

WORKING TOWARDS THE WOUGHTON COMMUNITY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (WCNP) ISSUES & FUTURES CONSULTATION DOCUMENT: CONDENSED VERSION

The Role of the Neighbourhood Plan: Being led by Woughton Community Council and a Steering Group of local stakeholders, the WCNP will contain a small number of policies that reflect the community's opinions on how Woughton should change over the next 15-20 years. While the Plan itself cannot decide if those estates identified in Regeneration:MK are refurbished or redeveloped for, it can set out the principles by which those decisions are implemented while planning for the rest of the parish. Our goal is to ensure that Plan:MK and Regeneration:MK respond positively to the agenda established by the Neighbourhood Plan, which will set out the expressed preferences of the local community.

Neighbourhood Plans can: establish where & what type of development should happen, promote more development than set out in a Local Plan, & include policies that take precedence over policies in the Local Plan, provided there is not conflict with the Local Plan's strategic policies.

Neighbourhood Plans cannot: conflict with strategic policies in the Local Plan, be used to prevent development included in the Local Plan, or be prepared by a body other than a town/parish council or Neighbourhood Forum.

It is vital that we discover what our local residents think is the best path for our future. The full version is available at www.woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk or call 01908 395681 to request a hard copy.

WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW:

HAVE WE IDENTIFIED ALL POTENTIAL POSITIVES & NEGATIVES FOR EACH POSSIBLE FUTURE?

HOW CAN WE COMBINE OUR OPTIONS TO ENSURE THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS?

DO YOU AGREE THAT THE PLAN SHOULD CONTAIN POLICIES ON THESE ISSUES & WHAT SHOULD THOSE POLICIES SAY?

Background: As MKC is the Local Planning Authority, the authority responsible for approving planning permissions and making planning decisions, the Neighbourhood Plan needs to reflect existing land use planning policies for Milton Keynes as they affect Woughton. It also needs to anticipate the possible impact on Woughton of major policy changes in the coming years for the city and Woughton.

Milton Keynes Core Strategy (2013) & Local Plan (2005): These documents have been adopted by MKC as formal planning policy documents (known as 'the development plan' for MK) and are used on a day-to-day basis to help determine planning applications.

'Plan:MK' (new Milton Keynes Local Plan) & 'MK Futures 2050': MKC is now preparing a new Local Plan ('Plan:MK') from 2017 to 2031 which will plan for the future housing, economic and infrastructure needs of the borough. In addition, MKC is thinking about the longer term future of the city through to 2050 (in an initiative called 'MK Futures 2050').

The Regeneration:MK Programme: The focus of the strategy is a major 15 year regeneration programme commencing in April 2016 with the launch of a new partnership between MKC and Mears Group plc. MKC proposes that the programme will focus on seven areas, four of which are in Woughton (Netherfield, Coffee Hall, Beanhill and Tinkers Bridge). At this stage, it is too early to know what the programme will be for these communities but the Strategy makes clear the potential value in Neighbourhood Plans enabling local communities to play an important part in shaping these decisions in the coming months and years.

Community Consultations: From August – November 2015, WCC undertook a series of surveys & workshops with local people to find out what they like, don't like, & want to see changed (309 responses in total; 135 from local children). Many trends emerged, including:

- The importance of selected play areas and green & open spaces;
- Concerns over the current management of waste & landscaping;
- Concerns over the maintenance of Redways, underpasses & road conditions;
- Concerns over public transport issues and access;
- The need to increase residential & commercial parking Parish wide;
- The importance of community spirit per estate and Woughton as a whole;
- The need to improve or add community hubs in select estates;
- The importance of a social & affordable housing stock that is well maintained and serves the current and future needs of local residents;
- The role that Woughton plays in the overall feel of Milton Keynes; and
- The need for a larger variety of local shops.

Some findings of other local community plans relating to land use planning matters will also be helpful for the WCNP.

How Woughton May Change in the Future: We are interested in discovering how our local residents want their future to look like. While the Neighbourhood Plan cannot decide which Regeneration future is chosen, it can put policies in place that are reflective of the local community that enables Woughton to be prepared for whatever will happen, while planning for the rest of the parish not identified by Regeneration:MK.

Potential Neighbourhood Plan Policies Affecting the Whole of Woughton

- managing **Houses in Multiple Occupation**
- controlling **maximum heights** of all new buildings
- identifying suitable land for **sheltered and other specialist housing**
- identifying land for a new **multi-purpose community centre**
- identifying land for sufficient **faith facilities**
- identifying land for additional or larger **local shops**
- identifying under-used green spaces for **allotments and community gardens**
- identify new **pedestrian routes** or access to other areas
- identify suitable locations for a new **police station, library** or **other services**

Refurbishment

In this future, it is assumed that the focus of the Regeneration:MK programme at Netherfield, Coffee Hall, Beanhill and Tinkers Bridge will be on the refurbishment and relatively minor, selective redevelopment of the housing stock.

This option assumes that refurbishment will be the most cost effective way of improving the physical fabric of the majority of existing housing stock, comprising the buildings, gardens, car parking and communal areas. There may be some specific groups of houses on a

street that may be beyond economic repair, and it assumes these will be redeveloped, but they will be the exception. With the lack of redevelopment in this option, there may, however, be little money generated to reinvest into the refurbishment of the four estates. There may also be some pockets of open land in the regeneration estates and elsewhere in the parish that may be better used for housing or other types of development. They will likely be sites that are poorly located for open space, perhaps known for misuse and costly to maintain and improve.

There will be no significant change to the overall population of the area but there may be a slight overall increase in owner occupation with the development of new sites – with new starter homes for example - as a result of Government policies. The hospital will continue to grow within its existing site, hopefully with additional bus services that will benefit Woughton, but there will be a lesser need for additional schooling facilities.

The Neighbourhood Plan will therefore identify appropriate small sites for development in the area and set out how they should be successfully developed. It will also establish the key design principles for how pockets of housing redevelopment should be undertaken.

Potential Positives:

- Better quality housing and external areas
- Little disruption to the existing community facilities & established support networks
- Maintaining current population levels
- No change to green spaces

Potential Negatives:

- Few opportunities for new home ownership or other forms of open market or affordable rent occupation which may impact on social networks (i.e. family cannot move close to family)
- Little chance of new employment, retail or community uses and no ability to expand hospital site or to locate new secondary school
- Some green spaces remain difficult to maintain and use
- There may not be enough development to finance refurbishment across the four identified estates

Redevelopment

In this future, it is assumed that at least one, and maybe all four, of the estates are comprehensively redeveloped to deliver new homes with complementary improvements to community facilities, shops and open spaces. This option assumes that the housing stock condition survey shows that redevelopment is the only economically feasible strategy in the longer term. It may allow for new street layouts, for higher density housing leading to an increase in population and some new land uses like shops and extensions / additional schools. There is likely to be a change in the overall mix of housing tenures. The number of social rented homes may not change if current tenancies are protected by MKC but there may also be more affordable rented, 'build to rent', starter and self-build homes delivered, with a wider demographic profile of households.

In this case, the Neighbourhood Plan will set out the key development principles in terms of new housing design, densities, other land uses, open space requirements and amenities, without prescribing exactly where redevelopment will happen. And it will establish the principles of the process by which local communities are engaged in the detailed planning of their areas. This can be specific to each estate or can be generally applied over the whole of Woughton.

In addition, it will identify appropriate small sites for development elsewhere in the area and set out how they should be successfully developed & key design principles for how other pockets of housing redevelopment should be undertaken.

If all four of the regeneration estates are redeveloped then land may then be available for strategic city-wide purposes, for example to locate other health and medical facilities near the Hospital or make sections of the grid system more pedestrian friendly. In which case, the Neighbourhood Plan may also identify the most suitable broad locations for these strategic land uses in the area and establish the location and design principles for downgrading part of the grid system and the nature of the development that would front on to a new type of street.

Potential Positives:

- New open market, starter and affordable homes with a wider mix of types and sizes to meet the needs of existing and new residents
- A wider range of shops, employment and services within walking distance of each community with less reliance on using cars
- Improvements to green spaces
- New bus routes through the area
- The funds generated through redevelopment may mean that change and refurbishment would be more economically viable

Potential Negatives:

- Significant disruption for local communities over a long period of time that will undermine sense of community
- Possible disruptions for local residents in the identified regeneration areas moving away & into other areas of the city, which risk possible compulsory purchase of their homes
- Fewer affordable homes & higher rents for local people wanting to continue to rent
- Possible implications for local residents moving away from their current neighbourhood & established support networks
- Possible loss of precious green spaces

The Next Steps & Consultation Details

- Next: The Steering Group will review all comments then decide what policies the Draft Plan should contain, to be published for consultation in spring 2016.
- Then: Again the Steering Group will review all the comments made on the Draft Plan before submitting the final Plan to MKC, probably in summer 2016.
- Finally: MKC will arrange for an independent examination before the Plan goes to a referendum before the end of the year. If the Plan receives a majority support then all planning applications in the parish will then be considered using the Plan and those other documents.

The consultation period will be from **9 March 2016 to 20 April 2016**. Please email your comments to Victoria.Binko@woughtoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk or send them in writing to:

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