the Starter Homes requirements and how Starter Homes should be incorporated into later versions of Plan:MK.

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Policy HN2

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

On development sites which provide for 11 or more homes, the Council will seek a minimum of 33% of those homes for affordable housing.

The tenure mix of affordable housing units to be provided will consist of:

- i. 26% of units for rent at a range of rental levels up to 80% of market rents, under the Affordable Rent model, including approximately 5% of the total affordable provision at a level broadly equivalent to Social Rent (at the time an application is considered).
- ii. 7% Shared Ownership (based on a range of 25%-40% equity share) Any scheme will need to demonstrate that the design, siting and phasing of such housing provides for its proper integration and timely provision as part of the wider development so as to contribute towards creating mixed and balanced communities.

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.

In seeking affordable housing provision the Council will have regard to the current viability of developments including land values and other development costs. Where it has been demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction through the submission of viability evidence which is open and transparent that the provision of affordable housing in accordance with the above levels and tenure mix would deem the scheme unviable then the Council will take a flexible approach to achieving viability as follows:

- i. Reviewing the tenure mix;
- ii. Reviewing the extent of other site specific planning obligations; and
- iii. The proportion of affordable housing.

In exceptional circumstances off-site provision or financial contributions of equivalent value may be accepted.

Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding

13.11 The Council will support this avenue of house building within the Borough in order to diversify and increase the supply of housing to meet needs. Schemes that involve the creation of low-cost and Affordable Housing, for instance via Registered Social Landlords or community groups, would be particularly supported as these would provide additional opportunities to meet the demands for social and affordable homes in the Borough.

Policy HN3

SELF-BUILD AND CUSTOM HOUSEBUILDING

The strategic allocations set out within Plan:MK will be required to make provision for serviced plots of land to contribute towards meeting the evidenced demand for Self-build and Custom Housebuilding in the Borough. Provision of serviced plots of land within other proposals for housing will also be supported subject to evidenced supply and demand.

Meeting different housing needs

13.12 The role of housing plays an important part in the overall quality of life for those living with physical and mental health issues. Planning provides an opportunity to ensure there is sufficient choice of suitable and appropriate housing that meets the varying levels of need that these households and individuals have.

13.13 National policy and guidance enables local planning authorities to identify the proportion of dwellings in new developments that should comply with the requirements Building Regulations Approved Document Part M4(2) and M4(3) as part of the Local Plan, based on the likely future need and taking account of the overall impact on viability. Projections indicate that the over 65 population will grow by 64%, with the over 75 population projected to double over the plan period. As such, there is clear evidence of need to support a significant proportion of all dwellings to meet Category M4(2) requirements, providing that this does not compromise viability.

13.14 Planning authorities should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends and the needs of different groups in the community including older people and people with disabilities. As people grow older, many prefer to stay in their own homes for as long as possible, whilst others may move in with relatives (for example into a 'granny annex') or to purpose built sheltered housing, extra-care or flexi-care or other supported living schemes. For others, a more specialist care environment is required as they are unable to live independently and need more extensive nursing and residential care. Policies HN4 and HN5 plan support the provision of around 3,000 dwellings as part of the overall housing requirement as well as around 1,200 net additional C2 bed spaces to allow for a suitable choice to help meet the varied needs of an ageing population. This provision will also help to meet the needs of other age groups who require residential care, for example those living with physical or mental health issues.

13.15 Datasets on disability show that currently around 1-in-30 households in England (3.3%) have at least one wheelchair user, although the rate is notably higher for households living in affordable housing (7.1%) and in older age groups (in both market and affordable tenures). Based upon the analysis within the SHMA, the projected increase in households likely to need wheelchair accessible housing accounts for 5% of the overall housing requirement, and 10% within affordable tenures. National policy limits the ability of local planning authorities to set policies and targets for wheelchair accessible homes to those dwellings where the local authority is responsible for allocation or nominating a person to live in that dwelling. As such, the evidence supports setting a 10% target for category M4(3) within affordable tenures, as reflected in Policy HN5. In addition, the local

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planning authority will require 5% of new market dwellings to be capable of being adapted to the wheelchair accessible standard (category M4(3)) to ensure there are opportunities within the housing stock to service these needs. However, there are indications that the demand for wheelchair accessible and adaptable dwellings will be greater than that presented in the SHMA and the datasets it uses to determine need. Therefore, it is being considered whether higher targets for these types of dwellings will be sought within the final Plan:MK.

Policy HN4

SUPPORTED HOUSING

As part of the overall housing target, a net increase of around 3,000 dwellings will be supported to help meet the varied housing needs of an ageing population and those with particular needs, through the provision of a range of housing options such as bungalows, sheltered housing, flexi-care, extra-care, assisted living and other forms of supported housing. Provision of housing for older people will principally be sought via the strategic allocations and through Neighbourhood Plans.

Proposals for supported housing should be approved where they are in locations that are highly accessible by pedestrians and wheelchair users, are well served by public transport, and would not result in an over-concentration of that type of residential accommodation in that location.

Policy HN5

SPECIALIST HOUSING

In addition to the overall housing target, a net increase of around 1,200 bed-spaces to help meet the accommodation needs of those who need specialist (C2) residential or nursing care will be supported in the Borough.

Policy HN6

ACCESSIBLE AND ADAPTABLE HOMES

Proposals for 11 or more new dwelling will be required, subject to viability, to provide:

- i. At least 60% of all new dwellings across market and affordable tenures that are built to Building Regulations Part M4(2) standards for accessible and adaptable dwellings, the delivery of which should be distributed across market and affordable tenures.
- ii. At least 5% of all new market dwellings that are capable of being readily adapted to the Building Regulations part M4(3) wheelchair accessible standard.
- iii. At least 10% of all new affordable dwellings that built to Building Regulations part M4(3) wheelchair accessible standard (or as subsequently amended).

Question 3

TARGETS FOR WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE DWELLINGS

Do you consider that Policy HN6 should adopt higher targets for Category M4(3) dwellings across market and/or affordable tenures? If so, please explain why citing any data that supports the setting of higher targets within Milton Keynes.

Temporary accommodation

13.16 Milton Keynes has recently experienced a rise in the number of rough sleepers, homeless people and people and families who urgently require alternative accommodation. The ability of the Council to support these people and place them into suitable accommodation is coming under increasing pressure. Plan:MK could play a role in providing greater opportunities for supporting people in this situation.

13.17 One approach that could be considered is a criteria-based policy for the development of new temporary accommodation or the change of use of existing buildings to provide temporary accommodation. Matters such as location, accessibility, scale, co-location of supporting services and whether there would be on-site management in place could form part of such a policy.

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Question 4

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

Do you consider that Plan:MK should adopt a policy to guide and support the provision of temporary accommodation to meet the needs arising from rough sleepers, homeless people and those who have an urgent requirement for alternative accommodation? If so, what criteria should this policy use to help consider such proposals?

HiMOs and student accommodation

13.18 The 2011 Census identified that there were 12,840 students aged 16 to 74 living in Milton Keynes in 2011, with others travelling into Milton Keynes to attend the two main institutions in the city: Milton Keynes College and the University Campus Milton Keynes associated with the University of Bedford. The total number of students makes up around 8% of the Milton Keynes population, but there are no halls of residence and most students are aged 16-18 and so mostly live with parents.

13.19 The MK2050 Commission identifies, as one of its 6 Big Projects for Milton Keynes, the establishment of an undergraduate university (MKIT) specialising in STEM subjects, preferably within Central Milton Keynes. Initial indications are that this proposal would generate a student body of around 10,000 students within 5 years of the university's establishment. There is likely to be a need to provide purpose built student accommodation to service a proportion or all of the students' accommodation needs within Central Milton Keynes on-campus, with the possibility of off-campus provision also being required.

13.20 HiMOs form an important part of the housing stock, providing a valuable supply of privately rented accommodation for a variety of households. Rents are generally cheaper than those charged for self-contained dwellings and are therefore usually one of the more affordable forms of accommodation within the private rented market. The SHMA indicates that there was a growth of 1,251 households (an increase from 806 to 2,057 households over the period between 2001 and 2011) living in multi-adult households. Changes in the Local Housing Allowance has meant that many more young people will only be able to afford shared housing, and this has further increased demand for housing such as HiMOs. As such, HiMOs are likely to be a continued (and possibly growing) part of housing supply to meet local needs, with increased pressure for the existing housing stock to be converted.

13.21 It is therefore considered appropriate for Plan:MK to include policies that will help to manage the growth and development of these two types of housing and accommodation.

Policy HN7

HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

To maintain mixed, balanced, sustainable and inclusive communities proposals for Houses in Multiple Occupation will be approved where they would not create an over concentration of such accommodation resulting in an imbalance within local communities or other significant adverse impacts. Proposals should comply with the Council's Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document.

Policy HN8

PURPOSE BUILT STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

Purpose built on-campus student accommodation to meet the demonstrated needs of higher education providers in the Borough will be supported where this is in accordance with a master-plan that has been approved by the Council. Off-campus purpose built student accommodation will be supported where it is highly accessible to a main university or college campus within the Borough by walking, cycling and public transport and provides sufficient on-site car parking. Development should not on its own, or cumulatively with other similar developments in the area, have a significant adverse impact on the amenity of residents and local communities, or on the character of the area.

13.22 The Council is seeking views on whether exemptions to the HiMO SPD on over concentration could be considered for proposals that consist of entire blocks or rows of properties being converted to HiMOs and therefore the impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties would be minimised or negligible.

Question 5

HiMO EXEMPTIONS

Do you consider that policy HN7 should allow for exemptions to HiMO proposals where it involves a change of use of entire blocks of (e.g. flats/apartments) or a complete row of houses within a street? Alternatively, do you think this could be achieved via a change to the adopted HiMO SPD? Please explain why or why not.

Loss of residential

13.23 A shortfall in meeting overall housing requirements could arise if net losses to the Borough's stock of dwellings and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation are allowed to take place. Even on a piecemeal basis, such net losses in the Borough could create additional development pressures elsewhere and such losses will be resisted except in the circumstances set out in policy HN9.

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Policy HN9

LOSS AND CONVERSION OF RESIDENTIAL

A. Proposals which result in the loss of one or more dwellings through demolition or conversion should be approved where:

- i. There would be a net gain in the overall number of dwellings provided by the proposal; or
- ii. It can be demonstrated that the existing dwelling is significantly affected by adverse environmental conditions and there is no reasonable prospect that the impacts can be adequately mitigated to create a healthy living environment for existing or future occupants; or
- iii. The social, economic or environmental benefits of doing so are demonstrated to significantly outweigh the need to minimise net losses to the Borough's housing stock. In particular, significant weight will be attributed to maintaining the provision of wheelchair accessible and adaptable properties.

B. 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.

Rural exception sites

13.24 A significant part of the Borough is rural in nature with a large number of smaller settlements and communities which, in accordance with the proposed spatial strategy would not be appropriate for the allocation of larger scale market developments, which would normally be expected to deliver a proportion of affordable homes. Nevertheless it is likely that there will continue to be a need for affordable homes in those communities.

13.25 There is therefore a need to provide the opportunity for those communities to be able to benefit from the provision of affordable homes on suitable small scale, rural exception sites if a local need is clearly identified and evidenced. The most suitable format for this need to be identified and exception sites to be planned is through the production of a neighbourhood plan.

13.26 In accordance with the NPPF consideration should also be given to the provision of a small proportion of market housing to provide flexibility and enable the opportunity for some cross-subsidy to facilitate the provision of additional affordable housing to meet local needs.

13.27 This policy will therefore allow for planning permission to be granted, in some cases, for affordable housing to meet local needs on sites outside the development limits of rural settlements, as an exception to normal planning policies, particularly where these are identified and supported through the preparation of a neighbourhood plan.

Policy HN10

RURAL EXCEPTION SITES

Proposals for small-scale “affordable” housing schemes to meet local rural needs should be approved for on exception sites in the following locations:

- i. Outside the development boundaries of villages as defined in the settlement hierarchy;
- ii. In smaller settlements where no limits of development have been defined in Plan:MK or a neighbourhood plan;
- iii. On sites identified through the preparation of a neighbourhood plan.

In each case, proposals should be approved where the Council is satisfied that:

- i. There is a demonstrable social or economic need for affordable housing for local residents which cannot be met in any other way and which can reasonably be expected to persist in the long term. An application will be required to be supported by an up to date housing need assessment which clearly demonstrates that there is a need arising from the settlement for the type, scale and tenure of the proposed affordable dwellings;
- ii. The size of the development and the number of dwellings proposed is appropriate to the scale of the community it is supporting;
- iii. The development is well-related to the existing pattern of development in the settlement and there is no detriment to the character of the village or the open countryside;
- iv. Suitably secure arrangements will be made to ensure the housing is reserved for local needs in perpetuity (This may need reviewing in light of the Housing and Planning Act (2016) in relation to the ‘Right to Buy’ issue).

The Council will also consider the provision of some market housing within a site to assist with scheme viability, if it can be demonstrated through open and transparent viability evidence that such housing would ensure the delivery of significant additional affordable homes to meet local needs.

Gypsies and Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople

13.28 The Council is required by the NPPF to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople within Milton Keynes, developing a strategy that addresses any unmet need that is identified. The overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates their traditional and nomadic way of life while respecting the interests of the settled community. As part of the evidence

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base for Plan:MK the Council has had a Milton Keynes Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) prepared to provide an assessment of the current and future need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation within the Borough.

13.29 There are currently two public Gypsy and Traveller sites within Milton Keynes which provide a total of 18 pitches (Calverton Lane: 12 pitches and Willen Road: 6 pitches), of which none are currently vacant.

13.30 The GTAA found that over the plan period 2016-2031, there is a requirement for 5 additional pitches to be provided to account for the need of gypsies and travellers, and an additional requirement of 13 pitches to account for the need of Non-Travelling Gypsies and Travellers (those who do not meet the *Planning Policy for Travellers Sites, 2015* (PPTS) new definition of Gypsies and Travellers). A Further requirement for an additional pitch was also identified for 'unknown' Gypsies and Travellers; those whose status under the new definition could not be determined.

13.31 In total, Plan:MK is therefore required to accommodate a further 19 households in culturally suitable housing for Gypsies and Travellers up to 2031.

13.32 Within Milton Keynes there remains a total of 12 further pitches allocated but yet to be provided, consisting of 8 pitches on a new site at Newton Leys and 4 additional pitches to be provided as part of an extension to the Calverton Lane site. With the retention of these existing allocations, Plan:MK will need to provide for an additional 7 pitches over the plan period.

13.33 Further work will need to be carried out to establish the most sustainable location(s) for these 7 pitches to be allocated. This will need to incorporate:

- a review of existing sites and allocations to see if any of them are capable of, and suitable for, extension;
- a call for sites;
- a review of suitability for sites within the proposed development areas allocated within Plan:MK.

Policy HN11

GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

A. Pitches at the following existing, developed and allocated Traveller sites will be safeguarded:

- Calverton Lane (12 existing pitches and 4 allocated pitches)
- Willen Road (6 existing pitches)
- Newton Leys (8 allocated pitches)

Proposals should be approved for an alternative use of a safeguarded site if an alternative, replacement site has been identified and developed to provide facilities of an equivalent or improved standard (including its location), or if sufficient evidence can be produced to show that there no longer remains a need for the site(s) to be retained for Gypsy and Traveller use.

To accommodate the full identified need of 19 pitches for the period up to 2031, Plan:MK will make provision for 7 new pitches to be allocated. Dependant on the outcome of further work to be carried out, these pitches will come forward via:

- i. Extensions to existing developed or allocated sites;
- ii. New sites identified through a call for sites
- iii. New site(s) located within proposed development areas allocated through Plan:MK.

Any new, or extension to existing, Gypsy and Traveller sites granted planning permission shall also be safeguarded for such use.

B. New permanent, Gypsy and Traveller sites, and extensions to existing sites, including transit sites, will be permitted provided:

- i. The number of new pitches on an individual site is limited to no more than 8;
- ii. A genuine need for the site or extension has been demonstrated;
- iii. The site is reasonably accessible to shops, schools, health and other local services and community facilities;
- iv. Sites must be well related to the primary road network and have adequate road access;
- v. The site is compatible with neighbouring land uses, and minimise impact on adjacent uses, built form and landscape character;
- vi. There is space within the site for the provision of essential facilities, including parking, and landscaping;
- vii. The development would not be prominent from public vantage points;

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- viii. The site is not within an Area of Attractive Landscape;
- ix. The site would not affect a site of nature conservation interest.

Travelling Showpeople

13.34 The GTAA found that there were currently no Travelling Showpeople yards located within Milton Keynes and that subsequently no additional need has been identified.

13.35 Plan:MK therefore proposes no allocations of plots for Travelling Showpeople, however provides Policy HN12 'TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE' to assess any proposals for new sites which may come forward during the plan period.

Policy HN12

TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE

New sites for travelling showpeople should be approved if they satisfy all of the following criteria:

- i. A genuine need for the site has been demonstrated;
- ii. The site is reasonably accessible to shops, schools, health and other local services and community facilities;
- iii. The site has convenient and safe access to the primary road network for both domestic traffic and fairground vehicles and equipment;
- iv. The site is compatible with neighbouring land uses, and minimises impact on adjacent uses, built form and landscape character;
- v. There is space within the site for the provision of essential facilities including parking, and landscaping;
- vi. The site is not within an Area of Attractive Landscape;
- vii. The development would not be prominent from public vantage points and equipment storage areas in particular should be well screened;
- viii. The site would not affect a site of nature conservation interest.