

Kents Hill Developments – Questions and Answers

1.

Q: Do we really need more housing in MK? How many houses does MK need vs how many sites do we have in progress already? Can you give us a table?

A: The adopted Core Strategy requires 28,000 new homes between 2010-2026 (based on 1,750 homes per year). The figure of 28,000 was derived by Milton Keynes Council (MKC) from a higher figure outlined in the now abolished Regional Spatial Strategies.

6,617 net completion since 1 April 2010, which is a current 2,133 shortfall based on completion of 1,750 new homes per year.

The figure originally came from the Government’s old Regional Housing targets, but those have been abandoned. MK Council, like all councils, has to carry out a SHMA (Strategic Housing Market Assessment) every few years to assess what housing is needed, and the need for this housing was verified by MKC’s Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). A SHMA *“is a framework that local authorities can follow to develop a good understanding of how housing markets operate. It promotes an approach to assessing housing need and demand which can inform the development of local plans and housing policies.”*

The SHMA was prepared in 2014 by external consultants commissioned by MKC and confirmed the figure needed as around 1750 pa right through to 2031, which will be the minimum period for the new Local Plan now being developed.

The total available land as at 1 April 2015 is as follows:

Planning Permissions: Full	3017
Outline (This includes the northern, eastern and western expansion areas, and Oakgrove)	14 704
Local Plan Allocations, deliverable brownfield opportunities and windfall allowance (This includes the parts of the SLA near J13 which don’t have outline planning permission yet)	5230
TOTAL	22 951

This land has not however automatically been assumed to be deliverable.

So we need land for more than 7,000 more homes over and above what was allocated in the last Local Plan and Core Strategy.

This figure originally came from the Governments housing targets, but has recently been verified by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment carried out by MK Council, which checks how many homes we actually need over the Plan period. The figures came out virtually identical.

These above figures are also based on 35 dwellings/ha. If the parking standards (out for current consultation) are however approved in their current format this will likely reduce this density figure and therefore require further houses to meet the completion of 1750 new homes per year.

In addition to that, the 2011 census assessed the level of overcrowding and in this area – Monkston ward – 10% of all homes were overcrowded. So there is considerable need in this immediate area too.

Kents Hill Park is not currently included in these figures. It will help reduce the current shortfall by allowing more sites to be built simultaneously. It could also help reduce the impact of some sites

	not coming forward for development.
2.	<p>Q: We haven't met our housing targets for a long time. Why does it matter now? And will allocating extra sites make a difference?</p> <p>A: Two reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The number of statutory homeless – the people the Council has to find homes for if they can't find their own – is rising. That means families with children living in costly Bed and Breakfast in neighbouring towns, paid for by MK council tax payers. We NEED those homes! b. Because the Planning Inspector inspecting the Local Plan picked the problem up last time and insisted that we make a plan for some extra houses, to make sure that at least the target number actually happen. MKC has to propose those sites this winter and this is one it wants to propose. <p>Will it make a difference? Probably, yes. Smaller sites tend to come forward more quickly, so adding a few more of this size or smaller should mean we start to meet our targets.</p>
3.	<p>Q: What efforts have been made to market the sites for their current purposes – education and knowledge-linked employment? Do they not have to make such efforts? Why is it now possible to change that?</p> <p>A: Regarding Sites A, C and D1 (proposed for residential uses within the Brief) which are allocated for Higher Education uses, MKC has confirmation from both the Open University and the University of Bedford that they have no interest in these sites for expansion of their institutions. The OU indeed own land for any potential expansion directly to the north of their current campus (at corner of V10 and H8). The fact that the land is no longer required for higher education uses, means in planning terms that alternate use can be considered. When the last Local Plan was assessed, the Planning Inspector gave MK two years to propose alternate uses, and housing is the use MKC is proposing.</p> <p>Regarding Sites B and E (proposed for the secondary school) which are employment sites, I can find no evidence that these have been actively marketed by the former owner (the HCA) for employment uses. The point now however, is that the sites are now needed for a secondary school. The Planning Committee will need to assess the evidence that it is needed for that purpose and decide whether that should override the need for employment land.</p> <p>Site A1(n) is designated as education and was always expected to be for primary school provision.</p>
4.	<p>Q: How come MKC are consulting, but they have signed the contract to build the schools already? What are we being consulted about? What authority did they have to sign that contract?</p> <p>A: The Council is not consulting about whether to build the schools on this site. It is consulting about the considerations that should be taken into account – eg traffic issues, the relationship of the parts of the school sites to the proposed housing, position of footpaths, etc.</p> <p>Before any detailed plans can be drawn up, a number of surveys have to be carried out – in particular, ecological and archaeological surveys. In order to build the schools by 2017, when they are needed, the survey work etc has to be carried out this summer, or they will not be able to meet the timetable. The survey work will be needed whatever is built there, and the Council has the power to carry out such surveys on its land at any time. It however should be noted that this is merely the first stage of the procurement process and there are a number of stages that need to be completed before any contractual commitment to building works is made.</p>

	<p>The current consultation provides all stakeholders with an opportunity to comment on the overall development brief for Kents Hill Park which covers all 6 sites owned by MKDP. Should the development brief be approved, the council will proceed with a process to determine who will run the school.</p>
5.	<p>Q: Why didn't the Council consider the need for the school when the housing at Ashlands, Oakgrove or Walton Grange was being built? Why have they suddenly found that they need an extra site? There was an original plan in Central Milton Keynes to build a school there and that's where the £25 MIO for building the secondary school is coming from. That would mean that there would be an even distribution of schools across Milton Keynes and then when there was a shortage in one area or a glutton in another area you could just adjust the school catchment areas slightly. What you are doing with this plan is shoving a school where it is not wanted and not needed into an area that frankly doesn't want it. The area that wants it is not getting it. With Milton Keynes Academy you could adjust that area of Beanhill and Ashland area and Woughton Park and that wouldn't be a problem by building the school in its original site that was identified in the report in 2001 in Central Milton Keynes. So why have you changed that site?</p> <p>A: Those housing areas were all given outline planning permission many years ago. The new school is needed because the number of children in the area has risen dramatically in recent years, since then, as older people moved out and lots and lots of families with children moved in – similar to what has happened in this area recently. Oakgrove estate is not in the catchment area – Oakgrove School will take the children from that as planned.</p> <p>The school planned in CMK was a primary school. A secondary school wasn't planned there. The 25M is the budget for the new school, but no site has been allocated.</p>
6.	<p>Q: What catchment areas are proposed for the school? Can the entire Kents Hill go to the secondary school? Can't we "budge-up" the catchment areas locally?</p> <p>A: Milton Keynes Council plans for school places in liaison groups.</p> <p>Secondary school: In the southern part of the Milton Keynes Academy catchment area there is an undersupply of secondary school places. Families are currently able to access places in other schools, but this will no longer be possible with effect from September 2017 as the pressure for places continues to rise. The new provision is intended to serve families that live in Simpson, Woughton Park, Tinkers Bridge, Ashland, Netherfield and Beanhill at a furthest distance of around 2 miles from the proposed school. It is also intended to serve the new residents of Kents Hill Park. The Council will consult about the precise areas, priority groups, and the management arrangements for the school later in the process. Parents of children it expects will go to the school will be consulted at that point.</p> <p>Primary school: In terms of primary provision, we already have a shortfall of 30 places at junior school level (years 3-6) from 2017. Heronsgate School was asked if it would expand to meet this need, and declined. There is no space on the Kents Hill School or Heronshaw School sites, so there is no school that can take these children.</p> <p>If the 300 proposed new homes go ahead, that will create further demand for infant and junior school places in the context of an existing pressure. These children could not be accommodated within existing schools. The primary school will predominantly serve residents of Kents Hill Park and the needs of the local population. Again, the Council will consult on the precise catchments and management arrangements later.</p> <p>If residents want to propose other changes to catchment areas, they can do that when the consultation happens, but the Council must cater for all children across all of the schools so the proposal would need to propose changes to other schools too to take the children that were not able</p>

	to get into the new schools.
7.	<p>Q: We were told that the schools were designed to be expandable but we don't see that in the plans?</p> <p>A: The secondary school has been designed so it is easily expandable to take 6FE.</p> <p>The primary school may not need all of its 30 infant places and 60 junior places at first, so it may open with smaller classes, which can then be expanded as needed.</p>
8	<p>Q: I've visited quite a lot of schools in Milton Keynes and never yet visited one that has enough parking for staff, visitors, parents or anything like that. Can you assure us that there will be more than enough parking?</p> <p>A: There is a set requirement for schools which is much higher than when any of the schools in this area (apart from Oakgrove) were built. The parking will be detailed when the plans are submitted, and residents will have time then to assess it and comment on it.</p>
9.	<p>Q: Has Kents Hill nursery got spare places? We are hearing two different versions! If so, why is a pre-school planned?</p> <p>A: The latest participation data for Kents Hill School nursery class suggests that the provision is almost at capacity with minimal places available. With further development proposed in the area accompanied with a change to legislation planned in September 2017 which will mean an increase from 15 hours per week of free early education to 30 hours there will be demand for additional places.</p>
10.	<p>Q: Why is 35 dph proposed for the new development when Kents Hill is only 29 dph?</p> <p>A: When the 200 rooms in the 2 care homes within Kents Hill are included the existing density is closer to 35 dph. The density of 35dph is the start point because that is what the Local Plan sets as a target average for this part of MK.</p> <p>It is important to note that the 35dph figure is an average across the whole site. It will be higher than that in certain locations eg along Timbold Drive to help reinforce this as the primary street serving the development. It will however be lower in other locations eg along the higher ground toward the eastern edge of the development and adjacent to the woodland tree belt. By varying the density it will help create a variety of character across the area. If the new parking standards are approved, that may lead to a lower density. The developer would have to prove exceptional reasons to move higher than 300 dwellings.</p>
11.	<p>Q: What is meant by "thinning" of the buffer strip of woodland? Narrowing, or the routine thinning out but leaving it the same size?</p> <p>A: The woodland belt is managed by the Parks Trust. Thinning is an essential part of good woodland establishment that can often be seen as negative at first, specifically to the untrained eye. Removing some trees to allow the remainder to flourish is a recognised horticultural principle, leading to better quality trees and more foliage cover at lower levels in the woodland assisting the formation and conservation of diverse wildlife habitats.</p> <p>The consultation draft outlines various options for the future treatment of this woodland belt. We will wait for the completion of the consultation and then report back to MKC Cabinet what the majority views are from residents before including a more firmed up approach to the woodland tree belt. So what residents say on this matter will largely determine what is reported and recommended to MKC Cabinet when adopting the Brief.</p>

12.	<p>Q: What are the plans for the deep hedgerow and lane along the length of the secondary school site? Why has only part of it been shown as preserved when it is an old route? Lots of wildlife in that on.</p> <p>A: Indications are now that in order to reduce build costs the main school building is likely to move more centrally within the site which will require removal of this hedgerow. An ecological survey has also indicated that the hedgerow mostly comprises bramble and hence has a low ecological value. This ecological survey has also addressed wildlife which will have to be addressed if found.</p> <p>Compensation planting elsewhere on the secondary school site will however be required.</p>
13	<p>Q: Can we have a footpath from the south east corner to the redway to the local centre?</p> <p>A: Yes there is the potential for this to occur and it will be included in the final draft of the Brief. The path would cross Parks Trust Land* to join the existing redway and therefore shorten the walking route to the local centre for example. This path would likely be funded from s106 contributions and would be adopted and maintained by MKC. I don't think we would have any objection in principle to a footpath across our land in this location. This would be on the basis that any path would be adopted and maintained by MKC.</p> <p>*This land is part of the Parks Trust transportation corridor leased from MKC, so if MKC (as landlord) want to use some of the land for transportation purposes it has the ability to do so by giving the Trust a month's written notice.</p>
14	<p>Q: Will the traffic modelling take into account the impact of all the developments in this area, not just this one?</p> <p>A: Yes a Transport Assessment will be required as part of the submission of the Planning Application and this will take into account all development areas outlined within the Brief</p>
15	<p>Q: What are the standards for width of roads? Will the roads be wider on the new part than they are on the old part?</p> <p>A: The roads within the development will be either 4.8m wide (those serving up to 50 dwellings) or 5.5m wide (for those streets serving between 50 and 300 dwellings). Level surface streets serving below 25 dwellings could be narrowed in places to 3.2m. In the past the problem was that because of insufficient on street parking, cars parked within these carriageways and therefore made it difficult for other cars and delivery/emergency/service vehicles in particular to get through.</p> <p>The Council are aware of these problems and now actively encourage and ensure sufficient on street parking is located outside of these distances (carriageway).</p> <p>There is a draft Parking Standards SPD currently out for consultation and this requires streets serving more than 50 dwellings to locate on street parking outside of the existing carriageway.</p>
16	<p>Q: Will there be safe crossings across Timbold Drive to the two schools?</p> <p>A: Potentially yes but this will be determined at the planning application stage. The Brief can mention that this should be considered. Traffic calming will certainly be required along Timbold Drive to make it safe for pedestrians to cross – the Brief will make this clear.</p>
17	<p>Q: The exit onto the H9 is dangerous. Will that be improved?</p> <p>A: As part of the preparation of the transport assessment, accident data will be investigated and if this highlights issue with this junction remedial / safety measures will be required. The Head of Transport has recently walked the area with the ward Councillors, and agrees that improvements</p>

	will be needed.
18	<p>Q: Can we have a contribution towards the bus routes that go along the V10? They are under threat each year.</p> <p>A: Yes a s106 contribution could be sought toward the bus routes that go along the V10. While the Brief states that s106 contributions will be sought it does not however normally go into the level of detail of agreeing specific contributions. These are normally made and agreed as part of the preparation and submission of a planning application.</p>
19	<p>Q: What floor space is KH community centre, and how does that compare with the size that will be needed for the combined development?</p> <p>A: The existing community centre is c300m2 in floor area</p> <p>In terms of community facilities, during the preparation of a planning application MKC might well seek a contribution towards existing facilities depending on what is on offer in the area and the feasibility of expanding or improving the offer (MKC do this for any development proposals between 200 and 599 homes). MKC would not seek an 'on-site' facility for a development under 600 homes. There are space standards that MKC aspire to (for community centres it is 120m2 per 1,000 population) Since the space standards work out around the 300 m2 that is already there, it is unlikely that new provision would be required, but MKC will make an assessment on need and demand locally before negotiating on this point, at the planning stage.</p>
20	<p>Q: Are there any plans for doctors and dentists to serve the new area? Where? If elsewhere, why can our current ones not be expanded? How do people who don't drive get there?</p> <p>A: The development is not large enough to require a specific new doctor's surgery as part of the development. s106 contributions can however be sought to help expand existing surgeries.</p> <p>The nearest GP surgery is at Walnut Tree, who is considering plans to increase their capacity and is discussing this with NHS England. MKV surgery at Middleton is also asking to expand. The decision rests entirely with the surgery and NHS England. The Council cannot force them to build new or expanded facilities.</p> <p>On the Eastern side of the city more generally, existing capacity will be bolstered by a new health centre that will be based at Brooklands in the EEA. It will be up and running in the next few years and, as the largest facility of its kind in MK, will give people in the area additional choice and more locally based health services (i.e. not just GP services).</p> <p>Most GPs in MK will take patients from across the city and on the whole, there is spare GP capacity across Milton Keynes. This is a key indicator that NHS keeps under review.</p> <p>The nearest dental facility will be at Walnut Tree, followed by the soon to be re-opened facility at Middleton.</p>
21	<p>Q: Logistics for when the building is taking place. Can we ensure that cars do not park on the roads? What times will they work and what ensures this?</p> <p>A: There will be a condition on a planning application requiring a Construction and Environment Management Plan, which will address these issues.</p>
22	<p>Q: An environmental survey will be carried out. Will we be able to see the results, and if so, when?</p> <p>A: The full report will be submitted along with the planning application and will be online for everyone to see. Residents will then have time (between 6 and 12 weeks) to comment before any</p>

	decision about the application is made.
23	<p>Resident (R): I would just like to know, will there be a meaningful consultation with businesses along Timbold Drive that are there already that are going to suffer 20 mph speed limit and the congestion those schools are going to cause? Because if there isn't we could actually end up losing businesses and jobs from that area because of those sort of restrictions being placed upon them.</p> <p>Neil Sainsbury (NS): There has been active engagement with Kents Hill business centre. They are aware of the proposals and they've made some comments but I understand that in principle they are happy with the proposal. They have been engaged all the way along through the process, Hilton Hotel have as well as have all the other businesses.</p>
23	<p>Q: When will phasing be known?</p> <p>A: Both the Primary and Secondary School are due to open in September 2017. This means starting on site in Easter 2016</p> <p>The approximate phasing / programme for the proposed housing development could be: Approval of development brief – October 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MKDP market the sites – winter 2015/16 • MKDP approve preferred developer end winter 2016 • Developer submits outline planning application – end summer 2016 • MKC determine outline planning application – late 2016 • Reserved matters submitted – spring 2017 • MKC determine first reserved matters - summer 2017 • Start on site – autumn / winter 2017/18 • If a single house builder, approximately 100 homes built per year (so potentially a 3 year build period). This could be quicker if multiple house builders working simultaneously on the site).
24	<p>Q: Exactly what is it that is being consulted on? You've said it's not the schools, but it sounds as though much of this is a fait accompli. Can you reassure me that I've misinterpreted that or is it really what it sounds like and this is going to go ahead on what the plans are demonstrating and actually this is just paying lip service to consultation with the public?</p> <p>A: I accept on the schools, there's a need for the schools and no other site. On the housing, there is a need for the housing, but if most residents don't want it used for that purpose, I will represent that back to MKC. I can't guarantee that MKC will take notice of that. They have to find more land for housing somewhere!</p> <p>On the more detailed aspects –footpaths, traffic issues, the buffer strip, where tall or low housing should be located, etc. the Council does not have a strong view, and really does want to hear what needs to be taken into account and what residents want.</p> <p>Eg. I can assure you that if the majority view of the residents is that they want the tree belt retained in the Public Realm that will be my recommendation in my comments table to the relevant Cabinet member. I think there were also some references in the brief to having taller buildings on the higher bits and there's been lots of comments from residents saying they really appreciate the views from that high land. So the brief will actually say that the tallest buildings, the ones that are three storeys, will be lower on Timbold Drive. The higher land will be the area where the lower buildings are sited. There's also been a lot of talk about the Northern edge, there's an existing hedgerow that runs all the way around there and actually being really sensitive to that edge and how the developer interfaces with that. So I think those are some examples where we have and there's also been comments around the type of housing that will be on the site and those things will be reflected in the Brief, depending on what the comments are that come back. I do think we will take on board what residents say and amend the Brief to reflect that.</p> <p>We can't change the school allocation. If everybody says that they don't want residential there, I will</p>

	<p>certainly say that the majority of residents don't want this site developed but I can't say that will necessarily change it because the site is allocated for development after all. Even if MKC did decide not to develop, it's not clear that the government inspector would allow that when they consider the new Local Plan. They have the power to order MKC to allocate it.</p> <p>Q: So if the predominant view of the residents is that we don't want any building, is that what the brief will reflect?</p> <p>A: No, I will say that we had 150 comments but I can't say that the Cabinet member who adopts the brief will take that into account. I will record what everybody has said in the consultation and I will have a discussion. If the overwhelming response is that the site isn't to be developed I will have a discussion with senior people in the council and say that this is what the people are saying, what do you want to do, do you really want to progress with this site? I am not saying that they will suddenly stop it, from my point of view I want to accurately reflect what everybody said and even on that particular point before it goes into a report, I will make the point and have a discussion with the relevant Cabinet member and Milton Keynes Development Partnership to explain this is what people have said. As I said, I can't say that that will necessarily change that particular element.</p> <p>R: But at least you have told us that the schools are a fait accompli.</p> <p>NS: Yes, I am told that the schools are needed and that this is the only site.</p>
25	<p>Further Questions – we are still awaiting answers to these.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. I understand that MKC has to pay the government back for the land. How much does MKC have to pay? b. By changing to housing, that will make the sites worth more. So how much profit does MKDP expect to make on the Kents Hill sites as a whole? c. Has the site on Walton Manor been considered for the secondary school? It is closer to the catchment area. d. Why was the need for extra places not considered when MK Academy was built? e. Are the distances we're given to schools "as the crow flies" or as footpaths and roads go? f. Why is MK Council not marketing the employment sites for employment? g. A few homes locally have been marketed at fairs abroad as summer homes. Can MKDP use its landowners powers to prevent this, so that the homes go to people who will live in them in the UK as their main home? h. What area does the traffic modelling take into account? Eg, does it take into account the SLA (near J13) or the eastern expansion (Brooklands etc).