

**Wards Affected:**

All Wards

**ITEM 12****CABINET****9 NOVEMBER 2015****DRAFT STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

Responsible Cabinet Member: Councillor Legg, Cabinet member for Public Realm

Report Sponsor: Anna Rose, Service Director Planning and Transport  
Author and contact: Fiona Robinson, Senior Planning Officer, 01908 252318**Executive Summary:**

This report asks that Cabinet approve the Strategic Development Options consultation document (Annex A) which uses the outputs of the Vision Workshops held in Spring 2015 to identify a number of principles that could be used to develop a longer term Vision for the future of the Borough, and a series of four spatial development options for how longer term growth could be delivered. The feedback from the consultation on the Strategic Development Options will be used to inform the "Preferred Options" stage in the preparation of the new local plan for the borough, Plan:MK.

**1. Recommendation**

- 1.1 That the Draft Strategic Development Options Document be approved for a 12 week period of public consultation and engagement.

**2. Issues**

- 2.1 Plan:MK will be the new Local Plan for Milton Keynes, which 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 review and replace the existing Core Strategy (adopted 2013) and the saved policies from the Local Plan (adopted 2005).
- 2.2 Between September and December 2014, the Council consulted on a series of twelve Topic Papers as the first stage in the preparation of the plan. These papers, which formed the Issues Stage of the plan-making process (Regulation 18 in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012), gave stakeholders the opportunity to provide their comments on the issues that Plan:MK is likely to need to address. Around 2,000 comments were received from more than 260 individuals and organisations. The responses to the Topic Papers will be used in developing the detailed policies for the plan as discussed in paragraph 2.7. A report of those comments is available on the Council's website at [www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/PlanMK](http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/PlanMK) alongside a Statement of Consultation setting out the various engagement processes we have been through so far in the preparation of Plan:MK.
- 2.3 Since the Topic Papers consultation, work has been ongoing to help understand stakeholders' priorities and ambitions for the future of Milton

Keynes, to help develop the longer term strategy options for Plan:MK that will underpin the plan moving forward. As part of this, a series of Vision Workshops were held in Spring 2015 as an opportunity to have a discussion around those issues with a wide range of stakeholders. A report of these workshops which covers the background to why they were done, the methods used and the outputs that emerged from the sessions has been prepared (Annex B) and will be available alongside the consultation document that is the subject of this Cabinet decision.

- 2.4 The outputs from the workshops have been collated and considered in order to inform the preparation of the Strategic Development Options (SDO) consultation document (Annex A). The SDO document includes a number of principles that could be used to prepare a longer term vision for Milton Keynes. By taking a longer term view, we can make sure that the developments we plan and create now, fit with the long term aims of the Borough. Plan:MK will deliver the first 15 years or so of that Vision.
- 2.5 The second part of the consultation document considers a series of four spatial options showing potential locations for future development in the Borough for Plan:MK and the longer term. As with the ideas for a draft Vision, these options reflect the recurring themes and locations identified by the participants in the vision workshops. The SDO consultation document asks for comments on these Development Options, to help inform the development strategy for Plan:MK moving forward. At this stage, the Council has no view on which (if any) of these Development Options (or combination of options) it favours. Equally, it is important to note that the development options being consulted on are the outputs from the Vision Workshops rather than options that are being suggested by the Council.
- 2.6 The consultation document appended at Annex A is currently in draft format and further minor refinements may be made in preparation for the start of the consultation period in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.
- 2.7 The results of the consultation on the SDO will be part of the input into the next stage of the plan-making process, alongside the responses received to the Topic Papers, the outcomes of our growing evidence base, ongoing discussions with our neighbours and other bodies under the Duty to Cooperate, guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework and a Sustainability Appraisal. That next stage will be the preparation of the Preferred Options document, which will include a series of policy directions or approaches that the Council believe should be the way forward for Plan:MK, taking into account those inputs. It is anticipated that the Preferred Options consultation document would be available in Autumn 2016.
- 2.8 Alongside work on Plan:MK, the Council is exploring the future of Milton Keynes in a wider context, as a UK city and economy of increasing importance. The MK Futures 2050 Commission process is running alongside Plan:MK with the two activities interlinking and sharing information. The Commission will be considering the Plan:MK draft Strategic Development Options as set out in this consultation document, and will think about how these will relate to the economic future of the city. Similarly, the Plan:MK process will use the outputs from the Commission as part of the evidence

base moving forward, and make sure the plan will help to maximise opportunities for the future of Milton Keynes. The timetables for these two processes have been set up to take full advantage of the links between them.

- 2.9 The twelve-week consultation period will give all stakeholders the opportunity to make their comments on the outputs of the Vision Workshops, to consider what the vision for Plan:MK and the longer term could include and to comment on the four possible development options identified. The SDO consultation document in Annex A includes a series of questions to guide stakeholders' comments.
- 2.10 The engagement process will run in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (March 2014) and will include writing to/emailing the c.4,000 individuals and organisations on the Development Plans database, newspaper adverts, drop-in sessions, public meetings and presentations to various stakeholder groups. Details of any consultation events will be publicised through our website, through social media and with the assistance of Ward Councillors and Town and Parish Councils so as many people as possible are aware of the arrangements. Due to the potentially contentious nature of the SDO document, around the date of the publication of these committee papers on the Council's website, briefing sessions were held in Olney, Woburn Sands and in the Civic Offices for Town and Parish Councils and Ward Councillors from within and adjacent to Milton Keynes Borough, to make them aware of the upcoming consultation.

### 3. **Options**

- 3.1 The recommended option is to approve the draft SDO consultation document appended in Annex A for a twelve-week consultation period, as the next stage in the Plan:MK preparation process.
- 3.2 An alternative option could be to not hold this consultation period, but instead decide to use the vision and development strategy approach in the Core Strategy and roll this forward over the next plan period. This approach is not recommended as it would miss the opportunity to reconsider what is important for the future of the Borough and to set an ambitious vision for the future. This would also risk the reputation of the Council, as it would retract on the agreed approach for Plan:MK.
- 3.3 A further alternative is to wait for the MK Futures 2050 project to complete and make its recommendations to Council, and take on board at that stage the Commission's outputs. This would cause an unacceptable and unnecessary delay to the Plan:MK process which, if not progressed as planned by 2017, would carry a risk that the Government would intervene in our plan-making process. As programmed, the MK Futures 2050 project will provide a response to the consultation on the SDO document which can be considered as part of the preparation of the Preferred Options stage. This approach is considered to be the most effective opportunity, which allows the MK Futures commission to influence plan-making in an appropriate way, whilst maintaining momentum with Plan:MK.

#### 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 part of the Development Plan for Milton Keynes and will be used in the determination of planning applications.

Plan:MK will also be a key corporate document and will help inform decisions around investment and service provision for the Council and 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 will not be achieved, good progress is being made and this consultation document is the next stage in that process. The timetable to prepare Plan:MK is challenging, in part due to the 2017 Government intervention date mentioned in paragraph 3.3 put in place by the Productivity Plan.

##### Cost of Plan:MK

This will be mainly resourced by staff time for most of the production of the Plan but some specialist consultancy evidence will be required, such as for the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Funding for these reports will be 'drawn down' as they are required from budgeted one-off expenditures reserves, but the onus will be on the Development Plan team to provide as much evidence as possible.

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

##### 4.3 Carbon and Energy Management

Plan:MK will include policies relating to sustainability and carbon and energy management, but the decision has no direct impact

##### 4.4 Legal

Plan:MK is being prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This consultation stage is not a statutory stage in the plan-making process, however it will be an important stage in ensuring the final plan is sound and robust, and will meet the requirements of the regulations when it reaches the Public Examination stage.

There are no real identifiable risks to the Council should it take the recommended option.

#### 4.5 Other Implications

The consultation on the Strategic Development Options consultation document will be carried out in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (March 2014). Engagement during the 12 week consultation period will use a suite of methods, and will encourage involvement from a wide range of stakeholders.

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

Background Papers: Plan:MK Topic Papers, September-December 2014, available online at [www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/PlanMK](http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/PlanMK)

Annexes:

Annex A – Plan:MK Draft Strategic Development Options Consultation Document, November 2015

Annex B – Plan:MK Vision Workshops Report, Spring 2015