



Robert Brigden  
Milton Keynes Planning  
Civic Offices  
Milton Keynes  
MK9 3EJ

12<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Dear Robert,

**Application no: 22/03005/REM**

**Proposal: Approval of reserved matters (layout, scale, appearance and landscaping) pursuant to outline permission ref. 21/02085/OUT (for the construction of up to 103 residential dwellings, together with associated access, parking, open space, landscaping and all ancillary works)**

**At: Land West of Newport Road Woburn Sands Milton Keynes MK17 8UE**

### **Woburn Sands Town Council's Response**

#### **Key Principles**

1. In order for compliance with the requirements/features of the SEMK development framework, there needs to be a legally watertight agreement that the rear access between the southwest corner of the Redrow site and the rest of SEMK cannot be used for normal vehicle traffic otherwise it will become a rat run out of SEMK. The SEMK SPD states that there should be only one egress onto Newport Road, which pertains to the extension of the H10 onto Newport Road further north. Any bus access must be limited to the Redrow site only and must not be connected to the rest of SEMK (for example through a common car park). Officers to advise how this can be achieved – but this is a 'red line'.
2. The emergency access at the northeast of the site must be restricted in perpetuity to emergency use only. Some device/barrier must be constructed, openable by emergency services only, to restrict use to emergency vehicles only.
3. Construction traffic must be prohibited from using the WS High Street
4. There does not appear to be any 'Plan B' should EWR decide in the future to construct an underpass for Newport /Station Road which could effectively destroy the front/southeast of the site.

Redrow Homes prides itself on designing and building communities that are attractive, sustainable and beautiful places to live. The following points question some of these claims. The points also question the goal of 103 homes agreed as the **maximum** number allowed in the Outline Planning application approved in October 2022. As this is a maximum figure,

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some of the following could be resolved by reducing the number of houses to below the maximum allowable of 103.

### **1. Layout, with particular reference to the distribution of affordable housing.**

Redrow Homes claim that they will deliver a sustainable and socially cohesive community by providing a diverse mix of housing types and tenures. Although this may be true in principle in their plans for the Swan Hill site, the reality is anything but socially cohesive. There are 32 affordable housing units. However, the affordable units are not well distributed throughout the development.

Of the 32 units, 14 are at the northern most end of the site with another 3 on the opposite side of the road. ie 17/32 are in close proximity to each other in the most inaccessible part of the site, furthest from the access road. 4 of these are 1/2 bedroom maisonettes, presumably for older people – again located in the least accessible part of the site. Another 8 are on the northern flank of the western edge of the site; then another 7 are along the southwestern flank of the site in an area most likely to be flooded in extreme weather conditions (see letter from MK Lead Local Flood Authority).

Siting affordable housing in close clusters, many of which are in the least favourable parts of the site, is divisive, discriminatory, and bad practice considering the social issues that sometimes arise in such situations. If they were more spread out amongst the rest of the homes, this would dilute any such effect. The Town Council is not confident that the plans comply with the spirit of MKCC'S 'mixed' concept nor that it provides a socially cohesive community. Although WSTC would not insist the layout complies with 'tenure blindness' principles (ie zero segregation) it certainly would support a greater integration/dispersal of tenure types.

### **2. The location of the play area and green space**

WSTC feel strongly that the play area is wrongly sited. The play area and green space is at present located in the extreme southern edge of the site: close to Newport Road. There are several issues to this:

- a) Considering the low-lying nature of this part of the site and the probability of engine fumes from idling cars (waiting for the level crossing gates to open) settling there means they are in the most polluted part of the site. Not a wise location for a play area particularly considering that waiting times will increase when the level crossing gates are down more frequently.
- b) The play area should be more centrally located so that the maximum number of houses have easy access to it to afford visual contact to be maintained between residences and those playing on the site. This would create a greater 'sense of place' so central to MKCC's planning mantras. The play area is not very accessible for children from the more affordable housing to the north of the site who either must go out onto Newport Road to easily access the play area (which would not be popular for young mums) or have quite a long detour (psychologically more than physically) to get to the play areas by using the internal spine roads. There is no footpath within the site from the northern flank to the southern flank. A central location would also discourage any anti-social behaviour focused round the play area.

- c) To access the proposed play area, children will have to cross over the main access road, contending with cars, and buses in the future. The unsafe nature of this could well deter parents from encouraging their children (particularly younger ones) from using the play area and green space. A central location would help meet No 6 of Redrow Homes Principles – to encourage healthy lifestyles and a sense of community and pride which at present would be limited.
- d) As the play area is next to the southern boundary and the fishing lakes/wooded area, children will be naturally inclined to explore this area. The management of the boggy area in the southern flank should be entrusted to The Park's Trust to ensure a safe environment for all as well as a diverse natural habitat. This should be the case whether the play area is moved more centrally or not.
- e) If the play area and green space were more centrally situated then it would go some way to complying with Number 4 of Redrow's 8 principles of development – to provide opportunities to meet and socialise.

### **3. Refuse collection**

The refuse plan does not seem to have considered that MKCC is moving to four bins per household in September 2023, with collection of two bins per week.

According to the plans, plot numbers 51 – 59 all seem to have refuse collection points outside plots 51 and 59, which seems bizarre and likely to lead to a jumble of uncollected bins (2 per household) which amounts to approx 18 bins outside 2 houses. Such 'bin pow wows' may possibly also occur in other locations as well. Although Redrow cannot be accountable for residents not delivering their bins to, nor collecting them such refuse collection points promptly, the likely result is one that will mar the street scene for 2/3 days a week. The resolution would be for a lower density of housing and/or one where the layout of streets allows for bin collection to be made outside all homes.

### **4. Sustainable living**

1. We note that MKCC Highways Dept has referred to the width of the Redway along Newport Road towards the station and that it should be widened to 3m. This would entail the destruction of the established roadside hedgerow along the eastern boundary of the site, which would be an ecological travesty. Not only does this hedge form a diverse ecological community but it also acts as a barrier to pollution between the vehicular traffic and the homes. Planting a new hedgerow would take years to establish and would never replace the ecological diversity of the existing hedge. If anything, this established hedge needs to be supplemented with ornamental trees and bushes which would enhance the visual prestige of the site and increase both the flora and fauna of the hedge. The Town Council also note that the Redway width along Newport Road outside the Haycock development and nearer the Kingston roundabout opposite Glebe Farm has not been widened, so question the need for this to happen alongside the Swan Hill development. As the A5130 has been downgraded, the width of the road could be reduced and provide an opportunity for both Redway widening and traffic calming along the Newport Road.
2. The Town Council applauds the principle of the 'Faunal Enhancement Location Plan', catering for bees, birds (esp., incl. swifts), bats and reptiles (+ amphibians), small mammals and invertebrates. Siting orientation on houses appears to be suitable for each type. However, it may be a good idea to re-locate those closest to Newport

Road (at the east) further into the site, to avoid the effects of noise, street lighting etc.

3. However, the proposed 'Boundary Treatment' plan (1867-22-02-03), would seal out ground-dwelling wildlife with a hermetic mosaic of '1.8m close board fencing around the back gardens - a nemesis for Green Infrastructure connectivity. To ensure compliance with MK Policy SD11 SEMK SUE, B3 (to '...ensure ecological connectivity...'), the installation of wildlife-permeable boundaries should therefore be included as a condition.
4. To encourage wildlife and help answer the issues of climate change, WSTC would recommend that the road running north to south from the spine road has trees planted every 5 properties (with a suitable medium/long term plan for their maintenance) and that homes with back gardens have one ornamental tree planted suitable for small spaces which will encourage wildlife.
5. The Town Council applauds the plans for passive design measures particularly air source heat pumps and trust that those installed have the highest possible build standards and lowest possible noise emissions.
6. There does not appear to be any provision for solar panels on S facing roofs.
7. There is no reference to grey water systems. Such systems would allay any concerns the LLFA has over surface water drainage issues.
8. It would be excellent if bee bricks were planned for all houses.

#### **Further note on the future of SEMK.**

There is a definite need to resolve the matter of education and health infrastructure **before** further development of SEMK takes place.

Swan Hill is the first of the major developments of SEMK. It would be a huge credit to Redrow Homes if they designed a site that took into account the wishes of the local community and also the climate change challenge facing everyone by demonstrating that community wishes do not have to come secondary to profit.

As a final point which is directed at MKCC – SEMK, with approximately 3000 homes planned (of which the Swan Hill site is part), would provide the most magnificent opportunity to set up a Low Carbon Energy Scheme for future development which would truly set MKC apart as the 'Green City' of the future.

Yours sincerely,



Alison Jordan  
Town Clerk  
on behalf of Woburn Sands Town Council