

# PLAN:MK

## MILTON KEYNES CYCLING FORUM RECOMMENDATIONS

### PROMOTING HEALTH (POLICY CC10)

The evidence is that global warming and air pollution, resulting in a substantial way from unrestricted motor vehicle use, are having a serious effect on health, with many thousands dying prematurely. The latest estimate is of 50,000 annual deaths in the UK.<sup>1</sup>

We note NICE guidelines, see below.<sup>2</sup>

1.2.5 Ensure pedestrians, cyclists and users of other modes of transport that involve physical activity are given the highest priority when developing or maintaining streets and roads.

We welcome the recognition that walking and cycling play an important role in promoting good health and the need to extend the Redway into new developments.

However, in order to promote walking and cycling we need to pay close attention to removing barriers and promoting behavioural change.

### CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

The Original planning of Milton Keynes with separate redways (shared cycle and pedestrian paths) provides a large safe and integrated network of routes.

Multiple studies have concluded that safety is seen as the biggest barrier to the uptake of cycling.

We note the recent degradation of the planning and the infrastructure, exemplified by the introduction of;

- 'city roads' with no graded pedestrian or cycle crossings
- Redirection of National Cycle Network from Central Milton Keynes
- Closing pedestrian/cycling underpasses at Sainsburys, Avebury Blvd.
- providing at grade Redway crossings of grid roads with traffic lights instead of grade separated crossings in Broughton to Brooklands
- the removal of Redway bollards. An important signpost of redway routes at MK station.

We note the proposed growth of Milton Keynes and the original design limit of 250,000 inhabitants. MK is dominated by motor vehicles. Already we see the impact of unrestrained car use with trading estate roads blocked by parked cars all day long and tailbacks on grid roads at peak times. Milton Keynes grid network was designed for 250,000 occupants which it has now surpassed.

The strong relationship between land use planning and transport planning in reducing travel distances, thus encouraging walking and cycling, needs more emphasis.

There is often little apparent co-ordination between housing schemes, eg poor walking and cycling links to existing routes.

We note that original towns, eg. Bletchley and Newport Pagnell are poorly connected to the Redway Infrastructure.

We note that important destinations are poorly served by the redway network, eg. Milton Keynes Central train station (1 route) and Milton Keynes shopping centre (2 routes).

Why are walking and cycling popular in the Netherlands? They have designed car routes to be indirect, subject to slow speeds and with little parking provided. On the other hand, walking and cycling routes are direct, not 'round the houses', attractive and enjoyable to use.

Public transport is important to cyclists as part of mixed mode transport, reduces the number of cars on the roads, again helping cyclists. We would like to see good redway links to the main transport hubs, train and bus stations.

We note that recent commercial and residential developments, such as Costco, Aldi and Sainsburys have no cycle parking provision, despite planning rules. We note that cycle parking is prescribed in London developments and must be signed off by planners.

Further infrastructure such as good cycle parking needs to be part of any plan. All new residential and commercial property should have sufficient resources to support the planned growth. This provision needs to be delivered with inducements for those who ignore the requirements.

### Targets

There are few targets in the MK Plan and there seems an unwillingness to commit future planning and development to follow the same principles on which Milton Keynes was founded. The Mayor of London has set a target that 80 per cent of journeys in the capital to be made by public transport, cycling or walking by 2041. Why are there no such targets in the Plan?

From the Plan, we note;

15.21 One of the core National Planning Policy Framework principles (para 17) is to 'actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling'

It is noted that the government cycling delivery plan aims to double bicycle stages by 2025.<sup>3</sup>

It is MK cycling forum's opinion, that a strategy needs targets to be an effective mechanism in order to facilitate real changes.

We further note Propensity to Cycle<sup>4</sup> have carried out research showing the potential to grow cycling modal share by region. This tool shows Milton Keynes to have great potential for cycling to grow, as commuter distances are less than 10Km for the majority. With a Dutch style culture 20% Modal share is predicted and with E-Bikes the share has potential to cater for 30% of all traffic.

### Finance

We support the strong promotion of walking and cycling. However, the level of funding per head of the population remains very low compared say with the Netherlands and even London. This results in poor maintenance, missing links especially to and from recent developments and to surrounding villages in adjacent local authority areas, eg Old Stratford – Cosgrove. The lack of Redway snow clearance during the recent cold snap, compared to the attention given to roads, is another example of the lack of priority, even though the most vulnerable are affected.

MK Cycling Forum would like to see walking and cycling funding increased from the present mediocre level of about £2 per head annually to a level equivalent to the level of leading pro-cycling nations in Europe, and even in London, of about £20.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1/ Priority needs to be given to sustainable healthy transport modes, cycling and walking, such that they have a chance to displace the polluting modes. Cycle routes need to be as direct and uninterrupted as possible to compete with cars; especially from main residential to major destinations. Junctions should prioritise sustainable modes with safe infrastructure, such as underpasses or bridges.

All communities should be well connected to safe cycle paths. Planning for new developments needs to fully consider the needs of cycling as a transport system. Sufficient cycle parking, especially covered and secure parking must be provided by prescribed rules depending on size and type of business. Rules need to be implemented by formal process of signoff with penalties for non-conformance.

2/ Targets need to be set in line with government targets for health promotion, pollution reduction and sustainable principles. We would recommend a cycling mode target of 10% by 2025 and 20% by 2040 be set as a minimum.

3/ Finance needs to be set aside to develop and maintain a fully functioning cycle network that is universal, and safe throughout the day and year. We recommend a target of £20 per person per year. This should be focused to provide for new linkages with important transport hubs and underserved residential and commercial areas.

### References

1. The Lancet Commission on pollution and health Oct 2017
2. NICE Guidelines NG90 (Mar 2018)
3. Cycling Delivery plan October 2014
4. Propensity To Bike, [www.pct.bike](http://www.pct.bike)

## Appendix

### POLICY CT2 MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

We support the ambitions described. We stress the need to integrate land use planning and transport planning, the need to challenge climate change and air pollution but also the importance of the public rights of way network, often the poor relation, but always vital in promoting access to the attractive countryside both inside Milton Keynes and beyond.

### WALKING AND CYCLING

#### POLICY CT3 WALKING AND CYCLING

A Walking and cycling routes are preferable away from roads, especially grid roads.

B We agree that traffic calming needs to take into account cyclists. Speed pads with gaps are preferable to continuous ones.

C Road crossings are important for walkers and cyclists. Grade separated ones are preferred and grade ones in recent development are unsatisfactory for all road users, whether in a car, on foot or on a bike. Many of the existing Redway grade crossings of estate roads turning in from grid roads are clearly potentially dangerous with walkers and cyclists have to give way to motor vehicles turning in from behind. Generally, this failure to give priority to walkers and cyclists at all road junctions is a major failure of the Redway. At the same time there is another failure that needs addressing, that is the lack of priority marking at three and four way Redway junctions, a situation aggravated by poor or non-existent sight lines.

D See above comments.

E` Too often we see a failure to make cycle parking and changing/showers a planning permission condition and even when this has been made a failure to ensure that this is provided in the final scheme.

F We support cycle hire schemes and regret the acts of vandalism that have reduced the success of the Santander scheme.

G We support the creation of new walking and cycling routes from nearby settlements, including those beyond the Milton Keynes boundary, to Milton Keynes. Public rights of way are equally important to both walkers and cyclists, as well as horse riders. The National Cycle Network is an important part of the Milton Keynes walking and cycling network. The

route through CMK needs to be given a higher priority and advice to dismount is clearly unsatisfactory. The Network manages to provide continuous cycling through Oxford, by no means a new city, yet fails to do so in Milton Keynes, the newest of new cities.

#### Other Issues - Technology

Cycling UK is concerned about the introduction without consultation of driverless vehicles on the Redway. We see already removal of Redway bollards, an iconic feature that both informs and warns. USA evidence shows there are teething problems as to how these vehicles react to walkers and cyclists. We fail also to see any health benefits, especially regarding obesity.