



The Civic Society for Milton Keynes

# **TICKFORD FIELDS NEWPORT PAGNELL**

**A RESPONSE TO  
MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL'S  
INITIAL PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

**FEBRUARY 2019**

Tickford Fields offers the Council the rare opportunity to plan and develop an area from scratch under its own complete control, in the manner of the way that MKDC used to develop gridsquares. We believe that this opportunity should be grasped with both hands to create an exemplar of high quality, innovative development that will set the agenda for the wider expansion of Milton Keynes.

In particular we think that Tickford Fields should be used in an innovative way to demonstrate the Council's ambition to ensure that Milton Keynes becomes the "Greenest City in the World". As such, therefore, we think that the Master Planning process needs to be rethought to enable this but, in the meantime, we have the following comments upon the information made available at the public exhibition:

1. It is important to understand the wider context for the site and, in particular, the way in which it relates to the proposed MK Dons training ground. We think it is vital that there is a single Master Plan for both sites so that we can appreciate how they "knit together" to form a cohesive whole. The open space along both sides of the Chicheley Brook is particularly important and we feel that it is essential that residents of the area should be able to "walk a circuit" - along one bank, across a bridge and returning along the opposite bank. This will require coordination of open space planning of both sides of the Brook, including parts of the site proposed for an MK Dons training ground.
2. Whilst it is outside the site as such, we propose rerouting the Ouse Valley Way to run along the east of the River Ouse, past the MK Dons site to join Chicheley Hill by the junction with Sherington Road. This would replace the section of the Way that currently runs on a pavement alongside the Newport Pagnell to Sherington Road. The proposed route would provide attractive riverside walks for the residents of Tickford Fields and connections to other countryside paths.
3. The proximity of Tickford Fields to the MK Dons site seems to offer an opportunity to combine the SUDS for both in a more creative fashion than if they are separate and we hope that this will be explored.
4. We have a general concern about the proposed SUDS arrangements for Tickford Fields which run the risk of creating isolated depressions akin to steep sided "bomb craters" rather than meaningful pieces of landscaping. We note that the largest pond appears to be on relatively high ground.
5. If separate SUDS are to be provided, then careful thought should be given to their design and suitable briefs issued accordingly to cover items such as "normal" and maximum water depths, gradients of the sides, shallow margins that will be safer and more beneficial to wildlife, seating, relationship to adjoining housing etc. We also need to understand the nature of any dams and attenuating structures to be provided and how these can contribute to the attractiveness of the landscape in discrete ways.
6. How is the Brook to be maintained by the Internal Drainage Board? Experience from Brooklands has shown that the IDB clears streamside vegetation and place dredgings on the cleared banks, which is not an attractive prospect for residents and walkers and impacts upon the quality and usability of the open space.
7. Will the scheme provide public access to the lake to the north of the site?
8. It is important that the existing stream, wetlands and footbridge just east of Chicheley Street are fully protected as part of the development.
9. We welcome the retention of existing hedgerows and trees however we are concerned to note the proposal for a "focal building" close to the existing oak tree in the middle of the site which, we feel, proposes a risk to the tree from building works. The tree is a "focal

point" in its own right and should be integrated into a proper area of green space – any adjacent building will detract from it rather than compliment it. Careful consideration needs to be given to the installation of root barriers to protect new housing from existing trees and to avoid compensation claims due to foundation damage.

10. What noise attenuation will be used (eg a bund or acoustic fencing) to protect the site from A509 traffic noise, particularly as it is a fast, unrestricted dual-carriageway with a significant incline? We feel that traffic noise will also penetrate from outside the site, particularly from where the road passes the MK Dons' site. The use of flats or houses as 'shields' for the rest of the housing would lead to blank walls facing the A509 side or a poor acoustic environment for some of the residents.
11. We have a number of points about Redways:
  - a. We welcome the potential Redway link to the lake and Priory Street as this would make a direct and attractive walking and cycling route to the High Street, the Library and the parish church.
  - b. The concept drawings show a potential Redway link to the lake to the north of the site. Will this provide public access to the lake which, we understand, is in private ownership?
  - c. It is important that Redways and paths are not routed too close to retained older trees, as this will put pressure on tree management to remove older branches over paths.
  - d. What is the purpose is of the Redway shown running from the north-east area of the site over the Chicheley Brook straight towards woodland. What is it intended to connect with? We would support it as a link into the MK Dons site but otherwise wonder whether a leisure path be more appropriate – hence the need for a Master Plan (see 1 above).
  - e. The proposed Redway shown running alongside the north side of North Crawley road is shown at its eastern end diverging from the bridge over the A 509. What will this connect with? Is it intended to cross the A509?
12. The small, isolated housing site in the north-west corner seems somewhat anomalous in the context of the whole plan and, we suggest, the servicing (roads, drainage etc) will be disproportionately expensive and visually disruptive to this large area of open space. We suggest that it be assimilated into the open space.
13. We think that the overall site layout can be improved. The site slopes down towards the Brook and we think that the opportunity should be taken to incorporate viewing corridors out of the site from the higher ground so that residents and visitors can see the wider countryside beyond –as currently proposed the only people who will be aware of the open space are those living on the very edge of the development. Such corridors could be in the form of green swathes that would provide visual interest, a sense of spaciousness and interesting routes to connect the centre of the development to the wider open space beyond.
14. We think that there should be a greater mix of densities throughout the site and that it is wrong to reserve the entire park edge for the lowest density – there is-no reason why feature blocks of flats could not be used to punctuate the street scene or provide interest along the park edge eg as in Woodward Place, Great Holm.
15. The fact that the land is owned by the Council provides the opportunity to be creative in its planning and provide the equivalent of an MK gridsquare in terms of housing mix and in terms of tenure and style as well as providing the types of housing that are not being built elsewhere in MK eg small sites for regional builders, self-build plots and high quality

bungalows for the who wish to trade down. A good example of the latter are the patio houses in MK Village (Little Hame, and Parneleys) and Latimer (Stony Stratford) provided in the early days of MK. In order to achieve variety we would suggest that no individual site has more than 50 dwellings.

16. There should be a clear materials strategy and design code for the site. We would suggest that there should be a limited palette of materials - red brick, red roof tile and stone - that reflects the materials in Newport Pagnell.
17. As the land is in the Council's ownership it should prove possible to require a higher standard of carbon reduction than Building Regulations minima, through higher levels of thermal efficiency and air-tightness of homes, comprehensive installation of photo-voltaic panels, solar thermal systems, heat-exchangers and other such measures. Part of this could be inclusion of areas of housing to Passivhaus or similar standards, for both housing for sale and social housing. This would reflect MK Council's new Sustainability and Low Carbon aspirations and Tickford Fields could be presented as a forward-looking Low Carbon site.
18. There needs to be a clear economic assessment of the likely demand for retail space within the scheme as well as understanding whether a health centre is a realistic proposition. There should be a community site to be passed to the Community Foundation.
19. We believe that it is important that all the open space should be passed to the Parks Trust with a suitable endowment and that developers should not be given the option of passing the responsibility for some or all of it to a landscape management company. It is perfectly possible for the Council to achieve this given that it owns the land and can make it a condition of sale. It therefore follows that the Trust should be involved in the design of the open space at the outset. This should also apply to the SUDs ponds, as transfer to other bodies such as Anglian Water (as is being done in Fairfield and Whitehouse) would place day-to-day management under a body remote from the area and less accessible to local people.
20. The site is currently rich in wildlife which make uses of the hedgerows, trees and plentiful invertebrate food sources from the extensive grazing land - for example, swallows regularly feed over these fields. How will biodiversity be provided for, other than those species that make use of the wetland edges? The opportunity should be taken to make provision for nest spaces on houses and other buildings for birds that nest only on buildings such as Swifts.
21. We note the cricket ground, which seems to be at variance with the thinking in the Neighbourhood Plan. If a cricket pitch is to be provided at Tickford Fields then it is important that the club that occupies it has the maximum opportunity for success and, in particular,
  - a. It needs to have the facility for a bar and adjoining residents need to understand and accept this (this was a problem with the cricket pavilion in Great Linford).
  - b. The entire pitch needs to be above the flood level of the Brook (to avoid the Club having to bear the cost of unnecessary pitch repairs).
  - c. Assessment of potential noise issues for nearby homes when the pavilion is used for other kinds of event. Such an assessment may indicate that a pavilion so close to housing would be incompatible with the needs of nearby residents.

We hope that you find our comments of use and would be pleased to meet you and discuss them in further detail.