Milton Keynes
Strategy for 2050
Draft for Engagement
January 2020

Milton Keynes Council
www.MKFutures2050.com
Milton Keynes Strategy for 2050

Draft for Engagement

January 2020
A strategy for the future of our great city will only succeed if it is created together with all our communities. We have produced this draft strategy to encourage discussion about our proposed approach – which itself developed from the work of the MK Futures 2050 Commission and their major programme of public engagement.

During the engagement period, we will be talking to people about the draft Strategy for 2050 and the future of Milton Keynes, and we encourage you to get involved. You can send your comments to us until Friday 17th April 2020.

You may wish to give us your thoughts based on the questions below. Your comments will be considered in finalising the Strategy for 2050 prior to adoption later in 2020, and they will also feed into the development of the new Local Plan for Milton Keynes borough.

Where comments are useful in the preparation of their own local plans, we may share responses with neighbouring authorities. Please note, by responding to this engagement period, you are agreeing to your comments and details being shared in this way.

Do you agree with taking a long-term approach to 2050? Will these proposals stand the test of time?

Have we set the right ambitions for the growth of Milton Keynes to 2050?

Does this Strategy cover the right issues?

Do you have any comments on any part of this Strategy?

Do you have any comments on the assessment of growth locations (available online)?

You can send us your comments or get in touch...

By email, to MKFutures@milton-keynes.gov.uk

In writing, to MK Futures Team, Milton Keynes Council, Civic Offices, 1 Saxon Gate East, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ

You can also follow us on Facebook (search for MK Futures 2050) or on Twitter (@Futures2050MK)

And check online at www.MKFutures2050.com for updates

Comments should be received by Friday 17th April 2020
Responding to the Growth Options Assessment

The Annex to this Strategy describes a high-level assessment of potential locations for growth, not yet in Local Plans, which have been considered and assessed as part of the work in preparing the Strategy for 2050 and the recommended spatial strategy. The assessment, which is available at www.MKFutures2050.com looks at each location option and provides a brief commentary on its suitability for development in the years to 2050. As part of the engagement on the Strategy for 2050 we welcome comments on this Growth Options Assessment in the context of preparing the new Local Plan for the growth of the city to 2040. The feedback received on this will be taken into consideration and fed into the early phases of preparing the new Local Plan.

Technical note

Whilst the engagement on the Strategy for 2050 will not form part of a statutory Regulation 18 consultation for the purposes of plan-making, it will inform the review of Plan:MK and the comments received will be used by the Council’s Development Plans Team in beginning to draw up the new Local Plan for a full Regulation 18 consultation at a later date.¹
A note on the status of this strategy

This engagement draft of the Strategy for 2050 has been prepared using evidence and data collected from a variety of sources which are referenced throughout the document. A key source of evidence has been the MK2050 Milton Keynes Strategic Growth Study, prepared by David Lock Associates (August 2019) and a series of papers prepared by their team of sub-consultants. While this Strategy for 2050 carries forward many of the elements set out in that study, the Strategic Growth Study itself has been prepared as background evidence and does not represent the views, policy or approach of Milton Keynes Council (or of the other two councils – South Northamptonshire Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council - that were involved in commissioning that evidence study).

As is inevitable with such documents, this Strategy for 2050 has been prepared in a period of ongoing uncertainty around various projects that could impact on its contents and delivery, including the local plan examination processes in neighbouring authorities, the government’s intentions for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and the future of the proposed A421 expressway (often referred to as the Oxford-Cambridge expressway.) The Strategy for 2050 has therefore been prepared with the best available knowledge at this point in time.

The Strategy for 2050 is not a formal planning policy document and therefore has no weight in the planning process, and is not a material consideration in the determination of planning applications at this stage.

The recommended growth strategy set out in this Strategy for 2050 has been prepared on a ‘boundary blind’ basis, as a sensible and sustainable pattern of growth, which in some cases includes recommendations for areas outside of Milton Keynes Council’s control. These are draft proposals generated by Milton Keynes Council alone and in no way commits those local planning authorities to bring forward growth in that way. Through the plan-making process, it will be for the individual local planning authorities across the Metropolitan Milton Keynes area to consider the spatial framework and policy directions set out in this Strategy, and where appropriate adopt them into statutory planning policy. The Strategy for 2050 will also be used to inform other Milton Keynes Council policies.
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Chapter One
Introduction

This Milton Keynes Strategy for 2050 sets the way forward for the next era of making our great city greater. People are at the heart of what this Strategy is trying to achieve. It is a strategy for everyone living in Milton Keynes today and all those that wish to live here in future.

A note on terms

Throughout this strategy we use ‘city’ to describe the entire Milton Keynes borough, rather than exclusively the urban area. In places we also use the term ‘metropolitan’ Milton Keynes to refer to the borough plus adjacent settlements in the neighbouring South Northamptonshire, Aylesbury Vale and Central Bedfordshire local authority areas that relate closely to the city and its economy. Figure 2 shows a map of the metropolitan Milton Keynes area.

Milton Keynes is a special and beautiful city, completely different to any other in Britain with its parks and lakes within a few minutes’ walk of homes and the distinctive grid road system and city centre. Our older towns and villages and individual grid squares each have their own character and sense of community within the overall layout of the city. Our vibrant economy means young people are more likely to get a job with good prospects than anywhere else and we can move around by car more easily and cycle more safely than in any other city.

Some fifty years ago, a thriving city was promised to the 60,000 people living here then, the families who were to move here, and their children who would be born here. And, because this promise has largely been met, some 268,600 people from a diverse range of backgrounds now choose to call Milton Keynes borough home. Our Strategy to 2050 must preserve and protect these qualities to honour this promise to the people who have settled in the city.

In 1970, the original Plan for Milton Keynes promised to build the city that we live in today. Whilst the 1970 Plan provided the blueprint to build our city, it also recognised that the approach needed to be flexible to allow for new situations as they develop, meaning not everything that happened followed the Plan.

“The Plan is a beginning. It is a masterplan in the sense it provides a strategic framework in which the city can be developed. But – as with all good strategies – it defines the main aims whilst retaining flexibility to allow adjustments to new situations as they develop.”

The Plan for Milton Keynes, 1970

Back then, we did not foresee that the way we lived would contribute to climate change with, potentially, catastrophic consequences for the environment including increased risk of heatwaves and floods and loss of biodiversity. We could not foresee how computers (invented in Bletchley) would change the way we earn a living, communicate with one another, shop and travel. And, the Plan did not anticipate that not all of our people would be able to enjoy the benefits of the city’s success, with huge consequences for people’s lives. In some communities in Milton Keynes, people die 7.5 years earlier on average than in other parts.
Six Big Ambitions for growth to 2050

To continue to meet our promises to those living in the city, our ambitions for the next three decades must retain and build on what is great about Milton Keynes but also change with the times and adapt where necessary.

We have Six Big Ambitions for the people living here today, and for the people who will want to in future, and our Strategy for 2050 shows how we will do this.

- First, we need to maintain – and strengthen – those qualities that make Milton Keynes special, particularly our vibrant communities, our parks, lakes and landscape, and our network of grid routes.
- Second, we must do whatever we can to ensure that everyone can have their own decent home to rent or buy at a price they can afford. Our young people, in particular, deserve this.
- Third, we will continue to grow our businesses, and attract new ones, to provide a good job for everyone who wants to work.
- Fourth, we will make it much easier for everyone to travel around the city, particularly on public transport, on foot and cycle. Of course, our city will continue to be less congested than any other UK city.
- Fifth, we will provide better opportunities to learn for all – schools, colleges and universities – so that every citizen can benefit from our city’s economic success.
- Finally, we will reduce the city’s consumption of natural resources so that we will be zero-carbon by 2030.
Planning positively for successful growth

Milton Keynes has already exceeded the ambition in the original 1970 Plan for a population of 250,000 people and our excellent geographic location and great transport connections to London, Birmingham and other towns and cities, mean this momentum will continue. The city’s place at the centre of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc will further boost its future economy.

So, the city will continue to grow but this by itself is not a guarantee of success. We must plan effectively for the long-term so that we can maintain and strengthen what works well and ensure growth provides benefits for all our residents. This includes delivering the infrastructure and services such as transport, jobs, GPs, schools, shops and leisure facilities that are needed by our existing as well as our new communities and providing education and training opportunities to help everyone access work.

Anticipating this growth means we can plan for city-wide facilities such as a new, fast, public transport system (known as Mass Rapid Transit and explained in greater detail in Chapter Five) that the city has wanted since the idea was first discussed in the 1970 Plan. And it also allows us to ensure that all aspects of the city’s future are well thought through and integrated. For example, by anticipating the growth of the economy we can plan for the homes needed by our workers and ensure that they and their children have access to the education and skills development they will need for the jobs of the future.

Milton Keynes is an internationally renowned example of how well-planned growth can produce environmental and quality of life benefits. This is seen in the extent and quality of the city’s beautiful green open spaces, parks, lakes and rivers that provide a variety of habitats for animals and plants and play an important role in flood management. Planning at the whole city scale over the long-term means we can continue this approach as the city and its neighbouring areas grow. It also allows us to maintain our unique network of grid road routes and plan for how they link into new developments.

Strategic long-term planning provides greater local democratic control over development so that we can make sure it is done well. It means we can be clear with local people about what we expect to happen and engage them in decisions about the future of their great city. National planning policy requires us to plan to meet our local housing need, as a minimum, so without a democratically-led plan for growth housebuilders would have a much greater influence over the location of new housing and growth around the city. Haphazard, unplanned growth with inadequate provision for the infrastructure needed to support it would result.

By taking more control over our city’s development in line with the original 1970 Plan principles we can create a city that works better for everyone; a city where it is easier to get around, easier to get on in life and that we are all proud to call home.
Ambition for Sustainable Growth to 2050

In 2015, Milton Keynes Council established the MK Futures 2050 Commission to help it plan for the next phase of the city’s journey. The Commission’s report “Making a Great City Greater” was published in July 2016 and the general vision and direction of the Commission’s findings received unanimous support from the different political groups on the Council. It proposed a high rate of growth to 2050 as the best way of providing the greatest benefit for the city’s population. You can read more about MK Futures 2050 at www.MKFutures2050.com.

Milton Keynes Council set out a long-term ambition in its Council Plan 2016-2022 that anticipates continued growth of the city to a population of 500,000 people by 2050. This Strategy defines that ambition as applying to the ‘metropolitan’ Milton Keynes area, for which there are already plans to deliver homes for a population of around 400,000 people by 2040.

The ambition for a population of 500,000 people recognises that growth will continue beyond 2040 and that a guiding figure is needed, as in the original 1970 Plan, if we are to plan effectively. Our analysis shows that ambitious economic growth in line with that scale of population increase is the best approach to securing good quality jobs for all our residents who wish to work. It also provides a greater opportunity for investment in essential infrastructure and services for both existing and new communities, including our proposed new public transport system.

Taking an active and well-managed approach to growth means it can be shaped by our local priorities. For Milton Keynes Council, this principally means inclusive growth that provides benefits for all our residents and growth that is sustainable. The council’s Sustainability Strategy 2019-2050 highlights the global climate emergency and commits Milton Keynes to strive to become carbon neutral by 2030 and carbon negative by 2050.

**Figure 1: Sustainability Strategy Principles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainable principles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green energy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximising the use of renewable energy, reducing carbon and providing resilience to the grid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Circular economy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing the efficient use of resources to reuse materials, use less water, and ensure the best use of land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low emissions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reducing the level of emissions from transport, industry and agriculture and ensure clear air</td>
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‘Metropolitan’ Milton Keynes

This Strategy for 2050 is for the future development of Milton Keynes as a wider area and economy rather than just for the administrative borough of Milton Keynes alone. This better reflects the everyday lives of local people and helps us to be more joined-up about development that crosses council boundaries. We refer to this wider city area as ‘metropolitan’ Milton Keynes (see Figure 2). It includes adjacent settlements in the neighbouring South Northamptonshire, Aylesbury Vale and Central Bedfordshire local authority areas that relate closely to the city and its economy. Today the metropolitan Milton Keynes area has a population of around 315,000 people. As discussed in the note at the start of this Strategy, any propositions for development outside of Milton Keynes borough must be considered through the Local Plan for those neighbouring areas.

Figure 2: Metropolitan Milton Keynes
Delivering the 2050 Strategy

The councils covering the metropolitan Milton Keynes city area are already planning for around 41,000 new homes and the infrastructure required to support them. This growth alone would see the population grow to around 400,000 people by 2040. This 2050 Strategy is based on further steady growth of the population to 500,000 people across the metropolitan Milton Keynes area by 2050. This will require a further 46,000 homes across the area in addition to those already in the existing and emerging plans of the councils. Averaged across the 30 years to 2050, this would be around 2,900 new homes built each year across the metropolitan Milton Keynes area. This is a modest increase on the existing delivery average to 2030 of 2,700 homes each year. The background evidence prepared to support this Strategy has demonstrated that this level of delivery can be achieved through our recommended approach to growth.6

As with the city’s original 1970 Plan, this Milton Keynes Strategy for 2050 is drafted to allow flexibility as new situations arise. It proposes a broad pattern of development, described in more detail in Chapter Seven, that includes:

- Completion and enhancement of existing and emerging growth allocations across the metropolitan area.7
- Sensitive and selective development within or adjacent to existing communities which shares the benefits and opportunities created by development with existing residents. Potential locations for significant new development and the resulting benefits include Central Milton Keynes and Central Bletchley.
- Development of new well designed and connected communities beyond the existing urban area of Milton Keynes which:
  (a) are based around new mass rapid transit services,
  (b) make the most of existing and planned infrastructure and
  (c) continue some existing directions of growth.

The chapters of this Strategy describe how we intend to achieve our six ambitions for growth, including maintaining our approach to providing homes and jobs for all along with the policies needed to maintain those things that already make Milton Keynes a great and beautiful city.
Chapter Two
Milton Keynes – our successes, challenges and opportunities

Milton Keynes Today

Milton Keynes has been the fastest growing city in the UK over the past three decades. Its success has been driven by the people who feel it is a great place to live and entrepreneurs and companies who decide it is a great place to invest. The city has thrived through welcoming newcomers from all parts of the world but now also benefits substantially from its own natural population growth as those born and raised in MK choose to stay in the city and raise their families here.

MK’s people are its greatest asset, and the city has always made it a priority to help nurture the communities who choose to make a home here. The city’s strong community spirit is demonstrated by high levels of volunteering and the many community, sports and other local interest groups. A recent study showed that we benefit from a population that is ‘highly multi-diverse’, meaning that across the city a wide range of different communities live together in the same areas. The proportion of children in our schools from a BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) family is now at around 44% and whilst the city population is comparatively young the number of older people is fast increasing, with the proportion aged 65+ years old predicted to grow from around 14% in 2018 to 20% by 2040, a rate of increase well above the average for England.

There is no other city that looks like Milton Keynes. Its green character means there are open spaces, parks, lakes, woodlands and rivers near to every home. This ‘green’ and ‘blue’ infrastructure also performs other functions; providing habitats for wildlife and plants, managing flood risk and helping to improve air quality and our carbon footprint. The city-wide network of paths and redways allows residents and visitors to get out and about in beautiful surroundings.

Milton Keynes borough includes a large rural area, with thriving market towns at Woburn Sands, Olney and Newport Pagnell and many smaller villages set in an attractive landscape which complements the urban nature of the city. In the areas beyond the borough boundary, there are small towns and villages that relate closely to the city, its economy and facilities. These form part of a wider, ‘metropolitan’ Milton Keynes.

The city’s prime location, at the crossroads between London and Birmingham, Oxford and Cambridge, has helped to build a strong and growing economy. There are 182,000 jobs in the city across a wide range of sectors, with particular strengths in knowledge-intensive business sectors including digital, engineering and technology plus business, financial and professional services. The logistics and distribution sector is also strong, reflecting the city’s excellent access to national road and rail links. Unemployment levels are low, helping us achieve high levels of productivity – Milton Keynes is currently rated the second most productive UK city economy outside London.

The city’s distinctive network of high speed grid roads means that car travel is generally fast and easy, with relatively little congestion outside peak hours and average journey times much quicker compared to other cities. Excellent rail and road connections are due to be supplemented by a new East West Rail connection and the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway. The city’s strong north-south connectivity will also be improved following delivery of the HS2 high-speed rail link which will release space for more frequent services.
to north London and the Midlands on the existing West Coast Mainline.

Figure 3: Oxford to Cambridge Arc

Milton Keynes sits at the centre of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, which is an area of world-leading universities and research institutions with a concentration of knowledge-intensive, technology and high performance engineering businesses. In 2017 a National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) study of the Arc’s potential suggested that Milton Keynes could be re-established as “a development location of national significance, through the intensification and expansion of the town to a population of at least 500,000”. The city works with neighbouring councils and businesses on strategic economic and housing growth through the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership.

Milton Keynes is known for being designed in a different way to other UK cities and also for its appetite for innovation that has created new ways of doing things that other places across the country have followed. This includes the UK’s first kerbside recycling collections and first solar powered house, building shared ownership homes and our policy of requiring new development to be carbon neutral. This continues today through trials of new forms of mobility that include shopping delivery robots and driverless vehicles that contribute to Milton Keynes being rated as a leading global place for testing new technologies.14

The structure of the city was designed for innovation and to retain the flexibility to adapt over time. On individual estates, sites were reserved to provide space for future community facilities. At a city scale, space was provided alongside grid roads to allow for road-widening or the introduction of trams or similar urban transport systems.

Central Milton Keynes (CMK) also has space for significant expansion of its already substantial retail, employment, leisure and residential opportunities. Today, CMK is host to around 39,000 jobs15 and major new developments are already underway, including 383 homes by the Grand Union Canal and 13,000 sqm of Grade A offices next to the train station. Santander is investing in a new UK technology hub near to the station which will ultimately accommodate 6,000 employees.16 With other proposals on the horizon, the city centre is poised to become a more vibrant place. The planned opening of the new university, MK:U, in the city centre in 2023 brings the promise of further activity and variety.17

Innovation has also been seen in the design of homes and communities. The grid structure of the city with its patchwork of estates of different characters is unlike anywhere else. Some of the early estates were designed by young, up-and-coming architects, and MK hosted experiments for new methods of sustainable building such as the Energy World exhibition of low energy homes in 1986.
Our Challenges

Milton Keynes has great strengths and opportunities but there are some challenges that mean not everyone experiences the same benefits from living and working here. Many of our residents live in households that do not have access to a car, which makes it difficult to get around the city as travel is not as easy by public transport. This means that residents in some of our more disadvantaged areas, where car ownership is often at its lowest, are unable to readily access jobs and other opportunities. Our estates see variation in the health of their residents with a gap of 7.5 years in average life expectancy for people living in the top and bottom performing neighbourhoods on this measure. As the graphic (next page) from The Health Foundation shows, there are many determinants of health that future growth of the city could influence; these factors, such as education, work, surroundings, food and the environment account for at least 60% of health outcomes.

In some ways, our strong local economy has added to our challenges. The number of jobs in the city continues to grow steadily and in recent years has outpaced housing growth, far exceeding the historic target of creating 1.5 additional jobs for each new home. The average over the last few years has been more than 7 jobs created per new home, which adds pressure to housing costs and means we are increasingly reliant on people commuting into the city to fill these jobs. The cost of renting privately and house price to earnings ratios have both sharply increased to exceed national averages for the past four years and homelessness and the number of households in temporary accommodation have risen in recent years.

Within Milton Keynes, our population has, on average, fewer qualifications and lower skills than nationally, and many local companies struggle to find workers with the right skills to fill positions. Our schools mostly achieve a “Good” Ofsted rating, with pupils receiving grades that meet the national average. But in the face of global trends such as automation of jobs and in a place with an ambition for truly inclusive growth, we need to do more to create a skilled, local workforce so that all our citizens can benefit from the city’s economic success. Without this we will rely more and more on workers commuting into Milton Keynes.

Whilst the city has set an ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030 and carbon negative by 2050 its current heavy reliance on cars for movement rather than shared and sustainable forms of transport, will make this difficult to achieve. Our carbon footprint from transport is relatively high, compounded by the small proportion of journeys made by walking or cycling despite our excellent network of redways.

Our city centre is doing well, and the shopping centre has bucked the national trend of declining footfall over the last few years. But there is still a lack of buzz and vitality; only around 3,500 people live in CMK at the moment, and despite the large numbers of companies based here, there are times of the day and evening that parts of the city can feel deserted. We also hear often about the lack of independent retail, leisure and entertainment venues in the city centre, where we don’t have spaces that are suitable for pop-ups, entrepreneurs or new ventures.

This Strategy for 2050 is an opportunity to retain and build on our strengths and address our challenges. The following chapters set out our approach.
What makes us healthy?

Good health matters, to individuals and to society. But we don’t all have the same opportunities to live healthy lives.

To understand why, we need to look at the bigger picture:

- Good work
- Our surroundings
- The food we eat
- Education and skills
- Transport
- Money and resources
- Housing
- Family, friends and communities
Chapter Three
Sustainable Homes and Places for All

Affordable Homes for All

50 years ago, Milton Keynes was established as a project of national significance, an ambitious social undertaking to meet the urgent housing crisis in the South East of England, and provide people with a high-quality place to call home. The 1970 Plan for Milton Keynes stated that “Housing is the primary reason for the city’s designation...” and highlighted the importance of a range of housing types and tenures at all levels of affordability to ensure the city could deliver its vision of a place that all sorts of people could call home.

Creating new communities is in our city’s DNA and we have been successful in doing so; our city continues to be recognised as one of the highest performing cities in terms of delivering ‘good growth’ which includes factors like jobs, skills and health alongside housing affordability, transport, work-life balance and the environment. However, a consequence of MK’s economic success and its reputation as an excellent place to live has been the rising unaffordability of housing. Homelessness and the number of households in temporary accommodation have also seen marked increases, with affordability a particularly acute problem for those on low wages. The quality of life for a substantial and growing proportion of our residents is being impacted as a result and the founding vision of MK as a place where everyone can find a home and thrive is increasingly under threat.

If we are to enjoy continued economic success, our ambitious 2050 approach to jobs growth must be accompanied by building enough homes for our natural population growth and expanding workforce with the necessary infrastructure and public services. And for growth to be inclusive, we must make sure that new development addresses the city’s affordability challenge and provides the types and tenures of housing that meet the diverse needs of our residents, now and in the future.

The 1970 Plan for Milton Keynes had the aspiration that at least 50% of households in the new city should own their own homes. At the time it was felt if there was too high a concentration of homes built for rent from the public sector in the early years and not enough houses to purchase, then people’s housing choices would be restricted. In today’s context, with ‘Right to Buy’, ‘Right to Buy to Let’, and a greatly increased reliance on private housebuilding and a reduced percentage of homes constructed by the local authority for rent, the risks are very different, with too few homes for rent or purchase at affordable prices in our city.

Local Plan policies set the level of affordable homes required in new housing developments but the definition of ‘affordable’ in planning policy is different to how many of us would judge whether we can afford to live in a property. We are likely to judge whether housing is affordable to us against our income level, whilst technical planning policy defines affordability against market values.
Milton Keynes Strategy for 2050

January 2020

Engagement Draft

References:
Household Mix
Housing Affordability
Cost of buying a home
Numbers of rough sleepers

Household Mix

- Owner-occupied: 57.7%
- Privately Rented: 17.3%
- Council Housing: 11%
- Housing Association: 7.1%
- Shared Ownership: 6.1%

Household Affordability

- 2010: House prices in MK 6.60 times avg salary
- 2018: House prices in MK 8.81 times avg salary

Cost of Buying a Home

- 69% increase in MK since 2010
- 46% increase in England since 2010

Number of households in temporary accommodation

- March 2010: 82
- June 2019: 786

The number of rough sleepers in Milton Keynes in Autumn 2018

- 41

17
We will therefore aim for a substantial rise in new homes built by the council and ensure that we meet our delivery targets for affordable housing, including exceeding planning policy requirements for the proportion of affordable homes built on Council-owned sites. These actions will increase the delivery of homes within Milton Keynes which are more affordable than market rent. We also wish to achieve a very significant increase in the supply of ‘truly affordable homes’ (which we define as homes for sale or rent at below market rates, at costs linked to local incomes) which are available in a variety of tenures and types.

Over the long term, we will need to cater for the mix of household types changing significantly. A greater proportion of people will be living alone or in couples without children and a smaller percentage of people will live in traditional family groups. City centre living, with good access to public transit and close to retail and leisure facilities is particularly popular with young, single professionals. Fewer young people are learning to drive or own cars, so we need homes that will meet their needs, including those of the students that will locate in the city once the new university, MK:U, is open.

International trends reveal that urban living is also increasingly popular with those aged 55-64. Whilst many older people want to socialise with their own age group they also state a preference, when asked, to remain part of the life and activity of a wider community. As well as developments specifically designed for the over-55s we will provide homes within mixed communities that are suitable for our older residents. Homes must be designed to be adaptable and flexible to changing needs so that people can grow older without needing to leave their own homes should their health or mobility decline in later life. This includes bungalows and homes with sufficient space to adapt for wheelchair accessibility and homes adaptable for multi-generational living since it will be more common for two or more adult generations to live together.

Through increasing the total number of homes that are built we will grow the overall supply of affordable homes. We will also stimulate the building of alternative types and tenures of homes that may provide an affordable option for some households, including the construction of more self- and custom-build homes, or co-housing schemes. Our long-term approach provides the opportunity to encourage a wider variety of home designs in new estates than the relatively standard products built in recent years. And we wish to recapture the reputation that Milton Keynes established as a ‘green’ housing pioneer through the Homeworld (1981) and Energy World (1986) exhibitions of low energy housing. Our approach will include improved green standards and innovation in new housing, so that in addition to the positive impacts on the environment, more MK residents can experience the benefits these standards will bring, such as lower energy costs.
Quality principles for existing and new communities

Creating happy, healthy, strong communities with easy access to all the facilities and services that people need is at the heart of our approach and, below, we have defined quality principles for ‘place-making’ to achieve this objective. These principles apply from neighbourhood level through to city-scale and are rooted in the existing strengths of our places but also aim to address any weaknesses that might hamper our future success.

High quality and loved places will continue to characterise our city as it grows to 2050. In particular, places will be designed to support a new Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) public transport network, with development, including new homes, being more closely clustered around stops to help create travel demand to support the new services. This will apply to new development areas at the edge or beyond the edge of the existing city, and many places within the existing urban area will also benefit from being developed to fit these principles. We will ensure existing communities are fully involved and consulted when any such changes are being considered.

1. Creating Healthy Neighbourhoods
   Our neighbourhoods can be shaped so that healthy activities and experiences are part of people’s everyday lives, helping to tackle preventable disease. Development should promote good physical and mental health, making walkable neighbourhoods with spaces for recreation and local food production, and other places for people of all ages to come together to make stronger communities, helping to reduce isolation and loneliness, and improve residents’ quality of life.

2. Fully integrated with the natural and historic environment
   Development should be integrated with the natural environment so that everyone can access open spaces with trees, green areas and water both within their residential area and in larger, city-scale open spaces like Stanton Low Country Park or Brooklands Meadow Park. These should be linked as part of a city-wide network, which will continue to shape the way development is delivered. The impact of new development on the built, historic environment should also be managed, recognising the role that heritage can bring in giving a sense of place and helping to develop character in new communities.

3. Supporting compact, mixed-use neighbourhoods that work for public transport
   New communities should be more compact than much of the city today, and be well-connected to other, existing parts of the urban area. Residents should be able to walk or cycle to schools and other public service locations and the nearest public transport station or stop. These types of places are called transit-oriented developments (TODs), and would be built with a higher density of housing and commercial uses, with a wide mix of facilities within each neighbourhood. TOD communities should include smaller properties suitable for younger people without cars and older people looking to downsize. For everyday journeys, it should be easier to walk, cycle or use shared and public transport than use the car.

4. Designing for active travel – walking and cycling
   Well-connected, well-lit, safe and direct pedestrian paths and bicycle routes should pass through high quality public spaces. Streets and buildings should be designed at a scale that feels comfortable for people on foot, creating spaces that are overlooked by surrounding buildings.
so that people feel safe at all times of the day and night. Street layouts should have smaller blocks to make neighbourhoods better connected and more walkable to make it easier for people, including parents with child buggies and those using wheelchairs or mobility scooters, to access facilities and services without needing to drive.

5. Creating places that support community ownership
We will establish new approaches for the design of public space and the relationship between buildings and public spaces, with generous, well-designed spaces and landscapes that create opportunities for people to meet. If residents feel more involved in their communities and local environment they are more likely to take responsibility for its care.

6. Strong connections to the public transport network and reducing the reliance on cars
Alternative and attractive modes of transport must be available close to as many people as possible, with communities designed in a way that reduces the dominance of the car, including avoiding roads that sever communities or make it less attractive for people to travel on foot or by bike. In new developments, the infrastructure needed to make this possible must be put in place and services provided in advance of new residents moving in. This will include incorporating space for public transport and considering different ways to provide parking, especially as community pool car schemes and other new approaches to mobility emerge.45

7. Reducing the environmental impact of new developments
New developments and changes to existing places must respond to the climate change emergency and protect and promote biodiversity. We will strive to meet high standards of ‘green’ sustainable construction using national standards like Passivhaus or BREEAM and look at ways energy could be generated within the community. Building new homes and retrofitting existing properties to make them easier and cheaper to run is an important part of making growth work for everyone.46 The design of neighbourhoods must also contribute to the sustainability agenda, by being compact and walkable.

8. Sense of place and innovation
When creating new places, they should provide a distinctive sense of place and identity, be rooted in their local context by recognising and enhancing existing heritage character, and provide architectural quality and beauty.47 This can be achieved through the use of a variety of densities, landscaping, streetscape features, layouts and architecture that reinforces MK’s distinctive ‘patchwork’ character. We wish to see places that are not just ‘off the shelf’ but that continue the city’s ‘different by design’ heritage by being willing to be pioneering and ambitious. We will also encourage more self- and custom-build developments and alternative construction methods, including modular and off-site manufacture.

9. Providing for a mix of uses within neighbourhoods
New developments should continue the model of local, district and town centres, providing a range of facilities and public services in one place in a way that encourages use predominantly by people on foot or bike, or through shared trips so people don’t feel they need to drive to their local centre. These centres would be ideal nodes on the mass rapid transit
network so users can stop at their local shops to pick up shopping or deliveries on their way home. This emphasises the need for compact, walkable communities, so that people live within an easy walk of a wide range of facilities and public services.

10. New development that is sensitive to existing communities

The new city of Milton Keynes successfully managed the challenge of sensitively incorporating the existing towns and villages within the city’s designated area, with those original settlements still recognisable today, in places like Woughton on the Green or Loughton. This approach must be continued in the future. Where development takes place adjacent to, or surrounding a village in the rural area, we need to make sure the character and amenity of those places is protected. Our approach would consider the impact of development on existing views, landscape features and built heritage.

11. Making space for culture

Culture and creativity are integral to making great places. Shared experiences are one way in which we can help to build community spirit around places where people live or spend time, and around ‘communities of interest’ that are based around faith, nationality, interest or activity. In growing the city we will create spaces and opportunities for people to meet and spend time together. Our wider strategic priorities of inclusive growth and mobility for all will help create a happy city supported by culture in all its different forms so that everyone can take an active role in our diverse city.

12. Sharing the opportunities for growth across all communities

To support mobility for all and provide more opportunities for residents to live in well-connected communities, a significant proportion of new development in Milton Keynes will happen within and alongside existing settlements, perhaps as part of sensitive infill development, redevelopment of vacant and underused employment areas, or through the allocation of new development sites. New development provides the opportunity for investment and new facilities for the wider area, including existing communities, for example as stops on the mass rapid transit network. Our approach will include the possibility of innovative models and structures for allowing the community to have a strong voice in decisions about change and investment in such areas.
A Green and Blue City

We will take the opportunity to maintain and significantly increase our city’s parks, lakes and other environmental assets as part of its growth. The Council has an aspiration for Milton Keynes to become a globally leading green city and a ‘National Park City’ and is also committed to protecting and promoting biodiversity.

The city-wide network of open spaces, parks, and woodlands (known as ‘green infrastructure’) and the lakes, rivers and brooks (known as ‘blue infrastructure’), have been fundamental to the design and appeal of Milton Keynes from the outset.

Our commitment to maintaining and extending this green and blue infrastructure will continue with the future growth of the city. It helps improve health and well-being by providing opportunities for recreation and leisure, active travel and improving air quality. It also contributes to capturing the city’s carbon emissions and helps to reduce airborne pollutants and particulates. We will continue adding to the millions of trees already growing here, and ensure our existing trees and woodlands are well cared for and maintained.

Almost 3,000 hectares - More than 30% of the city!

The city’s lakes and parks play an important role in managing drainage and flooding and also provide significant ecological and biodiversity benefits for local wildlife. The existing system is nearing its designed capacity limit with the impacts of extreme weather events being felt locally. Our future approach will use the existing blue infrastructure within the city area as the basis for extending the system into new development areas and linking to neighbourhood schemes for managing surface water.

Figure 4 shows how strategic green and blue space could be enhanced and expanded long-term to 2050 alongside new development areas. Major allocations for new communities will be required to include a significant proportion of the site for green space, ensuring it is delivered as an intrinsic part of the community. Development should result in a net gain to the environment, making positive improvements rather than just mitigating impacts. Through an integrated planning process these new areas of open space should be linked with the existing linear park network to continue the seamless green character we enjoy in the city today.

We will require developers to contribute to the provision and maintenance of green and blue infrastructure. The city-wide park and green space network in Milton Keynes is mostly owned and maintained on behalf of the city by The Parks Trust. This model has worked effectively for over 25 years and should continue for new areas that are created as the city grows and develops.
Figure 4: Green infrastructure potential growth framework
Chapter Four
An Economy of Opportunity for All

Milton Keynes has been by some distance the fastest growing UK city by population and economy over the past three decades.\(^{59}\) The Milton Keynes economy today ranks as the 12\(^{th}\) largest city economy in the UK and is regularly found at the top of rankings by job creation rates and productivity.\(^{60}\) In the last five years, Milton Keynes has contributed 18\% of all employment growth across the Oxford-Cambridge Arc demonstrating the city’s important future role as the “the key connectivity point and commercial linchpin at the heart of the Arc” that is highlighted in the Arc’s Economic Vision.\(^{61}\) The city is also an important contributor to the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership.

The growth of Milton Keynes has been enabled by excellent rail and road connections to the north and south. East-West Rail (EWR) will see new links to Oxford (due to open in 2024) and to Cambridge (due to open in the mid-2020s) with MK Central and Bletchley stations becoming key points of connection between EWR and the West Coast Mainline. Road connections to Oxford and Cambridge will improve through the opening of the motorway-grade A421 Expressway in the 2030s. These investments in strategic infrastructure together with local initiatives such as the new city centre university, MK:U, will add further momentum to growth.

As part of a vibrant, creative economy Milton Keynes has a strong and growing range of cultural venues and events.\(^{62}\) There are economic benefits from boosting our cultural offer and this extends to helping make the city more attractive to students who might consider attending MK:U in the future, or encouraging young professionals to relocate here.

**Strengths of the Milton Keynes Economy (from MK Local Economic Assessment 2019)**

- **Strengths**
  - Milton Keynes has a strategic important geographical position, being at the crossroads between the Oxford to Cambridge Arc and the Euston-Birmingham corridor.
  - It is an enterprising economy, with a high business creation rate, and good prospects for businesses (especially in the first two years).
  - Milton Keynes continues to have developable land which can be used to facilitate the expansion of housing and commercial property locally.
  - There are strong transport connections, both on the road and rail network. These are only expected to continue into the future with the East-West Rail and Oxford-Cambridge Expressway proposals.

- **Productivity** is very high, being the 2\(^{nd}\) most productive city nationally outside of London (behind Slough).

- Milton Keynes continues to expand at a rapid rate, with population, employment and business growth above the national level. Recent population growth has been amongst the working age population, going against national trends.

- Milton Keynes has a number of nationally recognised brands headquartered in the city, including the Motorsports Valley, home to Aston Martin, Red Bull Racing and Honda F1 research & development facilities.

- Milton Keynes has lower house prices than the wider South East region, and compared to other cities on the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.
But the city’s economic success does not benefit all of our residents. Some live in neighbourhoods counted among the 10% most deprived in England and many do not have the skills needed to access the local jobs available. And around one in five (21.5%) of the current jobs in Milton Keynes are in sectors that are likely to shrink due to automation and similar trends. Our strategy requires we create a wide range of job opportunities and do more to create a flexible and skilled local workforce.

Our strong economic growth is creating additional challenges. In recent years the combination of house price inflation and rising rents in the city is making it harder for many to live and work in Milton Keynes. This, combined with skill shortages, is creating greater reliance on people commuting into our city which in turn adds to congestion and carbon emissions.

An inclusive economy

We plan to use the opportunity of strong growth prospects to address our economic weaknesses and create an economy that provides much better access to good jobs for everyone who lives here and wishes to work.

The building of new homes and the increase in the number of people living here creates demand for essential services and jobs that provide for everyday life in activities such as utilities, food production and processing, retail and distribution, and health, education, housing and caring services. This is known as the ‘foundational economy’ and in our context will include long-term jobs for local people in building the homes their city requires and work in the caring professions to support our ageing population. The health and social care sector already employs around 1 in 10 of the working population. The high growth we anticipate will produce a greater number and variety of opportunities in the foundational economy, suitable for workers at different skill levels.
We will deliver skills and training initiatives to support our ambition for an inclusive economy in which local people are able to access the growing number of local job opportunities. The new university, MK:U, will work closely with industry and business to create new opportunities for students from non-traditional academic backgrounds and will encourage Milton Keynes residents who currently have very limited opportunities to stay at home and study to access degree-level education within their city. This will include improving the access routes to university for students from Further Education colleges. More widely across the city’s education system, the Learning 2050 project is focussed on improving Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) teaching across schools at every level. The council will continue to show leadership in promoting good jobs for all and the use of apprenticeships and other skills development approaches. We will focus regeneration policy on building stronger communities and improving quality of life and life chances, including through access to jobs and skills development.

The scale of jobs growth we envisage will support other dimensions of our inclusive growth strategy. Increased jobs density (with more people working in one location) will provide travel demand that will support the viable operation of public transport services. And our mobility for all ambition (outlined in Chapter Five) will in turn provide access to work and other opportunities across the city from all our neighbourhoods so that nobody is excluded from the economy because they do not own a car. The MRT system will be designed to provide routes and stops for our most disadvantaged communities. We will also ensure a range of homes is provided to meet the needs of our growing and diverse workforce, including those we are aiming to attract in future.

Growing the knowledge economy

We aim to grow and attract large numbers of ‘knowledge-intensive’ jobs in high tech, high performance engineering and innovation-led businesses so we can compete successfully with other global city economies. This ambition is realistic given the existing strengths of Milton Keynes and our central position in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. It will be supported by growing local talent through initiatives such as MK:U and the new Institute of Technology being established by MK College at Bletchley Park. A targeted approach to attracting businesses from outside the city to locate and invest here, along with retaining businesses already based here, will also be pursued.

MK:U is a new city centre university being created through a partnership between Cranfield University and Milton Keynes Council. The university will be located in CMK and focus on the digital economy, using the city as a ‘living laboratory’, building on the global reputation of Milton Keynes as a ‘smart’ city that effectively applies new technologies and innovations. The close involvement of industry in designing the MK:U curriculum will mean graduates are work-ready with transferable skills. MK:U is planned to open in 2023 with an expectation of growth to around 5,000 full and part-time students within five years and 15,000 by 2038.
Knowledge-intensive industries tend to locate within city centres, where ideas, knowledge and people cluster. Already, almost half of all knowledge-intensive jobs located within Milton Keynes borough are in CMK\textsuperscript{68} and we know that providing enough future space for businesses within the city centre will be important to encourage the development of further such jobs. This will need to include the right kinds of office and work spaces, including more collaborative, shared spaces, as well as the kind of homes attractive to city centre workers.

In planning our city’s new Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) network we will explore the idea of a city-wide ‘innovation campus’. This would provide transport connections via the network to link university and business research and development facilities across the city and neighbouring areas and support collaborative working between businesses, academics and technologists.

**Scale and location of jobs growth**

Growing our economy at the same rate as now until 2050 would create around 60,000 additional jobs, taking the total number of jobs in the city to 240,000.\textsuperscript{69} This number does not, however, take into account the impact of MK:U and other major initiatives planned in the city or the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. The National Infrastructure Commission’s analysis of the Arc’s economic potential anticipated there could be around 130,000 additional jobs in Milton Keynes borough alone by 2050 with the right support.\textsuperscript{70} We will therefore aim for at least 120,000 new jobs by 2050 across metropolitan Milton Keynes as the best approach to gaining a high share of knowledge-based jobs and a range of wider employment opportunities that are suitable for all residents.

The city has a strong supply of employment land to meet its future needs with the current Local Plan identifying 282 hectares of vacant employment land in the borough. But to achieve our 2050 objectives we will need to create new employment areas. The land requirements of industry and business to 2050 cannot be predicted exactly but we expect the role of Milton Keynes as the “economic powerhouse” of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc will require approximately 2 million square metres of additional B-use class employment floorspace within the metropolitan Milton Keynes area.\textsuperscript{71}

Milton Keynes was originally planned to provide employment at different centres across the city, providing work close to homes and minimising the need to travel. Our Strategy for 2050 will likewise provide opportunities for employment growth at varied locations, linked by our Mass Rapid Transit system to create a better-connected economy and provide access to all major employment locations for people from all parts of the city. But there are two specific locations that we expect to see grow especially strongly over the long-term (and that are discussed in detail in Chapter Six):

- **Central Milton Keynes (CMK):** Our strategy anticipates that around 30,000 to 40,000 of the new jobs requirement to 2050 will be in CMK along with a higher proportion of the office-based employment within MK borough.

- **Bletchley** is a key opportunity area for economic growth due to its location at the intersection of the West Coast Main Line and East West Rail. Strengthened transport links with Cambridge, Central Milton Keynes and Oxford also provide the opportunity for Bletchley to become a significant technology hub that builds on the legacy of Bletchley Park.

The level of growth proposed for the metropolitan Milton Keynes area means a rise in employment levels across the wider city. Our plan to take forward the city’s existing
approach means that new mixed-use centres and employment areas for office, manufacturing and knowledge intensive jobs will be included in new mixed-use communities in our proposed growth locations. These will be supplemented by small-scale business premises in new local centres and jobs within the service, retail, community and education sectors at the heart of communities.

The creation of the MRT network will create employment opportunities at locations on the routes because of the improved access for workers and businesses. The existing employment hubs of Knowlhill and Shenley Wood have space for further growth. They are physically separate but could be linked by the MRT network and have a direct and fast connection to CMK, increasing their attraction as business locations. Cranfield Technology Park and Interchange Park in Newport Pagnell are both key employment locations on the edge of the urban area that would provide opportunities for higher density employment and development if they have direct access to the MRT network.

Other job opportunities across the city would be created by the introduction of MRT services. Whilst employment locations such as Linford Wood, Kiln Farm and Old Wolverton may not be on direct MRT routes they would benefit from being connected to the core MRT network via supporting mobility services - such as fast buses or shared, on-demand mini buses.

Logistics and Freight

The logistics sector includes the management of transportation, goods and information from one place to another to supply business needs and, increasingly, internet shopping. Logistics is a key part of the Milton Keynes economy and sites such as Magna Park will continue to be of major importance because of our excellent links to national transport networks.

Further growth in the logistics sector will be created by the new investment in east-west rail and road links but the industry is facing considerable changes from trends such as autonomous vehicles, smart warehousing and changes to last mile delivery and it seems likely that the number of jobs associated with logistics will fall over the long term. The industry also anticipates new models of distribution emerging over the period to 2050 which supplement the large national or regional warehouse distribution facilities with a level of ‘urban consolidation centres’ on the edge of the city and town areas they serve.

These trends mean we will plan for a supply of flat, large, sites for more big logistics operations at locations with good links to the national and regional transport network and for manufacturing sites with logistics elements. In the longer-term, our approach will anticipate changes in the levels and profile of employment at such sites and the increasing trend to locate consolidation centres close to town and city centres. We will plan for local distribution services that will meet the need to move goods into and out of the city as it grows whilst minimising delivery distances, congestion and carbon emissions.
Chapter Five
Mobility for All

“Easy movement and access, and good communications” were among the six broad goals in the original 1970 Plan for Milton Keynes and the city has thrived in large part because it has delivered on this promise for many people. This Strategy for 2050 is rooted in the understanding that for continued success we must maintain our mobility advantage over other places and make it much easier for everyone to travel around the city, on public transport, on foot and on cycle. This will include maintaining our unique network of grid road routes and connecting these into new developments. But we will use grid road corridor reservations and, in some locations, existing road space for the operation of a new public transport (Mass Rapid Transit) as was envisaged in the 1970 Plan.

The structure and policies of the city have together created a place that gives movement by car an advantage over all other means. Whilst cars will continue to be the go-to option for many for the foreseeable future, we are proposing an approach that will help provide mobility for all through improving access to public transport and by introducing new mobility services. Nobody in Milton Keynes should be at a disadvantage by not having access to a car and we must make it easier for all people, including those with disabilities, to access employment opportunities, facilities and services without needing to drive. Our focus will be on making travel alternatives sufficiently attractive to encourage people out of their cars and we will plan the physical development of the city and new neighbourhoods to support new mobility services.

Commuter journeys both by Milton Keynes residents and people commuting into the city are today mostly by car, despite 70% of these journeys covering a distance of less than 10km. Commuting by bus is low at just 5.5% of all journeys to work and half of all bus users indicate that they have no other transport option. The areas in Milton Keynes with the highest levels of deprivation tend to have the lowest levels of car ownership so their residents are generally least able to access jobs, services and healthcare across the city. We anticipate that many of the young professionals attracted to the city as our economy grows will follow the pattern being seen nationally of choosing not to own a car, instead opting to use public transport or taxis, or travel on foot or by bike.

Vehicle emissions are a major contributor to the climate change emergency. At the time the 1970 Plan for Milton Keynes was developed there were few concerns around sustainability and the use of natural resources. We now recognise the need for urgent action to reduce the energy used to move people around the city. The city has shown national leadership in promoting electric cars and buses and will continue this focus, but we need to take a wider range of actions to reduce emissions. Reducing transport emissions will help improve the environment and maintain our good air quality, benefitting the health of our citizens given the proven effect air quality has on conditions such as asthma and heart and lung diseases. But electric vehicles will not in themselves help our inclusive growth requirement of ensuring mobility for all or deal with the challenge of keeping the city running smoothly.
Proportion of journeys made each day that are less than 5km

43% - equivalent to a 20 minute cycle

19% Proportion of MK households without access to a car in 2011

Increase in bus passenger journeys in Milton Keynes

13% increase between 2011 and 2016 *

Public satisfaction with bus services in MK
- Average for value for money and journey time satisfaction
- Bottom five of 26 for punctuality

Comparative costs of parking and bus journeys
- Cost of monthly parking permit £52.50
- Four-week bus pass £57.00

Proportion of trips each day made by different modes

70% by car 10% by walking or cycling

References:
Proportion of journeys in the city less than 5km \(^{80}\)
Proportion of trips each day made by different modes \(^{81}\)
Proportion of MK households without access to a car \(^{82}\)
Increase in bus passenger journeys in Milton Keynes \(^{83}\)
Public satisfaction with bus services in MK \(^{84}\)
Comparative costs of parking \(^{85}\) and bus journeys \(^{86}\)
Traffic congestion in the city is not at the levels seen in many other UK towns and cities but is becoming progressively worse. Without intervention, by 2031 some key grid road junctions will exceed their operational capacity, creating major congestion and genuine ‘grid lock’ at peak hours which will hold back the economic ambitions of the city. The construction of new highway road capacity will not provide a long-term solution as increasing road space has been proven to induce more traffic. Our strategy will be to use the city’s generous road space and grid system more efficiently. The image (above) demonstrates how creating better alternatives to the car and moving away from single-occupancy vehicles will not only help provide mobility for all but will also help our existing infrastructure carry more people.

To accommodate the high level of car use, parking provision is very generous, especially in the city centre, with a high ratio of parking spaces to jobs and relatively low parking charges. More than one fifth of the city centre is taken up by car parking, so alternatives to the car including the MRT system help create possibilities for thinking differently about how at least some of that space is used.

Cycling and walking

The starting point for our approach will be to make walking and cycling an attractive choice for shorter journeys, helping to address congestion, encourage more visible life in our streets and public places and build more activity into people’s day-to-day lives. The city’s extensive 320km network of shared walking and cycling redway routes provides segregated, traffic-free movement but tends to be used for leisure cycling rather than commuting. Extending and improving the future network can be achieved through...
routes that are more direct for commuting and that give priority over road users to those using the redways, at appropriate locations. Future communities will be better designed to enable cycling and walking. This includes creating cycle hubs at transport interchanges and extending the cycle network to new growth areas with links back to existing communities.

**A Mass Rapid Transit Network**

The original 1970 Plan for Milton Keynes envisaged equality of accessibility by public and private transport and the introduction of fixed track systems “on routes running on the main roads”. But for a number of reasons this aspect of the original 1970 Plan never came to fruition. We are now at a point where long-term planning means we can take steps to deliver that original plan through a Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) network for the city. By Mass Rapid Transit system, we mean a public transport system that connects and frequently serves key destinations in the city, is capable of carrying many passengers at times of peak demand, and gives the people of Milton Keynes genuine choice over how they get around. To create an attractive service any MRT system must be effective, efficient and price competitive.

New technologies exist that would provide an electric-powered low carbon system similar to a tram in functionality and quality but that runs on road surfaces and so avoids expensive, fixed rail infrastructure. Today, most grid squares are served by the bus network, either directly or indirectly, but services tend to be infrequent and slow in comparison to journey times by car. The MRT must offer reliable journey times and this can be achieved by segregating vehicles from normal traffic and giving them priority at junctions to avoid getting caught up in congestion.
The grid network is a distinctive and valued feature of Milton Keynes and in the existing city we will use the generous space provided in some of the grid corridors for the MRT network. In places we will create lanes within or alongside the existing carriageway whilst between adjoining settlements and new growth locations there may be new, dedicated routes for MRT alone. In some places, where traffic volumes allow, the MRT vehicles might run within mixed traffic with various measures to ensure they are given priority. Using the flexibility built into the design of MK, including space within grid corridor reservations, initial modelling has shown that about 90% of the network could be on segregated routes.98

Figure 6 shows an initial view of the potential MRT network. The routes have been selected as those which provide the best opportunities for MRT services that connect key existing journey origins and destinations with those places (existing and new) that have the greatest potential for growth. Further work is needed to define the final pattern of network routes and the engineering solutions to ensure the priority running that will be necessary at individual junctions and roundabouts.
Figure 6: Possible Mass Rapid Transit Network Routes
Milton Keynes was originally conceived as a city with employment locations, and consequently movement, distributed across the city. But in practice the most significant journey patterns today are from people travelling into the centre, reflecting the number of jobs that now exist there. This pattern will strengthen in future with the growth of CMK as an employment destination. Our initial thinking for services to and beyond CMK is that the MRT network routes will not all terminate in the city centre. Rather, cross-city routes will travel through and around CMK via a ‘loop’ of services focused on Silbury and Avebury Boulevards. Passengers could change services at several points if necessary or continue their journey around the loop to a destination beyond the city centre. By allocating one side only of the two boulevards to the MRT network there would remain space for car traffic to move alongside and to access the city centre.

Our recommended pattern of future city development, with compact communities designed to be more walkable, can provide additional benefits if those communities are based around stops on the MRT network. This will support the viability of MRT by creating greater user demand along the routes. The MRT will serve people in new housing developments but we will also plan routes for the existing urban area, including links for neighbourhoods with low levels of car ownership. For some routes, our policy of mobility for all will justify subsidising the costs of services, ideally from profits generated on other routes. The network will be designed to provide links to employment centres and important transport hubs, with Bletchley to Central MK being an especially important route on both counts.

A core MRT network will be supplemented by a wider transit network which provides services between other parts of the urban area and the core MRT routes. These other routes could be served by the same vehicles and have an integrated ‘look and feel’ with the wider network, but because of their location, these other routes may not achieve the same degree of route segregation and priority as the core routes.

Supporting networks and services

The MRT will be supported by a feeder network of other local mobility services to cater for ‘first/last mile’ demand. This will provide links to the MRT network for those people who live some distance from stop. It will also meet the need for journeys that are likely to be in less demand and for which the cost of providing MRT services is not viable. This wider network of mobility services is crucial to the success of the MRT system in a low density city like Milton Keynes because it will significantly increase access to the system for more people.

This supporting, feeder network of solutions is likely to include:

- City-wide public bike, e-Bike and scooter hire, with an improved cycle network
- Local buses
- On-demand minibus and taxi services
- Car clubs and flexible car hire services.

New technologies will allow people to plan journeys across different modes of transport, book on-demand shared services and pay for journeys and parking through a single payment system that covers all transport providers. This principle of Mobility as a Service (MaaS) is building momentum in cities across the world and the first stage of a Milton Keynes single payment platform is due to be introduced during 2020.
Mobility and the city’s structure

The city’s structure creates challenges for mobility in Milton Keynes. Through our quality principles for new and existing communities (in Chapter Three) we are taking the opportunity to create compact, sustainable communities that are more accessible for everyone, including being well served by an MRT system; we call this ‘transit-oriented’ development. For both new and existing communities, transit-oriented development would create opportunities for residents through improved access to public transport and other facilities as part of mixed use development around the transit stops. A more compact development pattern could include a higher density of homes located very close to public transit that would be attractive for younger people without cars, those with mobility issues and older people looking to downsize.

Neighbourhoods that are not dominated by cars can instead be shaped around their residents, perhaps by restricting car movement in some areas or by lowering speeds (our existing policies already require new estate roads to have a 20 mph limit). This will benefit the health and wellbeing of residents and create more attractive, safe places.

The city today is laid out as a grid of 1km squares bounded by our unique network of grid road routes. Our strategy will maintain that and ensure effective connections into new developments, including those that are some distance from the existing city area. We will use grid road corridor reservations and, in some locations, road space for the operation of our MRT system, as was envisaged in the Plan for Milton Keynes (1970). We will work with neighbouring authorities to find the best solution in places where growth crosses boundaries. The design of routes linking to new communities will be future-proofed to
accommodate our planned MRT system and associated infrastructure when this can be introduced. This will mean providing land corridors sufficiently wide to enable a range of possible transit solutions to come forward without undermining walkability or our quality principles for place-making in new developments. In all cases we will ensure that road layouts respect the form and character of existing neighbourhoods, villages and towns.
Chapter Six
Central Milton Keynes and Bletchley

The investment in new east-west rail services and the city’s planned MRT network will provide momentum for the city’s development overall but two particular places – Central Milton Keynes and Bletchley – will benefit significantly from being the locations where new transport opportunities connect.

6.A Central Milton Keynes

Central Milton Keynes (CMK) is the heart of the city and will be even more important in 2050 when it will be the city centre for the 500,000 residents of metropolitan Milton Keynes and a significant centre for the wider sub-region. As elsewhere, growth within CMK must be inclusive and sustainable, delivering wider and positive outcomes for existing as well as new residents.

Today, CMK is the location for almost a quarter of the jobs in Milton Keynes but is home to a relatively small number of people. There is considerable scope to increase office employment along with other uses such as residential, education and retail. This includes plots of land that are already vacant and the re-use and redevelopment of unused and under-used buildings and sites, and building at greater heights and densities. We want more people to spend more time in the city centre, adding to its vibrancy and vitality with a diverse offer featuring more independent retailers and restaurants. CMK has the space and opportunity to deliver such outcomes whilst keeping the elements of its iconic structure and character that we value as part of the city’s distinctive heritage.

Our principles in Chapter Three for creating high quality places will apply to development in the city centre too. CMK should be a walkable neighbourhood where residents, visitors and workers can access facilities within easy walk or across the city by the MRT network and other mobility services.

CMK will be a place that many more people call home as the city grows. There are almost 5,000 new homes already planned in CMK and the area around Campbell Park but we know there is the opportunity for many more. The increasing trend for young professionals to want to live and work in urban centres will create demand, as will our ageing population since accessible, central locations and low maintenance properties are equally suited to our older residents.

There is much to celebrate about the design of CMK but some elements create challenges. The network of step-free paths and covering structures (including the porte cocheres and ground floor colonnades) on most buildings provide shelter and a fully accessible environment for pedestrians, wheelchair users or parents with pushchairs. But the wide boulevards and rows of surface level parking in front of low density, spread-out buildings mean the city centre lacks vibrancy and a sense of excitement. Our strategy will aim to use the investment opportunity created by future growth to address some of these challenges and create a more integrated, interconnected and vibrant city centre with a public realm that is far more people friendly. We are already considering how Station Square - the area around Milton Keynes Central Station - can be a better gateway to the city and how Midsummer Boulevard East might become a more flexible, pedestrianised space that can be used for a variety of events and purposes.
Figure 8: Potential elements of CMK future framework

- Number and proportion of jobs in CMK today
  - 39,000 jobs
  - 22% of all employment in MK
  - 46% of the city’s office space
  - Fewer than 6,000 residents

- MK:U, a new university in CMK
  - Due to open on Block B4 in 2023
  - 15,000 students once fully developed

- Number of new homes in CMK in existing plans
  - Almost 5,000
Place-making in CMK

A city centre has many important roles – a centre of employment, a vibrant place to live, core culture and retail facilities, a civic heart and, in the case of Milton Keynes, well used and loved green space in the form of Campbell Park. A planned, coordinated and well thought-through vision for the future of Central Milton Keynes will provide a way to positively influence how these different activities are clustered.\(^{104}\) This provides the opportunity to create four ‘overlapping’ districts to which better create a CMK identity; Innovation, Culture and Leisure, Civic and Park Life.

The approach we take will balance proposals brought forward by the commercial sector with our overall ambition that development of the city centre should be well-structured and coherent. We will bring our economic, environmental, mobility and cultural ambitions together into a CMK growth and investment framework which will attract investment into CMK, focussing particularly on the leisure, culture, food and drink and showroom retail sectors. We will also explore opportunities to create a more pedestrian-friendly and stimulating city centre that has the people of Milton Keynes at its heart.

The CMK economy

Delivering our economic vision will see many more jobs in knowledge-intensive and innovative high-tech sectors located in CMK. In addition, CMK will also have a large number of jobs in the retail, leisure and hospitality sectors that will thrive as the city centre gets busier. Our new city centre university, MK:U, will create a major new focus for the life of the city with the student population supporting a greater range of leisure, retail, cultural and entertainment venues and businesses. The original 1970 Plan for Milton Keynes proposed the development of a centre for music and arts, including a theatre and concert hall in the city centre. Whilst CMK now has a highly successful theatre and recently extended art gallery it lacks music venues of the right size.

A quarter of all private sector jobs and 46% of general office space (B-use class) in the borough of Milton Keynes are located in the city centre today.\(^{105}\) We expect that by 2050 CMK will be the location for around 30,000 to 40,000 of the city’s new jobs along with a higher proportion (60%) of the borough’s office-based employment.\(^{106}\) We estimate that between 360,000 and 460,000 sqm of additional B-use class employment space will be needed, not accounting for existing, empty office space.\(^{107}\) The quality of the offices today in CMK is mixed and to meet modern requirements some will require major refurbishment - or replacement with new Class A office space. High quality digital connectivity, including seamless Wi-Fi, is essential for any city centre to be competitive. The current investment by CityFibre in a full fibre network is already enabling high quality gigabit internet connections for city centre businesses and helps make CMK a highly attractive location for knowledge-intensive businesses.
6.B Bletchley

Bletchley is one of the original towns contained within the designated development area of the new city. It grew during the Victorian era through its location at the junction of the London and North Western Railway and the Oxford-Cambridge ‘Varsity Line’ and is famous as the place where the first modern computer was built by Alan Turing at Bletchley Park during World War II.

Figure 9: Bletchley in context

The town again has the opportunity aided by its connections, for strong future economic growth as it will sit at the meeting point of the West Coast Main Line and the new East West Rail route. Our MRT network will further improve connectivity through the links planned between Bletchley, Central Milton Keynes and other locations in the city. The town’s north-south connectivity will also be improved when the HS2 high-speed rail link is delivered as this will release space for more frequent services on the West Coast Mainline.

Strengthened transport links with Cambridge, Central Milton Keynes and Oxford provide the opportunity for Bletchley to become a significant technology hub that builds on the enduring legacy of Bletchley Park where an Institute of Technology is now being built by MK College. The town’s future economic prospects mean there is the opportunity for comprehensive redevelopment within the context of our wider 2050 strategy. Milton Keynes Council has created a Prospectus for Central Bletchley that includes the following vision:

To offer an alternative but complementary lifestyle to much of Milton Keynes: create a desirable, higher density, metropolitan urban hub around excellent transport links that revitalises the town centre for existing and new residents, workers and visitors to Central Bletchley.

Central Bletchley Prospectus

A comprehensive plan for Bletchley could see growth in office-based employment and additional retail and leisure opportunities to support existing and new residents and employees, with around 46,500 sqm of additional floorspace. There is also scope to build new homes at higher densities and above shops and offices to help create a more vibrant place.

Future investment and growth will provide the opportunity to address some challenges in the layout and quality of Bletchley in places. Today, the railway and Saxon Street create a barrier that splits the community, and there is a need for better pedestrian links, including from the station to the town centre. The lack of an evening economy with few people living in Central Bletchley means it does not feel like a vibrant and active place. And the experience of arriving in Bletchley, whether by foot, cycle, bus, train or car, does not create a strong, positive impression. A major challenge is that the town centre is on the eastern side of the railway line whilst the station entrance is on the western side. Investment in the station as part of East-West Rail will help address this through a new eastern entrance and reconfiguration of...
Saxon Street which will transform the arrival points for workers, commuters, residents and visitors. Comprehensive development around the station (to the east, west and at the station itself) could also help to deliver economic regeneration and improvements for the wider area, stimulating the transformation of Queensway to become a much stronger high street for Bletchley. The opportunities shown in Figure 11 below are explained in more detail in the Central Bletchley Prospectus.

Figure 10: Bletchley Interchange – Illustrative Perspective
Figure 11: Bletchley opportunity areas
Chapter Seven
Locations for development – the 2050 Spatial Strategy

Our Strategy for 2050 provides a framework for decisions about how future growth and development can work to the benefit of all local people. An important element of the framework is where that development should be located.

The existing and emerging Local Plans\(^{109}\) of the relevant councils include ‘major’ allocations for around 41,000 homes to be built across the metropolitan Milton Keynes area in the years to 2040.\(^{110}\) These ‘major’ allocations are large and complex sites that can often take many years to be fully completed, so even those sites started before 2030 could still be under construction in 2040.\(^{111}\)

Despite having this significant amount of development already planned or proposed to 2040, the time it takes to deliver new homes and to plan for the infrastructure needed to support them means it is important we start thinking now about what happens beyond the building of those communities and what additional development should happen alongside.

Our recommended approach to 2050 therefore uses the directions of growth that have been proposed through Local Plans and outlines locations for the next phase of development. This provides a framework to achieve the ambition of growing to a population of 500,000 people whilst meeting our strategic objectives for growth that is sustainable and benefits all our existing and future residents.

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Figure 12: Major Commitments and Allocations in adopted and emerging Local Plans
Our Recommended Strategy

In developing this Strategy we have considered a wide range of growth options and their suitability for future development. From these options, we have recommended a strategy for the development of the metropolitan Milton Keynes area to 2050 that:

1. Completes and enhance existing and emerging growth allocations across the metropolitan area.

This includes completing sites in our existing Local Plan (Plan:MK), and sites proposed to be allocated in the adopted and emerging South Northamptonshire Local Plan, The Vale of Aylesbury Plan and the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan, which fall within the metropolitan Milton Keynes Area.

It is intended that, where possible, these allocations are developed, or at least future-proofed, in a way which enables the delivery of our principles for high quality places in this Strategy and ensures mass rapid transit can be effectively integrated to achieve a meaningful shift away from the car and support the new city-wide MRT network. In some cases, for example East of the M1, we recommend further development beyond that already proposed in Plan:MK.

2. Sensitive and selective development within or adjacent to existing communities.

These communities, following the principles for high quality places in Chapter Three, should be developed with public transport at their heart. Such communities will be attractive to a wide range of households due to their accessibility, and help to provide more sustainable ways of living. For the residents of existing parts of the city that have low car ownership, new development that is served by far more efficient and attractive public transport would help to improve their mobility options. In areas that have poor access to services, additional people living nearby could help to make new facilities viable. As an example, growth at Olney would only be made feasible by the provision of a bypass and/or connection to the mass transit network, with significant benefits that created for the existing town.

Central Milton Keynes, which will play an increasingly important role in the future of the metropolitan area, has the capacity to significantly increase the number of city centre residents and jobs, as well as leisure, culture, retail, community facilities and other sorts of activity.

Central Bletchley will also become an even more important location, with new east-west transport connections and its role as the interchange between the West Coast Mainline and East West Rail. The town centre therefore has great potential for growth and regeneration founded on its advantages as a transport hub and a location for high-tech and digital jobs.

There are other locations within and adjoining the Milton Keynes urban area that could benefit from this sort of development, although at a more modest level than would be suitable in these town centres. The flexibility and space built into the design of MK means that there is capacity for sensitive development in some areas to help make the city work well for everyone. This would help support extra services (for example a stop on the new MRT system), facilities and accessibility to benefit existing residents living nearby.
3. Development of new communities beyond the existing urban area of Milton Keynes which;
(a) are based around new transport links, including mass rapid transit services,
(b) maximise links with existing and planned infrastructure and
(c) continue some existing directions of growth.

Beyond the existing city, there are other areas which we believe would also make sensible locations for long term growth. The east-west corridor to the south of the city of Milton Keynes and extending into Aylesbury Vale and Central Bedfordshire is due to be the location for both East-West Rail and a proposed Oxford-Cambridge Expressway.

Development along this corridor should focus around stations on the rail link and other areas that would be linked with the MRT network. This could include locations like Winslow in Aylesbury Vale, where the East-West Rail station would create an opportunity to develop further the already strong community.

Within Central Bedfordshire, the growth already proposed at Marston Vale for example could be supported by better public transport links with Milton Keynes.

Development within South Northamptonshire to the north west of Stony Stratford could help to support infrastructure schemes to relieve pressure on the A5, perhaps with a park and ride service to further encourage more sustainable forms of transport.

Building Communities

It is very important to remember that these growth locations aren’t just about building houses; this strategy is about building communities. In all the locations and types of new communities proposed in our recommended growth strategy, we believe that it is essential they are well-designed, using our quality place-making principles, as places that are easy and attractive to move around for residents on foot or by bike, and with access to sustainable forms of travel at their heart. So those new developments must have all of the important facilities that are important to a community within easy reach, including green space, schools, shops, community, leisure and medical centres, as well, in many cases, employment opportunities and spaces for people to work. And in all cases, we will fully involve local communities in shaping the future of their great city.
Figure 13: Recommended Spatial Strategy
Building in flexibility

This recommended framework includes growth propositions within neighbouring council areas. It will be for the relevant local authority to take these growth options forward, which may be through a joint local plan across boundaries. We would like to work closely with those partners and hope that our quality principles, in particular those for creating transit-oriented development, would be reflected in any proposals that emerge.

At this stage, our Strategy for 2050 does not propose housing numbers to each type of development or any of the growth locations. It should also be noted that while the Strategy has identified these strategic growth locations, it has not determined the precise location, size or boundary of these growth areas. The focus is on the sorts of communities we want to create and the opportunities and benefits that growth can bring for residents, rather than the number of homes to be built or boundaries of sites. Determining those details is a task for future iterations of Local Plans. However, we believe, using the principles of making efficient use of land to build sustainable, walkable communities, and using the background evidence prepared to support this Study\textsuperscript{117} that the recommended framework set out above can effectively deliver the homes required to reach a population of 500,000 people across the metropolitan Milton Keynes area by 2050.

As with all long term plans however, there is a need to build in flexibility to account for changing circumstances and needs. We also recognise that the recommendations set out in this Strategy for 2050 still need to be fully tested through the statutory local plan processes across the area before they are formalised, or not, in planning policy. This process will include testing assumptions about how many homes and jobs could be developed as part of a site allocation, and setting out requirements for the other facilities that need to be part of that development. That process will also determine the phasing of when these developments should come forward to ensure we have a steady stream of new homes being built that keeps up with demand, but that does not allow sites to be developed before they are needed. The next chapter on delivery, also includes some details about how we believe the control over these issues should be held by the local authority and not dictated by the housing industry.
Chapter Eight
Making it Happen

The Plan for Milton Keynes (1970) set the framework for the first decades of the new city and this was accompanied by a body called a New Town Development Corporation that was established specifically to provide leadership and secure investment for the growth of the new city. These arrangements helped to ensure that the necessary infrastructure and facilities for communities were in place up front, before homes were occupied. The 1970 Plan and the Development Corporation provided most of what defines MK as a place today.

We are concerned that what has become the ‘normal’ development process today is not up to the standard enjoyed in the city’s early years and is unable to meet all our requirements for high quality large-scale development. Under the current approach, even where a local authority provides a strong vision for future development in its area through its Local Plan it is still wholly dependent on developers for the task of delivery. This can result in haphazard development and failure to gain the investment required in the infrastructure and facilities needed by existing and new communities. Our desire for well-managed, high quality future growth means we are considering a changed approach to delivery that will give greater democratic control by the council over the quality of development and timely delivery. Any future delivery arrangements should enable us to meet three principles:

- strong vision and leadership driven and guided by high quality community engagement,
- land value capture to create investment that can benefit the community, and
- provide the ability to look after and maintain the assets in our city well into the future (usually referred to as “long-term stewardship”).

The delivery arrangements must also be capable of achieving the home building rates necessary to house a population of 500,000 by 2050 and to bring forward infrastructure alongside. This would require an average annual rate of approximately 2,900 homes across the metropolitan Milton Keynes area over the next three decades. This level of development would be similar to the rates achieved in Milton Keynes borough in the 1980s, although the supply of new homes would be from across the wider metropolitan Milton Keynes area. By comparison, delivery rates in Milton Keynes borough alone for 2018/19 have increased to 1,760 homes and are on track to exceed this through 2019/20.

Long term planning

This 2050 strategy for growing and further enhancing Milton Keynes sets out an ambitious vision for what we wish to achieve for the future of our great city. By setting out our plan for how growth should happen over a longer period than would normally be the case we can harness opportunities that might not otherwise be available and ensure that the benefits are shared across the city. We can also plan to prevent undue pressure on existing facilities and services. Our communities already recognise that benefits can result from well-planned growth, as demonstrated in the result of the Fullers Slade ballot in 2019, where the local community voted in favour of refurbishment, new homes and estate improvements that will be enabled through additional growth.
This Strategy sets out a recommended long-term vision for Milton Keynes and the surrounding ‘metropolitan’ area. Future Local Plans will provide the greater level of detail and the formal planning policies that will be used when determining planning applications for the development that this strategy proposes. And further work is needed to explore in more detail how our proposals will be delivered in practice.

And of course, communities will be part of the process, helping to shape the detail of proposals as they are developed. People are at the heart of what this Strategy is trying to achieve.

**Infrastructure provision**

With any level of growth, there is a need to deliver a wide range of infrastructure and we are working towards a comprehensive assessment of the infrastructure, services and other requirements that are needed to support the future development of the city. This understanding is vital in securing funding.

Developers and landowners involved in building new homes are required to contribute to the local community for the cost of affordable housing and essential public infrastructure. There are three broad categories of infrastructure:

- **Physical infrastructure** - e.g. transport (including public transport, cycling and pedestrian paths), water supply and waste management, public realm, energy supply, telecommunications, waste management and flood alleviation
- **Social infrastructure** - e.g. education, health and hospital, social care, emergency services, courts and probation services, arts and cultural venues, art and design in the public realm, sport and recreational facilities, community halls and religious facilities
- **Green infrastructure** - e.g. public open space, green space, parks and play space.

In 2004 we established the MK Tariff in our major expansion areas to fund essential infrastructure. This was a mechanism that provided certainty upfront for developers about costs and certainty for communities about the infrastructure and facilities that would be provided as part of the growth. It helped us meet the principle of “I before E” - Infrastructure before Expansion. This ability to provide infrastructure up front in advance of people moving into their new homes is integral to delivering good growth that maximises the benefits of new development for all and we understand the concern that many residents have about the need for the right infrastructure. Current national policy will not allow us to introduce a similar tariff arrangement today, so we are exploring opportunities to replicate the features that made the MK Tariff so successful, including the powers to fund infrastructure up-front.

The levels of investment we require for infrastructure, affordable housing and our MRT network cannot be gained through existing approaches for financial contributions from developers. We will therefore need to create new arrangements with the owners and developers of the relevant land for the provision of adequate funding in the context of this new long-term strategy.

Similarly, to ensure growth is delivered in the most effective way, which helps to deliver all the benefits and opportunities our communities deserve, we believe new mechanisms and partnerships are needed to give greater local leadership of growth.

Voluntary agreements with landowners are likely to be difficult to achieve so we are also exploring whether creating a new delivery body or partnership could give the city the best chance of achieving its ambition by
providing greater control over the growth agenda, and how such a body could be managed and led. The options now include the possibility of creating a localised version of a New Town Development Corporation that works to a remit set by the local authority (or a number of local authorities).

We will invite our neighbouring local authorities covering the relevant parts of the metropolitan Milton Keynes area to participate in any new delivery arrangements where this will improve the co-ordination and delivery of growth across boundaries, including helping to share the benefits of growth and the responsibilities for infrastructure and service provision. At this stage, we do not believe it is sensible to pursue a local boundary review in order to achieve this co-ordination.

Elsewhere, undeveloped sites in public ownership in the existing urban area that are already served by basic infrastructure provide an opportunity to capture a large amount of the increase in land value that arises from awarding planning permission. Land near transit stops on our MRT network will provide particular opportunities, especially as access to transit would make it possible to build a greater number of homes in any one area.

And in the short- to medium-term, Milton Keynes Council has also made a commitment to build 500 new council homes by 2022, and to establish a council-owned housing company to deliver 2,000 new ‘truly affordable’ homes for local households by 2023.

### The key role of Mass Rapid Transit (MRT)

The successful growth of Milton Keynes to 2050 and the delivery of MRT are intrinsically linked. ‘Business as usual’ cannot accommodate the Council’s aspirations for growth. Any form of MRT system is unlikely to be deliverable unless the future growth of the city includes the more compact approach to development that is typically required to create the level of passenger demand necessary for the new MRT services to be financially viable.

An initial cost model has estimated the overall capital cost of building the core MRT network at around £1.1 billion. The model predicts that whilst some initial public subsidy would be required, the annual revenue, based on forecast demand, would be sufficient to cover the operating costs once the network is established. We need significant further work, including an engineering study, to determine the best MRT route network based on our recommended spatial strategy. We also need further work to determine costs and how the capital costs of building the network could be funded.

One important opportunity for securing capital funding will be land value capture whereby mechanisms are put in place to secure some of the increase in land value that results from the delivery of new infrastructure. Evidence from elsewhere suggests that this might release up to 20% of the total capital cost so the remainder will need to be through other means. These might include central government grant related to Housing Infrastructure Funding and the Oxford – Cambridge Arc, local authority borrowing on forecast income, private sector contributions and additional local revenue streams.
The creation of an MRT system is likely to evolve from the existing bus network rather than from radical new technology or vehicles. In the longer term, our vision would include new autonomous vehicle technology being incorporated into the operation of the network. So in its earlier stages it will integrate with what already exists and be expanded in phases - in parallel with new development. As the shape of development and the potential MRT corridors become clearer through the Local Plan process, the routes and land essential to delivering the vision must be safeguarded and protected.

To ensure new development meets our sustainability ambition, high quality public transport must be delivered in advance of new housing. The planning, modelling and appraisal process for new development must be consistent with our aim of MRT-led development with the principle of lower levels of car use in mind. If new housing is planned around worst-case assumptions about future highway demand from traffic then the outcome will be further car-dominated development and communities where public transport, walking and cycling cannot hope to compete.

There is the risk that decisions being made now, based on current policies, could compromise the long-term approach being advanced here. For example, development proposals that do not deliver sufficient intensity of use to support MRT services or for standalone office buildings which include significant levels of new employee car parking will act counter to the ambition to move away from commuting by car. Through this Strategy, however, we set out our long-term aspirations so that they can be supported consistently and over-time, through policy and investment decisions that are well-aligned with our inclusive growth agenda.
Introduction and approach

As part of the background evidence to support the Strategy for 2050, Milton Keynes Council has undertaken a high level assessment of 14 spatial options for potential directions of growth which could assist in delivering the Council’s growth ambitions to house a population of 500,000 people within Milton Keynes Borough and the wider area by 2050.

The map below shows the location of each of the broad areas that have been assessed.

Each of the broad locations has been assessed against a range of environmental and locations factors using existing information, particularly that forming the evidence base for Plan:MK, adopted in March 2019 and other local plans covering the Option areas where those lie outside of Milton Keynes.

The assessments review the strengths and weaknesses of each of the options and provide a brief commentary and conclusion on their suitability for development in the period to 2050.

The assessment has had regard to:

- Locational factors, such as flood risk, topography, landscape, connectivity etc.;
- Existing growth allocations across the metropolitan area (both those within Milton Keynes Borough and those proposed in neighbouring authorities within the Study Area);
- The ability of the option to deliver against the objectives of the Strategy for 2050, particularly:
  - its ability to realise inclusive growth outcomes for both existing and new communities within the Metropolitan Milton Keynes Area year on year throughout the period to 2050 and beyond,
  - the ability to promote delivery of a modal shift in transport through making the most of existing and proposed regional infrastructure improvements and through providing development that helps to deliver, and benefits from, a new MRT system;
  - the ability to take advantage of, and improve, existing and planned, east-west infrastructure and connections which are present in the south of Milton Keynes and extend into Aylesbury Vale and Central Bedfordshire, and develop the long term growth potential created by the Cambridge - Milton Keynes - Oxford Corridor.

The assessment considers each of the 14 options in turn, and is available to view at www.MKFutures2050.com with a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of each option.

This assessment provides a link between the Strategy for 2050 and the first review of Plan:MK, insofar as it will provide the first opportunity for comments to be made on options/directions for growth beyond the existing commitments contained within Plan:MK and the proposed growth in Milton Keynes’ neighbouring authorities.

The new Local Plan will cover the period to 2040 and will look to continue to deliver the long-term growth aspirations for Milton Keynes. It will be the first statutory planning document to embed the Strategy for 2050 within planning policy. As such the Strategy for 2050 will provide a key consideration for the new Local Plan in terms of its vision and objectives, development strategy and directions of growth.
Whilst the engagement on the Strategy for 2050 will not form part of a statutory Regulation 18 consultation for the purposes of plan making, it does form the first part of the engagement process for the new Local Plan and the comments received will be used by the Council’s Development Plans Team in beginning to draw up a draft Plan for a full Regulation 18 consultation at a later date.
1 Regulation 18 refers to a stage in the formal plan-making process, guided by The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012
2 Population Estimates: Persons by single year of age and sex for local authorities in the UK, mid-2018, ONS
3 The Plan for Milton Keynes was published in 1970 by the Milton Keynes Development Corporation (MKDC) in two volumes. Volume One describes the background to the designation of Milton Keynes and the approach in preparing the Plan. Volume Two describes the evidence which has led to the proposals. It also recommends proposals at a greater detail than in Volume One.
4 The MK Futures 2050 Commission comprised independent experts and local champions and conducted in-depth research and one of the largest programmes of public engagement in the city’s history – direct engagement with 1,051 people and a further 23,105 through social media. The MK Futures 2050 website, www.mkfutures2050.com includes a range of background Commission Working Papers which were developed to inform the preparation of the full report.
5 Population projections for the metropolitan Milton Keynes area have been prepared by Opinion Research Services, January 2020.
6 MK2050, Milton Keynes Strategic Growth Study, David Lock Associates, August 2019
7 Whilst the allocations in emerging local plans for neighbouring authorities have been identified as contributing towards this growth, these plans are still to be finalised. It will only be through the statutory local plan process that the suitability of these locations for development will be determined. Should these allocations not be confirmed, it would be necessary to consider the implications for the delivery of the strategy.
8 The Campaign Company, 2019, Cohesion ATLAS interim findings – Milton Keynes – This will be published as part of the Child Poverty Commission
9 Ethnicity of school age children and young people 2019, MKC
10 Population projections: The number of persons by five year age groups, local authorities and higher administrative areas within England, mid-2016 to mid-2041, ONS
11 Nomis Business and Register employment survey 2018
12 Centre for Cities, City Outlook 2019, Page 40
13 The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) provides the government with impartial, expert advice on major long-term infrastructure challenges. The NIC is an executive agency of HM government, sponsored by HM Treasury. In March 2019, the Government identified the Oxford-Cambridge Arc as a national economic priority
14 Testing Innovation in the Real World; Real-world testbeds, NESTA, October 2019.
15 Milton Keynes Local Economic Assessment 2019, Page 39
16 Santander Digital Hub Public Consultation Documents, January 2019
17 https://www.cranfield.ac.uk/about/mku
18 Health and Wellbeing in Milton Keynes, 2019
20 Figure derived from comparing Employment figures (ONS, Business Register and Employment Survey, 2012-2017) against the number of homes delivered from 2012-17.
21 Across the last 20 years, the growth of private rental prices has outstripped the rise in earnings. Households renting privately in Milton Keynes now pay an average of £900 a month on rent alone. Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings ONS, 2018 and Valuation Office Agency,

22 There is a relatively low proportion of residents with higher-level qualifications. Over 14,200 people in MK hold no formal qualifications, opposed to the 67,300 citizens who hold a level 4 or above qualification which is the equivalent of a degree or a NVQ level 4-5. Labour Market Profile for Milton Keynes – Qualifications, Nomis (Jan 2018 – Dec 2018).

23 Primary and secondary school provision across the city is relatively strong with 89% of schools in MK achieving an Ofsted outcome of Good or Outstanding. Ofsted Outcomes, Education, Sufficiency and Access, MKC, 2019


26 The Plan for Milton Keynes 1970; Volume One, p53


28 Those on low wages in Milton Keynes spend around 42.3% of their income on private rental costs, in excess of the 35% generally accepted as the most that people can afford. Recent analysis by the National Housing Federation found just four properties (0.79% of those listed) for private rent in MK were affordable to people receiving Local Housing Allowance.

Resolution Foundation, Housing Costs and Labour Market mobility, 2019. Affordability in the Private Rental Sector, Shelter, July 2019

Housing benefit freeze: 9 in 10 homes unaffordable for families, National Housing Federation, 7 October 2019

29 This is supported in our new Housing Strategy (2019 to 2024, in draft at the time of writing) that aims to ensure that everyone has access to appropriate, safe and secure housing that meets their needs.

30 Using Freedom of Information requests, Inside Housing found that Milton Keynes is the UK ‘Capital’ of Right to Buy to Let, meaning MK has the highest number of former council homes now being let in the private sector (70.85%) This compares to a 40% figure nationally. (Accessed 18.11.2019)

31 At the time the 1970 Plan for Milton Keynes was produced, Local Authorities were building around two-thirds of the Homes constructed in the designated area of Milton Keynes (The Plan for Milton Keynes, Pg53). In contrast, 2018/19, Private Homes for sale represented 81% of the homes delivered in Milton Keynes for that year (MHCLG Live Table on completions by tenure.)

32 Currently, this is set as 31% of homes on sites of 11 or more homes, with a mix of 25% affordable rent (up to 80% market rent) and 6% shared ownership, in Plan:MK Policy HN2.

For comparison, neighbouring local plans include affordable housing requirements as follows:

- Aylesbury Vale District Council – residential developments of 11 or more dwellings gross or sites of 0.3ha or more will be required to provide a minimum of 25% affordable homes on site. Proposed Submission Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013-2033 Page 166
- Central Bedfordshire – qualifying sites of 11 or more units or sites of 10 or less units which have a combined gross internal floor space in excess of 1,000 sqm to provide 30% affordable housing. Central Bedfordshire Pre-submission Local Plan 2015-2035 January 2018 Page 127
- South Northamptonshire – proposals for 10 or more dwellings, or on sites of 0.5ha or more should achieve: 40% affordable dwellings in the market towns of Towcester and Brackley; 50% in the rural areas; 35% in the Northampton Related Development Area. South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan Draft Submission September 2018 Page 47

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<td>2011</td>
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### Milton Keynes Strategy for 2050

**January 2020**

**Engagement Draft**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Tenure Type</th>
<th>Shared Ownership</th>
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Census data pre 2001 available online at [http://casweb.ukdataservice.ac.uk/step1.cfm](http://casweb.ukdataservice.ac.uk/step1.cfm)

Data for England taken from MHCLG Table 104 Tenure England (Historical Series)

- ONS, Ratio of House Price to Earnings 2008-2018, 2019
- MK Draft Housing Strategy 2019
- MHCLG Rough Sleeping statistics England, Autumn 2018
- The UK's rapid return to city centre living, BBC News, 22 June 2018
- Why boomers, not millennials, are fueling the urban apartment surge, CURBED, 12 November 2019
- This is discussed further in a paper by IBI; Future Communities and Meeting Housing Need
- We have policies in place through Plan:MK and the (draft) Housing Strategy that require new homes to meet Nationally Described Space Standards and for a proportion of new homes to be built to wheelchair accessible standards.
- Multi-generational families are often created to provide care or companionship for the older or younger generation or due to financial drivers. Multigenerational living: an opportunity for UK housebuilders? Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research, 2015
- Creating Healthy Places, Design Council
- For example, sustainable drainage systems to address flood risk should be integrated into the design of new areas ensuring that it links with the wider, strategic water management network, and pushing for the highest standards of sustainable construction and energy efficiency across all development, and finding opportunities for the integration of sustainable energy generation. Policies FR1 – FR3 of Plan:MK includes locally specific strategic flood risk management policies to maintain and continue the exemplar sustainable drainage model of Milton Keynes which prohibits development within the floodplain and seeks flood management and drainage infrastructure to be provided as strategically as possible and as part of a maintained, multi-functional blue-green infrastructure.
- The place to be – How transit oriented development can support good growth in the city regions, Urban Transport Group, January 2019
- This could mean communal garages to provide safe and secure storage for bikes, or off-site residential parking garages that have been successful in places like Vauban in Germany. What can we learn from this thriving car-free German neighbourhood, Fast Company, May 2019
- In MK today, our housing stock is relatively efficient, and although below average, fuel poverty can easily become unmanageable for the 7,288 households struggling with this issue in Milton Keynes. When a household has fuel costs that are above average the national median level and were they to spend that amount, they would be left with a residual income below the poverty line. Annual fuel poverty statistics report, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), 2019.
- Milton Keynes has established a unique and strong identity over the last 50 years and our place-making approach must maintain the focus on quality and innovation that has served it so well. Milton Keynes has vibrant, historic market towns and a wealth of beautiful, traditional villages but is increasingly aware of its notable contribution to British post-war planning and architecture. This new town heritage plays an important role in creating a sense of identity for Milton Keynes and we will continue to value the positive role it can play in encouraging high quality, creative and characterful future development. The ongoing work to develop a New Town Heritage Register supports this commitment to what makes MK special.
This may include the use of landscape buffers and the sensitive layout of development to provide a strategic gap or area of open space between old and new. This could be achieved, for example, by including formal and informal space on the edge of new development, adjacent to an existing settlement. The MK Futures Commission observed that “city-to-city competition is increasing and those that win will have a vibrant cultural base, and will be perceived as open, tolerant and creative places to be” (MK Futures 2050 Commission report, *Making a Great City Greater*, July 2016, p50)

Studies have shown that health and wellbeing is improved among those who attend cultural places and events, and that arts programmes can deliver positive results for care home residents and young offenders, for example. *Community cohesion and cultural assets*, Luton Borough Council, The Arts Council considers that “arts and culture bring us together as communities, helping us connect with one another to combat social exclusion and achieve great things”.

Part of the inspiration for Milton Keynes was the concept of ‘community without propinquity’, where communities would not be defined only by proximity, or limited by neighbourhoods. This relies on everyone having the ability to freely move around the city in order to be able to access and take part in all the various activities and events that are on offer.

The Council published a Physical & Natural Environment: Position Statement called “Greenest City in the World” in November 2019. In becoming the “Greenest City in the World” the document outlines Milton Keynes as an ambitious and innovative city, taking the action necessary to reduce this environmental crisis as we grow and this document sets a precedent for our peers and as the city of the future Milton Keynes must take the lead.

Green infrastructure includes the linear park network, open spaces and parks, and the attractive planted areas alongside grid roads whilst blue infrastructure comprises the various lakes that form part of our strategic drainage network, and the canal, rivers and brooks that help define the city. As trees and plants grow they absorb and store the carbon dioxide emissions that are driving global heating so our green infrastructure also makes a significant contribution towards achieving the city’s carbon reduction goals. Since 2012, Olney has been managed under an ‘Air Quality Management Area’ due to excessive annual mean nitrogen dioxide from vehicle emissions. Milton Keynes Council Air Quality Annual Status Report, June 2019

Green space plays a crucial biodiversity role; our linear parks, grid road reservations, woodlands, hedgerows, grazing pastures and meadows, and our ponds, lakes, rivers, canals and streams are rich with wildlife.

In recent years over 600 residents across Milton Keynes suffered localised flooding indicating a growing pressure on our flood management network. Milton Keynes Council Internal Flood Status Dashboard 2018

Natural environment; *Guidance on Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Ecosystems*, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The Parks Trust is a registered charity which owns and maintains over 2,500 hectares of linear parks and other open spaces within the city, including areas originally established by the Milton Keynes Development Corporation and more recently created areas within the city’s Eastern and Western expansion areas. Their role in the long-term stewardship of one of the most important ‘city-wide’ assets is an example of one of the most innovative and high performing open space stewardship models of its type anywhere in the UK. Planners and developers must work with the Parks Trust to design and deliver landscape in major development areas before adopting landscape with a maintenance contribution agreed through a Section 106 (or similar) agreement. Income from a property and investment portfolio is used to fund ongoing maintenance of the river valleys, woodlands, lakesides, parks and landscaping across the city.


Centre for Cities, *Cities Outlook* 2019

Ortus, MK Economic Growth Study 2019
The diverse cultural offer ranges from the busy theatre and newly expanded gallery in CMK and independent music venues like MK11 and The Stables, to the biennial International Festival and regular mass participation sports events like the MK Festival of Running.

Ortus report makes assumptions on the demand for services associated with new housing development and the number of jobs created by new homes.

You can read more about the Learning 2050 project at [https://www.mkfutures2050.com/project-three-learning-2050](https://www.mkfutures2050.com/project-three-learning-2050)

At the time of writing the Council was consulting on its new Regeneration Strategy. (Accessed 18.11.2019)

Beyond the High Street: Why our city centres really matter, Paul Swinney & Dmitry Sivaev, September 2013 Centre for Cities

Ortus, Economic Growth Study 2019

NIC Supporting Evidence, Cambridge Econometrics and SQW, November 2016. Figure relates to MK borough

For an explanation of the Use Classes Order, refer to [https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/9/change_of_use](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/9/change_of_use). B-use classes refer to business, general industrial and storage and distribution uses.

SEMLEP provide a helpful definition of the logistics sector in their guide to working in the sector. “Logistics is management of the movement and supply of things. The stages and organisations involved in moving goods from raw materials, via manufacturing processes, to the delivery of finished product to companies and consumers is called the supply chain.” Logistics is a major employer in Milton Keynes. SEMLEP 2017, [https://www.semlep.com/modules/downloads/download.php?file_name=1097](https://www.semlep.com/modules/downloads/download.php?file_name=1097)

The city itself was designed to provide for the growth of forecast private car use and to allow quick access by car from any point to any point in the city, while also providing high quality public transport, walking and cycling networks. In practice the grid road system has enabled convenient and short journey times by car, using a choice of routes which spread traffic across the network. This, combined with the difficulty of operating high-quality public transport within the city, has meant that the car is the dominant mode of transport. In 1970, there was an expectation that car ownership would increase to 1.5 vehicles per family and that almost 90% of households would have cars by the early 1990s (The Plan for MK Vol 2 pp 186/7). In 2011, almost one fifth of households didn’t have access to a car in MK (Milton Keynes Council Mobility Strategy 2018–2036, March 2018)

Census, Travel to Work data, 2011

Milton Keynes Council – Mobility Strategy 2018-2036 – [evidence base](https://www.mkcollege.digital/)

Young People’s Travel – What’s Changed and Why? Review and Analysis, The Centre for Transport & Society, UWE Bristol & Transport Studies Unit, University of Oxford

The below graph shows carbon emissions per capita from different sources in Milton Keynes. Data shows that carbon emissions per capita from all sources have fallen since 2005. The fall in carbon emissions for transport, however, represent a reduction of 13.4% across this period, compared with reductions of 47.3% from industry/commercial sources and a 32.2% in domestic emissions over the same period. Since 2013, carbon emissions per capita from transport in Milton Keynes have either risen or maintained their levels.
The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2016/17) recognised that the major source of air pollutants in Milton Keynes is road traffic emissions and to a lesser extent, commercial and domestic boiler emissions.

81 Milton Keynes Council Mobility Strategy 2018 - 2036, March 2018
82 Census, 2011, Car or Van availability by household. Q: In total, how many cars or vans are owned, or available for use, by members of this household?
83 Mobility Strategy evidence base 2018, Pg51
84 Transport Focus, Bus Passenger Survey, Autumn 2018, Page 4-7
85 MKC Parking Prices as at 01.04.2019 (Accessed 18.11.19)
86 Arriva Milton Keynes, Indicative cost taken from Arriva Bus App, Price correct as at 18.11.19
87 By 2031, car trips to CMK are predicted to grow by 28% from within Milton Keynes and by 46% from outside (Milton Keynes Multi-Modal Model, Impacts of Plan: MK, November 2017.
88 Research over several decades has repeatedly shown that building more road space to solve traffic congestion is not effective because it often leads to significantly increased traffic levels by inducing extra demand. New roads create new traffic, Campaign for Better Transport.
89 Evidence prepared for the Council’s Mobility Strategy indicates that single occupancy car use in Milton Keynes is very high. Mobility Strategy for Milton Keynes, Detailed Context and Evidence base, Page 81.
90 Mobility and MRT Study, Integrated Transport Planning, para 2.2.

Many people today talk about there being insufficient car parking in CMK. CMK actually has a far greater level of car parking and at cheaper rates that other city centres. The issue for CMK may in fact relate more to the location of the parking in relation to where it is needed most, as the occupation rates show that parking is never at full capacity. The low density, spread out nature of the city contributes to this, as distances between different locations in the city centre can feel quite lengthy. By making the city centre more pleasant to walk around or by providing more shared micro-mobility options (for example bikes, e-bikes and e-scooters like the Santander and Lime Bike schemes already operating), we can make it more attractive and easier to use parking in areas that are less in demand for those users of the city centre that must drive and park. Of course, with much improved mass transit services in the future, the number of people that need to travel into the city centre by car will decrease.

92 In Milton Keynes, only 7% of journeys to work are made on foot and 3% by bike. Mobility Strategy evidence base 2018, Milton Keynes Council, Page 54
93 This increased physical activity would also help to address the unwelcome fact that Milton Keynes has a higher than average rate of adults who are obese or overweight (64.8% compared to 62% in the UK as a whole). Public Health England Profiles Milton Keynes ‘Percentage of adults (aged 18+) classified as overweight or obese’, Public Health England 2017/18 -
In large part this is because car use is so convenient but also because routes are sometimes indirect and confusing to navigate and suffer in places from maintenance and lighting challenges.

Plan for Milton Keynes 1970, page 35

Initial work to consider the costs of a city-wide MRT network has shown that an innovative system guided by lasers and autonomous vehicle technology, with ‘rubber on the road’, would avoid the need for very costly fixed infrastructure such as rails set in the road surface or overhead power-lines. There is rapid evolution of transport technologies, including new forms of rapid autonomous shuttle-type services which are already operating in some parts of the world. Alongside modelling the core MRT network we have also explored the potential for some routes to be served by very rapid, limited stop vehicles over comparatively long distances that would be particularly useful for commuting passengers where linked to park and ride locations. Our Strategy will keep the development of these technologies under review and consider how route and network development can be sufficiently flexible to support a variety of future vehicle types.

While all homes in the urban area are within a 20 minute journey of the city centre by car, only 23% of the MK population is within 20 minutes of the city centre by public transport. This is in part because of the low-density design of the city which makes it challenging territory in which to operate commercial bus services. The need to pick up enough passengers to make the services viable means many routes meander and stop frequently through slow residential estate roads. Where services operate along grid roads this can require people to walk a distance from their homes and wait in at locations alongside fast, busy roads. See Mobility and MRT Study, ITP, para 2.14.

This can be achieved by re-allocating a lane on dual-carriage grid roads or city centre boulevards, creating a new carriageway alongside existing grid roads or creating segregated lanes in new developments.

Using public transport to travel from one location to another usually requires a traveller or commuter to get to and from the station or bus stop at either end of the journey, sometimes by foot but sometimes using other forms of transport. This part of the journey is commonly referred to as the ‘first/last mile’.

‘Mobility as a Service’ is the move away from personally owned modes of transport towards mobility solutions that are consumed as a service. This might mean users combine services from both public and private providers through a single gateway that creates and manages the trip (accessed through an app on a mobile phone or tablet), which users pay for with a single account rather than an account for each different mode or provider. This payment could be on a pay as you go basis, or as a monthly subscription.

This document refers to Central Milton Keynes in terms of the parish area covered by CMK Town Council and as outlined in Plan:MK (i.e. the area bounded by the H4 and H5, the railway and the canal)

This payment could be on a pay as you go basis, or as a monthly subscription.

Local Plans set out the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority (eg. Milton Keynes Council) in consultation with the community. The development of a Local Plan is carried out in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Existing local plans across the metropolitan Milton Keynes area already allocate significant levels of development and set out the locations in which this will take place (Figure 12 outlines all existing major allocations and proposed allocations). This growth alone will take the population of the area to around 400,000 people in 2040.

Estimates derived from the EGI property database suggest that 126,000 sqm of office space is currently available across the Borough, with 69,000 sqm of this within CMK.

Central Bletchley Prospectus, December 2019.

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We can’t stop planning now while those homes are completed; the development industry would continue to make planning applications and the Council would not be in a position to refuse them on the basis of putting a moratorium on growth in the short-to-medium term.

A good local example of the time taken to build out a large greenfield site is the Eastern Expansion Area of Milton Keynes, the area covering Broughton Gate and Brooklands providing 4,000 homes. The planning process (from early conversations with the developer, to submission of the planning application and approval) took in total around four years, with the site was first formally allocated in the Council’s Local Plan in 2005. The first housing completions took place in 2008/09, and the site is due to be completed in 2024/25, meaning the total time from first identifying the site to completion will be around 25 years. Lichfields Case Study; https://lichfields.uk/media/1728/start-to-finish.pdf

In addition to the David Lock Associates work, a further assessment of the possible growth options has been prepared to accompany this Strategy and to inform the development of the new Local Plan, as reflected in the Growth Options Annex.

It should be noted that emerging allocations still need to be tested and confirmed as being appropriate through adoption of Local Plans.

The Strategy is showing all allocations that have currently been identified by a neighbouring local authority in their emerging Local Plan. These sites will still need to be considered through the statutory planning process. Their identification in the draft Strategy should not be considered as an expression of support from Milton Keynes Council. In some instances the Council has raised significant concerns related to evidence underpinning an allocation in an emerging plan which would need to be assessed through the examination and adoption of that plan. Should these emerging plans be adopted by a neighbouring authority, the Strategy may need to be updated in due course to reflect the final Local Plan allocation.

The first phase (Western Section) involves relaying track and upgrading the existing track bed between Bicester and Bletchley and will see passenger services operate between Oxford and Milton Keynes, Aylesbury and Milton Keynes, and Oxford and Bedford all via Bletchley. The Western Section was subject to a public enquiry earlier this year and is expected to be given approval imminently, with an opening planned for 2024. Milton Keynes Council strongly supports the scheme.

The ‘Central Section’ of East West Rail is due to open around 2027 and will see direct trains operate between Oxford, Bletchley and Cambridge. There is currently no provision for trains to run directly between Milton Keynes and Cambridge without a reversing movement at Bletchley as there is no Eastbound connection between the Mainline and the East West Rail route. The Council is lobbying for this connection. At the time of writing, the consultation on route choice to Cambridge had closed, with a response and decision on route expected in late 2019.

The East-West Expressway is a new dual carriageway road proposed to link Oxford, Milton Keynes and Cambridge, recognising that road journey times between these places are slow, indirect and subject to congestion. The provision of better links is intended to support economic development and growth in the Arc.

In 2016, MKC’s Full Council took a decision to support the scheme, with a preferred corridor aligning with the East West Rail route, on the basis that any new growth in the corridor could be supported by both improved road and rail links. Highways England announced this as their preferred corridor in 2018. Highways England is now working on options for preferred routes within the corridor and with consultation postponed as a result of the UK General Election being called in December 2019. Following consultation, the preferred route will be selected in 2020 before the scheme moves to detailed design and construction, with a target opening date of 2030. In July 2019, a delegated decision was taken to move the Council to a position of ‘conditional’ support on the basis that the new road will be accompanied by significant environmental mitigation and improved public transport and cycling links. When the preferred route is announced the Council will assess the impact of this on the environment, traffic flows and development land before determining whether or not to continue to support the scheme.
The plan shows the mass rapid transit link that would serve Winslow as connecting with Buckingham. It is anticipated that the East West Rail service would provide the main public transport connection with Milton Keynes city.

MK2050, Milton Keynes Strategic Growth Study, David Lock Associates, August 2019

Of the 46,000 new homes that would be needed in addition to the existing commitments that are already in plans up to 2040, some would, in practice, be delivered in the period prior to 2040, rather than all being delivered in the final decade before 2050. A population of half a million therefore provides a target for planning purposes but, dependent on factors such as delivery arrangements and the wider economy, it may take some time beyond 2050 to be achieved – or it could be reached sooner.

Housing completions by decade:

The MK Tariff is an innovative ‘Roof Tax’ where housing developers paid a set amount per home as a contribution towards the cost of providing a wide range of strategic and local infrastructure, including...
Schools, community and health facilities, public transport and road improvements. The tariff also gave the ability to forward fund infrastructure ahead of payments from developers, which meant the infrastructure could be in place before homes were occupied. This mechanism was used in locations including the Eastern Expansion Area (Broughton Gate and Brooklands), the Western Expansion Area (Fairfields and Whitehouse), Tattenhoe Park and Kingsmead.

122 Any new delivery mechanism created for Milton Keynes should have the capability of being expanded to cover adjacent authorities (or parts of those areas) with our partners’ agreement in order to share the benefits created by such a body. Our commitment to coordinated partnership working also extends to work with the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP), government departments and national delivery agencies like Homes England, the development industry, infrastructure and utility providers, plus local stakeholders, organisations and communities. Milton Keynes Council will need to work with these different partners at a variety of scales and on a range of issues.

123 Recent amendments to the New Towns Act 1981 give the Secretary of State the power to establish a New Town Development Corporation (NTDC) at the request of one or more Local Authorities, to whom control of the NTDC would be delegated. Control over the operation of a NTDC would include setting its brief, appointing its Board, securing funding, owning assets and securing the long-term stewardship of community assets.
You can send us your comments or get in touch...

By email, to MKFutures@milton-keynes.gov.uk

In writing, to MK Futures Team, Milton Keynes Council, Civic Offices,
1 Saxon Gate East, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ

You can also follow us on Facebook (search for MK Futures 2050) or
on Twitter (@Futures2050MK)

And check online at www.MKFutures2050.com for updates

Comments should be received by Friday 17th April 2020