

## **Meeting with HCA regarding Towergate land and Neighbourhood Plan**

**6.11.15**

**Present:** Lisa Emmanuel, Stuart Copeland, Simon Dougall, Area Manager, HCA – Midlands & South East

### **Introductions and background**

Stuart outlined the background to the NPWG and progress of the draft plan to date. Stuart explained the intended timescale along with the consultation carried out so far.

Residents views reflect the feeling that Walton was built well, in line with the master planning for Milton Keynes, being approximately 90% built out and do not want to see this spoilt.

Stuart also explained that we have so far spoken with Parks Trust and Hewlett Packard representatives with further meetings planned for MKDP and MKCF.

### **HCA land**

Simon confirmed that the only land within the parish currently under HCA ownership is at Towergate. The land was allocated as employment land and has been marketed for a long time, with very little demand. There was an application for B2 use which was refused previously due to the type of industrial development.

Simon confirmed the view that there is not the demand for offices in this location – which would also be against MKC policy to cluster office type use in CMK. It is HCA's view that this process has run its course and for the last two years have been in discussion with MKC for re-allocation.

The site has been included in the call for sites and in general terms the site allocation shows it meets need in all ways except for in relation to failing to be within 1km of a general practitioner provision.

Stuart stated that the NPWG in principle would support housing on this site with the caveat that infrastructure must join up and that the "Wavendon triangle" should be planned holistically.

Simon asked what other social infrastructure is needed.

Discussion then followed on the situation regarding Church Farm and then the Wavendon triangle and the number of houses this would bring in total.

Simon then stated that whilst he cannot pre-judge MKC's decision around the 5-year land supply, we can assume they would be supportive of a cohesive plan which looks at this all together.

Stuart raised a concern that there is a risk of individual landowners only being interested in maximum returns and not providing infrastructure.

Discussion followed about the new parking standards and recent applications being approved on the back of the old standards. It is likely the new standards will apply to Towergate.

Simon re-iterated that the HCA's remit is wider than simply to maximise capital receipts for the government – they equally have a placemaking role and the opportunity to master plan with the SLA land and HP land makes total sense.

Whilst there would be contributions towards provision of wider infrastructure – this is not everything and it is vital to protect the “space” for future infrastructure to allow for phasing.

Stuart referenced the potential for a small local centre on the Fairfield site – which would provide for the medical and other needs.

### **Timescales**

The site allocations consultation ends in January 2016, this should provide indicative densities taking regard of the adjoining land also.

Simon also referred to the government push for less affordable homes and more shared ownership/starter homes.

Simon expected that the site would be allocated prior to the NP referendum date in September.

Stuart referred to the fact the draft NP has already been lodged as material with reference to Church Farm

Simon assured that he had listened to our concerns that the parish could be overburdened. The HCA's responsibility towards placemaking must have regard of this.

Stuart re-iterated that holistically planned the Wavendon triangle could be a good development.

Simon agreed that phasing of a local centre is the issue in terms of viability. He also stated that the HCA would not wish to push against our objectives and that he would raise all of our discussions with the planning consultancy they have on board and that they will actively support the “Wavendon triangle” view of planning.

Stuart agreed that we would share the proposed responses to the Site Allocation consultation in order that the NPWG, WCC and HCA responses are “mirrored”.

**Action:** LE/SC to share draft response with Simon prior to submission