

Wards Affected:

All Wards

ITEM 4(a)**MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL****18 OCTOBER 2017****Report considered by Cabinet - 3 October 2017****APPROVAL OF PROPOSED SUBMISSION VERSION OF PLAN:MK**

Responsible Cabinet Member: Councillor Gifford (Cabinet Member for Place)

Report Sponsor: Brett Leahy (Head of Planning) - 01908 252609

Author and contact: John Cheston (Development Plans Team Leader) -
01908 252480**Executive Summary:**

This report requests Council to approve the publication of the Proposed Submission version of Plan:MK for a six-week public consultation on whether it is 'sound' (fit for purpose) and complies with the legislation governing the preparation of local development plans.

This intended final version of Plan:MK before its submission to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for examination has been prepared using the outputs from previous rounds of consultation, a range of background evidence work and input from a cross-party Councillor Working Group.

1. Recommendation(s)

- (a) That the Proposed Submission version of Plan:MK at Annex A be published for six weeks' consultation and then submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government under Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended);
- (b) That the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place, be authorised to make any necessary minor amendments to Plan:MK and its supporting documents following the consultation; and
- (c) That the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place, be authorised to suggest any necessary modifications to Plan:MK during the examination process to secure its soundness, in accordance with the findings of the Planning Inspector and subject to any necessary public consultation.

2. Issues

- 2.1 Once it has been adopted, Plan:MK will be the new local development plan for Milton Keynes Borough until 2031. It will set out a vision and development strategy for the future of the Borough, and include development management policies and site allocations for all sizes and types of development to help

deliver that vision. Plan:MK will replace the existing Core Strategy (adopted in 2013) and the 'saved' policies from the Local Plan (adopted in 2005).

- 2.2 The Proposed Submission version of Plan:MK is the intended final iteration of the document before it is submitted to Government for examination. It sets out the Council's preferred strategy for meeting the Borough's needs until 2031. A 15-year time horizon 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 would also 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.
- 2.3 This Proposed Submission version of Plan:MK is based on the evidence currently available and has taken account of the previous consultations in 2014, 2016 and 2017. The consultation undertaken between March and June this year elicited over 1,500 comments from about 380 groups, organisations and individuals. A summary of the main issues raised by these representations is set out in a Consultation Statement. The preparation of the Plan has also been guided by a cross-party Councillor Working Group.
- 2.4 The principal changes which have been made to the plan compared with the previous Preferred Options draft are as follows:
- the removal of the 1,000-homes target for the rural areas of the Borough;
 - the incorporation of a windfall allowance of 1,330 homes over the plan period;
 - allowance for the strategic reserve site to the east of the M1 motorway to be delivered before 2031 if Government funding for infrastructure improvements is obtained;
 - the inclusion of a buffer in the housing land supply of approximately 10% above the objectively assessed need figure of 26,500 homes to serve as a contingency in case of non-delivery and to enable the target for affordable homes to be met in full;
 - the housing supply proposed from within the existing urban area of Milton Keynes has been reduced from 5,000 homes to 2,900 in response to the findings of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment; and
 - the affordable housing target has been reduced from 33% to 31% as a result of the findings of the whole-plan viability assessment.

3. Options

- 3.1 The recommended option is to approve the Proposed Submission version of Plan:MK appended in **Annex A** for a six-week consultation period on 'soundness' and legal compliance.
- 3.2 An alternative option would be to wait for further progress to be made on the emerging strategies and infrastructure developments, referred to in paragraph 2.2 above. However, this would cause an unacceptable and unnecessary delay to the Plan:MK process which, if not progressed as planned by 2017/18, would carry a risk that the Government would intervene. Furthermore, the Government has indicated that local plans which are submitted by 31 March

2018 will not be required to adopt the new national standardised methodology for calculating housing need (upon which consultation is currently taking place).

3.3 Whilst the implications of this proposed Government methodology for Milton Keynes are not so significant as they appear to be for neighbouring local authorities, it is unclear what changes may be made following the consultation and when it may be brought into effect. Nevertheless, as explained in Section 2 above, it is anticipated that the plan will require an early review in order to take account of these significant strategies and infrastructure projects. The recommended option in paragraph 3.1 above therefore allows for momentum in the preparation of Plan:MK to be maintained.

4. Implications

4.1 Policy

Plan:MK, when adopted, will replace the Core Strategy and the 'saved' policies in the existing Local Plan. It will form the key component of the Development Plan for Milton Keynes and will be used in the determination of planning applications and appeals.

Plan:MK will also be a key corporate document and will help to inform decisions on investment and service provision for the Council and its partners.

4.2 Resources and Risk

The Core Strategy adopted in 2013 put in place a requirement for an early review of that document, including an aim to have Plan:MK in place by 2015. While this has not been achieved, good progress is being made and this document is intended to be the final version of the plan before it is submitted to Government for examination.

The timetable to prepare Plan:MK is challenging, in part due to the Government intervention mentioned in paragraph 3.2 and put in place by the Productivity Plan. The Housing White Paper, published on 7 February 2017, strengthens the importance of all local authorities having up to date local plans in place.

Cost of Plan:MK

This will be mainly resourced by staff time for most of the production of the plan but some specialist consultancy services and evidence studies have been required for which additional funds have been obtained.

N	Capital	Y	Revenue	N	Accommodation
N	IT	N	Medium Term Plan	N	Asset Management

4.3 Carbon and Energy Management

Whilst Plan:MK includes planning policies relating to sustainability and carbon and energy management, the decision will not have a direct impact on this issue.

4.4 Legal

Plan:MK is being prepared in accordance with the amended Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

This consultation stage is under Regulation 19 (publication of a local plan) of these regulations and is the final stage in the plan preparation process before it is submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for a Planning Inspector to be appointed to conduct an independent examination of the plan.

There is a risk that the Plan will be found not to be 'sound' or legally compliant through the public examination process. It could also be challenged in the courts. Officers have taken steps, however, to minimise these risks through ensuring, for example, that the policies and proposals in the plan are based on proportionate evidence and that the legislation governing the preparation of local plans has been complied with.

4.5 Other Implications

The consultation on the Proposed Submission version of Plan:MK will be carried out in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (March 2014). Because this final consultation is only concerned with whether or not the plan meets the tests of soundness set out in national planning policy and is legally compliant, there is only limited ability for stakeholders to influence the shape of our strategies and policies. There is therefore no merit in seeking to encourage engagement in the process from a wide range of stakeholders or to extend the consultation beyond the statutory minimum period of six weeks.

N	Equalities/Diversity	N	Sustainability	N	Human Rights
N	E-Government	Y	Stakeholders	N	Crime and Disorder

Annexes: Proposed Submission version of Plan:MK for consultation

[Annex and Addendum to Approval of Proposed Submission Version of PlanMK](#)

Background Papers:

- Plan:MK Topic Papers, September-December 2014, available online at:
<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/plan-mk>
- Strategic Development Directions Consultation 2016, summary of consultation responses available online at:
<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/plan-mk>
- Draft Plan:MK consultation document, March 2017, available online at:
<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/plan-mk>
- Proposed Submission version of Plan:MK Sustainability Appraisal Report
- Draft Plan:MK Consultation Statement