

Milton Keynes Strategy for 2050

Milton Keynes Council

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Foreword

Milton Keynes is a special place

This Strategy for 2050 sets out how we will keep and strengthen those things that make us special – our beautiful green spaces and trees, being able to move around easily using our grid roads and Redways, our vibrant economy, and our diverse communities and strong community spirit.

But we must also tackle threats to our success and wellbeing, including the global challenge of climate change, the affordability of homes, and the fact that many children in our thriving city live in poverty.

No great city sits back and waits to see what happens. We want everyone living in Milton Keynes to lead happy, healthy lives and believe that growing our city and economy is the best way to provide this.

The Milton Keynes way has always been to look ahead, think differently and create our own future – that is why I established the MK Futures 2050 Commission in 2015 to help us create a new vision for our great city. A new long-term strategy was one of their recommendations and we have produced this through detailed research but, more importantly, by listening to our citizens and businesses. I want to thank everyone who helped us by sharing their views.

Back in 1970, the original Plan for Milton Keynes showed a vision of the thriving city we live in today. That Plan was flexible to deal with new circumstances and this new Strategy takes the same approach.

Uncertainty and disruption make it even more important to have a clear and ambitious vision. COVID-19 may have changed how we live right now,

but it hasn't changed our ambition for low-carbon growth and an excellent quality of life for everyone in Milton Keynes, especially the children and young people who will be our future citizens, and those who choose to move here and join us in the ongoing story of our great city.

Cllr Pete Marland
Leader, Milton Keynes Council



MILTON
KEYNES
FUTURES:
2050



Contents

Foreword from Cllr Pete Marland, Leader of Milton Keynes Council	3
Chapter One Introduction	6
Seven Big Ambitions for Milton Keynes in 2050	8
Planning positively for growth	9
Milton Keynes at the heart of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc	9
Our growing population	10
Greater Milton Keynes	10
The Voices of our Young People – Postcards from the Future	12
Chapter Two Our successes, challenges and opportunities	15
Milton Keynes Today	17
Our Challenges	19
Chapter Three A Sustainable and Green City	21
Acting to address climate change	23
A Green and Blue City	27
Chapter Four Affordable and High-Quality Homes	30
Affordable homes for all	32
Getting the right mix	32
Increasing the supply of affordable options	33
Regeneration and our existing homes	34
Widening our range of homes	34
Chapter Five Our Diverse and Inclusive Economy	36
An inclusive and flexible economy; jobs in a range of sectors	38
Skills for the future	39
The scale of jobs growth	40
The location of jobs growth – where will people work?	41

Chapter Six Mobility for All	43
The importance of mobility for all	45
The impact of our mobility choices	45
More cycling and walking	46
A Mass Rapid Transit network	46
The wider mobility network	51
The road network	52
Chapter Seven Central Milton Keynes and Our Centres	53
Central Milton Keynes	55
Central Bletchley	58
A rich network of Local Centres	58
Supporting our rural communities	60
Chapter Eight Healthy and Creative Places	61
Our commitment to quality placemaking	63
Our Creative and Cultured City	66
Chapter Nine The 2050 Spatial Strategy	69
Our Recommended Strategy	71
Building Communities	75
Building in Flexibility	75
Chapter Ten Making it Happen	76
A new delivery model	78
Vision and leadership	79
Value capture and infrastructure provision	80
Future stewardship	81
Partnership working	81
Achieving our Big Ambitions	81
A note on the Strategy for 2050	82
References and Links	83

Chapter One | Introduction

Chapter One | Introduction

Our city is a special place. Everywhere, rich, peaceful landscapes surround our homes. Our networks of parks and lakes are gifts which keep on giving. Our city centre is one of the nation's most popular places to go shopping. We can easily travel around the city by car and our Redways provide traffic-free routes for walkers, cyclists and e-scooters. Being a good

place to do business has made Milton Keynes the fastest growing city in the country.

Since the early 1950s, this part of North Buckinghamshire has been popular with families moving from London. Pioneers moved to a Bigger, Better, Brighter Bletchley and then to Milton Keynes: City of Trees. We have thrived by welcoming newcomers from all parts of

the world and our diversity is an immense strength. Now, much of our growth comes from our children, and their children, building their families here. But today, not everyone shares in this prosperity.

It can be difficult for some residents to get around our city or to access a good job. Too many of our young people live in poverty and do not gain the skills that they need to make their way in life. By 2050, some 410,000 people will live

in Milton Keynes borough, part of a Greater Milton Keynes of around half a million. Our Strategy for 2050 starts with some big promises to the residents of Milton Keynes today and in the decades to come. We will strengthen those things that make Milton Keynes special and deal with our weaknesses.

This Strategy is for everyone, but especially our children and young people who are the future of our great city.



This **Milton Keynes Strategy for 2050** sets the way forward for the next era of making our great city greater. It is a strategy for everyone living in Milton Keynes today, especially the children and young people who will be our future citizens, as well as those who will choose to move here to be part of a globally leading green city.

Our city is a place different to any other, with our network of parks and lakes within a few minutes' walk of homes and our distinctive grid road system, Redways and iconic city centre, animated by our extensive public art collection. We have created the largest designed city in Europe, internationally known for our modern heritage. Our individual grid square estates are complemented by our older towns and villages, each with its own character and community.

Our vibrant economy has provided jobs with good prospects for young people, and we can walk and cycle safely and move around by car more easily than in any other place. It all adds up to MK being a successful, attractive and popular place to live, work and spend time, and this **Strategy for 2050** protects those qualities.



“ 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



Since the early 1950s, this part of North Buckinghamshire has been popular with families moving from London. Pioneers moved to a Bigger, Better, Brighter Bletchley and then to Milton Keynes: City of Trees. In 1970, the original **Plan for Milton Keynes** provided a vision to the 60,000 people living here then, the families who were to move here and their children born here, of the thriving city we live in today. That original plan was flexible to adapt to new circumstances which meant not everything that happened followed the Plan. Back then we didn't know that the way we lived would contribute to climate change or how

computers (pioneered at Bletchley Park) would change the way we earn a living, communicate, shop and travel. And the Plan did not anticipate a Milton Keynes where so many of our families live in poverty and where people in some of our communities die 7.5 years earlier on average than their near neighbours.

We are already seeing the impact of climate change with more frequent and extreme weather events. Global warming threatens our economy, our quality of life and our natural environment. We need to be bold and imaginative so we can meet our ambition of Milton Keynes being

carbon neutral by 2030 and carbon negative by 2050.

Very recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has made us all think about how we live. The crisis has accelerated the trends we were already seeing in online shopping and homeworking and has helped us to see different possibilities for the future.

Many people appreciated being in a place with fewer cars and cleaner air and enjoyed walking and cycling as part of their daily exercise. Our network of green spaces, parks and lakes never seemed more precious

and we became more aware of the value of caring for each other. Instead of trying to get back to 'normal' we want to make things better for our residents, particularly those that haven't been able to share fully in the success of Milton Keynes so far.

Our city has grown up through major economic crises and enormous social change over the last five decades and we know that having a flexible, long-term plan has helped to create a great place. The Milton Keynes way has always been to look ahead, think differently and create our own future.

Seven Big Ambitions for Milton Keynes in 2050

We want everyone living in Milton Keynes to lead happy, healthy lives and we believe that growing our city and economy is the best way to provide this. Our aim is to grow by a steady population increase to around 410,000 people living in the borough by 2050. Our flexible development framework can support growth beyond this total under the right conditions.

This Strategy for 2050 offers Seven Big Ambitions which together act as our promise to those living here today and those who wish to make their homes here in future. We will:

1



Strengthen those qualities that make Milton Keynes SPECIAL

2



Make Milton Keynes a LEADING GREEN AND CULTURAL CITY - by global standards

3




Ensure everyone has their own DECENT HOME to rent or buy

4



Build safe communities that support HEALTH AND WELLBEING

5



PROVIDE JOBS FOR EVERYONE by supporting our businesses, and attracting new ones

6



Offer better opportunities for everyone TO LEARN and develop their skills

7



Make it EASIER FOR EVERYONE to travel on foot, by bike and with better public transport



Planning positively for growth

The original 1970 ambition for the new city was to grow to around 250,000 people and we've already reached that point. Our great location and transport connections mean this momentum will continue. We are at the centre of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc which will boost our economy even further.

But continuing to grow does not by itself guarantee success. We must plan to strengthen what works

well and make sure every resident in every part of Milton Keynes can benefit from our prosperity. This includes making available the infrastructure and services such as transport, health, social care, schools, shops, leisure, sports and cultural facilities that are essential for our existing and new communities. By planning this upfront we can make the case for investments that will serve us well into the future, rather than reacting as pressures arise. Knowing how big our city is likely to be long-term has recently

helped **Milton Keynes University Hospital** to secure investment from government to create a new Women and Children's Hospital. Milton Keynes is a living example of how well-planned growth can produce better lives and better places. We will continue to provide city-wide green space alongside other essential infrastructure and services and make sure we join up our approach so that development does not put pressure on our communities and environment. For example, as our economy grows,

we will ensure our residents have the education and skills to access the new jobs and provide affordable homes for our expanding workforce. This will help to address poverty and reduce pressure on house prices and the need for in-commuting, which in turn will reduce carbon emissions.

By planning, we will have more local democratic control over development so we can ensure it is done well and that local people are involved in decisions about their communities. If we lack a clear vision

and fail to plan, housebuilders will have greater influence over where and when development occurs, which would mean unplanned growth without all the infrastructure our communities need.

Failure to build enough homes would lead to even greater increases in house prices than in recent years, making it ever more difficult for our residents and their children to afford a home to buy or rent. Aiming to slow or stop the city from growing and changing would undermine our economy so fewer jobs would be created and we would have less to invest in public services and the upkeep of our existing infrastructure. The heaviest burdens would fall on our most disadvantaged people, a risk that is even more severe as we face the economic challenges triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Milton Keynes at the heart of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc

The need for a new strategy was identified by the **MK Futures 2050 Commission** established by **Milton Keynes Council** in 2015 to help us create a vision for the next phase of our city's journey. The Commission's report, **Making a Great City Greater**,

was published in July 2016 and recommended that we take forward Six Big Projects and prepare this **Strategy for 2050**. The Commission also proposed that Milton Keynes should grow to a population of around 400,000 people by 2050 and set out a broad approach for where that development could happen. The vision and direction of their findings received unanimous support from the different political groups on **Milton Keynes Council** and have provided the basis for this Strategy.

Milton Keynes sits at the centre of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc (as shown in **Figure One**), an area of world-leading universities and research institutions with many businesses in areas such as technology and high-performance engineering that will be important for the UK's future economy. Milton Keynes is well placed to benefit from these opportunities and to grow strongly. In 2017, a **National Infrastructure Commission** (NIC) study of the Arc 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"*.

Our growing population

Our current local plan for Milton Keynes, **Plan:MK**, was agreed in March 2019. It sets an annual housing growth target to meet the needs of our growing population and economy for the years to 2031 and identifies sites where those homes can be built. On those sites, plus others that already have planning permission, there are plans for around 25,000 new homes. Just building these homes would see the number of people living in the borough increase to at least 335,000 people from the 270,000 that live here today.

With more people being born here, and with people moving to the city because it is an attractive place to live, we expect Milton Keynes will continue to grow beyond 2031 at around the same rate, or slightly higher, to reach a population of around 410,000 people in 2050. So, in addition to the homes we know will already be built, this Strategy plans for a further 30,000-35,000 homes across the borough by 2050.

The rate of housebuilding is affected by many factors including the economy, the availability of materials and skilled tradespeople and,

Figure One: Oxford-Cambridge Arc



most immediately, the COVID-19 pandemic. We have designed our Strategy to be flexible to cope with uncertainties and recognise that the population of 410,000 could be met earlier or later than 2050. We will support growth beyond this level under the right conditions. These include government commitment to the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and investment in affordable housing, our mass rapid transit system and our new university.

In **Chapter Nine**, we describe where future development should happen, and throughout this Strategy we explain the principles that will guide growth to create a healthy sustainable and inclusive future for Milton Keynes and all our residents.



Greater Milton Keynes

This **Strategy for 2050** is about the future development of Milton Keynes borough, but we have also thought about the wider area and economy because people travel across council boundaries for day-to-day access to work, shops, leisure and other services. We think of this area as a 'Greater' Milton Keynes that covers the immediately neighbouring parts of Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire and Central Bedfordshire. Their towns and villages add to the area's attractiveness and prosperity. Around 315,000 people live in Greater Milton Keynes today (which includes the 270,000 people that live within Milton Keynes borough).

Advanced plans exist for around another 10,000 homes to be built in the parts of Greater Milton Keynes outside the borough, including major developments at Marston Vale and Salden Chase¹.

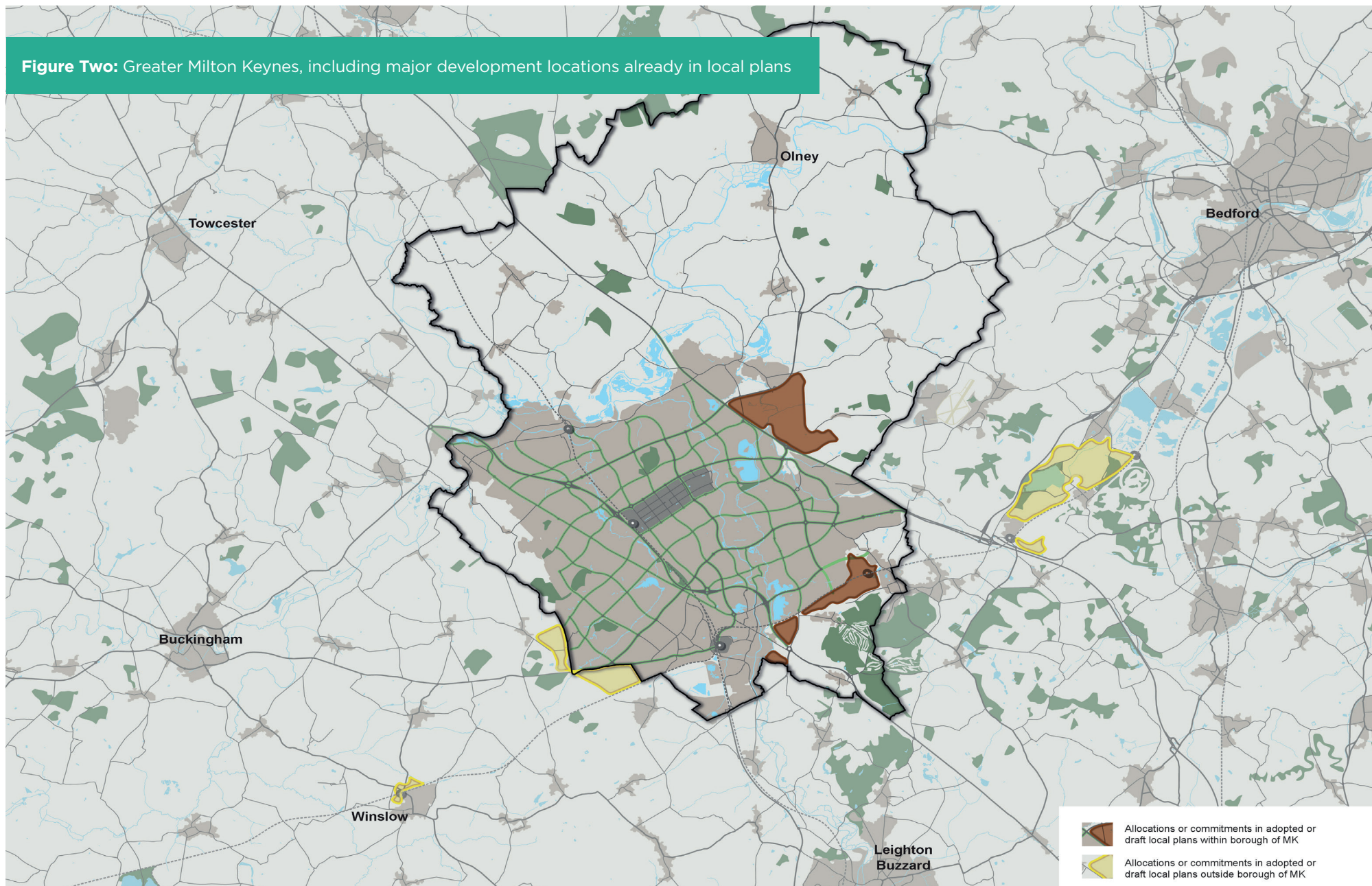
These are shown on the map at **Figure Two**. We estimate that by 2050 there might be a further 10,000 more homes built in those neighbouring areas. When added to the growth we expect within the borough this means a total

population across Greater Milton Keynes of around half a million people at some point in the middle of this century.

This **Strategy for 2050** does not specify development sites in our neighbouring areas; we know that is a decision for the relevant councils and that any homes built are counted towards their housing targets. But we have considered how development might work best across boundaries, especially when thinking about how people move around for work and their day-to-day needs and which areas are likely to continue grow over the coming decades. We have also thought about the natural environment and other constraints and opportunities that cut across council boundaries. We hope to work with our neighbours to develop plans that create high quality development and joined up infrastructure and services to benefit the residents of the borough of Milton Keynes and those who live in its neighbouring areas.

¹ Milton Keynes Council has expressed its concern with the detail of recent proposals for development just beyond the borough boundary at Shenley Park and Salden Chase, including the potential impact on the city's infrastructure and the need for proper integration with existing communities.

Figure Two: Greater Milton Keynes, including major development locations already in local plans

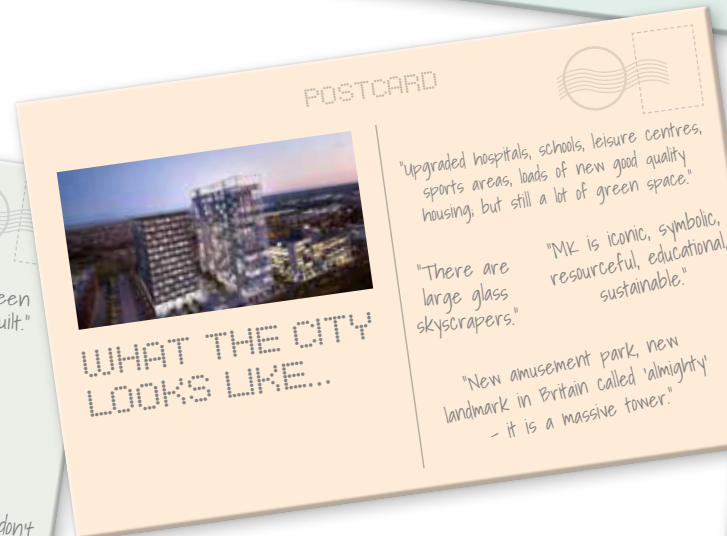


POSTCARDS FROM THE FUTURE

The Voices of our Young People

We wish to create the best possible future for all our people, especially our young people. As we developed our Strategy, we invited some of our future citizens to share their visions of Milton Keynes in 2050.

What did they think their city would look like? What would be important to them, their family and friends? The quotes below are from the 'Postcards' they wrote from their imagined future.



Chapter Two | Our successes, challenges and opportunities

Chapter Two | Our successes, challenges and opportunities

Today, our green and beautiful Milton Keynes is home to around 270,000 people. Many people have moved here, attracted by a job, a good home and a good life. As our families continue to grow and we attract more newcomers, our population remains younger than most other UK cities but is growing older at a faster rate.

Our iconic landscapes and city centre, our grid road network and Redways, our ready supply of homes in vibrant communities – and our workforce – have also attracted thousands of entrepreneurs and companies to invest in Milton Keynes. We have a productive, resilient economy and unemployment is low compared with other UK cities. And sitting at the heart of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, digital, engineering and technology will be important to our future economic strength.

Yet, some of our neighbourhoods are among the most deprived in England. Our public transport

system does not always provide ready access to job opportunities so our residents without access to a car can be at a disadvantage. Those living in the most deprived areas die up to 7.5 years earlier, on average, than those in the wealthiest neighbourhoods. Child poverty is high. And our skills levels and schools should be much better for a place with such high ambitions for its residents. Nationally, COVID-19 has had a higher impact in more deprived areas, a pattern that is likely to be the same here.

Our Strategy to 2050 sets out how we will continue to promote economic growth and play our part in the global climate emergency, side by side with ensuring that everyone who lives here can share the benefits of this growth. Accelerating social mobility – making it easier for those in deprived communities to gain further skills, secure a good job, and live in an affordable home in a healthy neighbourhood – will be key to our collective future prosperity.



Milton Keynes Today

Milton Keynes residents love their city for all the things that make it different. As the largest and most successful of the UK's new towns, it was built for growth and it has delivered on that purpose as the country's fastest growing city over the past three decades. Our success is driven by the people who recognise MK as a great place to live and the entrepreneurs and companies who have invested here. Our city has thrived through welcoming newcomers from all parts of the world and from people born and raised in MK who choose to stay and raise their families here.



Our people

Our people are our greatest asset, and we have made it a priority to nurture our communities. In the first days of the new city, community development workers helped the early pioneers make their home here. Our high levels of volunteering and our many active community, sports and other local interest groups demonstrate the city's strong community spirit. During the COVID-19 pandemic, our voluntary and community organisations have played an essential role in our communities and many new local groups sprang up to support our vulnerable residents.



We are a highly diverse place, which is an immense strength. The proportion of children in our schools from a BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) family is now at around 44%. Whilst our population is comparatively young, the number of older people is increasing at a rate well above the average for England.

Our place

As we continue to grow, we want to protect those things that are so important to the city's character. Our network of open spaces, parks, woodlands, lakes, canals and rivers, linked by paths and Redways, provide beautiful, accessible places for people to exercise and spend time – so valuable for our mental and physical health. This network also provides important habitats for wildlife and plants, manages flood

risk, helps to improve air quality and reduce our carbon footprint.

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 our city. In the Greater Milton Keynes area beyond the borough boundary, there are small, characterful towns and villages that relate closely to Milton Keynes and our economy and facilities.

Creating new communities is in our DNA and today we are recognised as one of the best places for 'good growth' that balances jobs, skills and health alongside relatively affordable housing, transport, work-life balance and the environment.



will be key stations, connecting EWR and the West Coast Mainline. Our strong north-south connectivity will also be improved when HS2 opens, releasing space for more frequent services to London and the Midlands on the West Coast Mainline.

shared ownership homes and led the way on carbon off-setting policies. Our innovation continues today with autonomous delivery robots – a scheme that was invaluable to many residents during the 2020 lockdown – and trials of driverless vehicles.

Our innovation

Milton Keynes is famous for being “different by design” and for its fresh thinking. We had the UK’s first solar powered house, built the first

The structure of our city was designed to be flexible and help us adapt to new circumstances over time. In our neighbourhoods, sites were reserved to provide space for future community facilities and our

Our economy

Our prime location, at the crossroads between London and Birmingham, Oxford and Cambridge, has helped build a strong economy and we are rated the third most productive UK city outside London. MK is at the heart of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc of high-tech businesses and 182,000 people work in our borough across a wide range of sectors. We are particularly strong in knowledge-intensive business sectors including digital, engineering and technology, business, financial and professional services and the logistics and distribution sector. The COVID-19

pandemic has had a major impact on employment in Milton Keynes with rising unemployment and many people furloughed from their roles.

Our connections

Our distinctive network of high-speed grid roads makes car travel generally fast and easy, with little congestion outside peak hours and quicker average journey times compared to other cities. East West Rail (EWR) will boost our excellent transport connections further, providing new rail links to Oxford (due to open in 2024) and to Cambridge (due to open by 2030). Bletchley and Milton Keynes Central



grid network was built with room to introduce new forms of transport. We can now take advantage of this forward thinking.

Innovation can also be seen in how our homes and communities were designed. Individual estates each have a unique character, building up a patchwork effect across the city. Some of our early estates were designed by up-and-coming architects and MK experimented with new methods for building sustainable homes, such as the Energy and Home World exhibitions in the 1980s.

Our city centre

Central Milton Keynes (CMK) demonstrates the modernist principles of the new city and still has space to grow alongside the employment, leisure, retail, cultural and residential activity we see today.

In 2018, around 41,500 people worked in CMK and many new developments have recently been completed or are underway. New apartment buildings, canal-side homes, hotels and high-spec offices are being built, including Santander's new UK technology hub for 6,000 employees.

Our Challenges

Our health and wellbeing

Despite our strengths and the good quality of life enjoyed by most of our people, we face challenges that mean many residents risk being left behind as the city grows. Some are in neighbourhoods that are among the most deprived in England and others do not have the skills needed to access good local jobs. This is not always the easy-to-navigate, welcoming city that the original pioneers and planners intended.

It can be hard for some of our residents to get around by public transport, making it difficult to get to workplaces or other opportunities, especially for those who don't have access to a car. This can make poverty and deprivation even worse as car ownership is often lowest in our more disadvantaged areas. We know that child poverty in MK is at a high level and rising and that the health of our residents is unequal across the city with big differences in life expectancy between neighbourhoods and earlier deaths from coronary and cardiovascular disease compared to national averages. Nationally, COVID-19 has had a higher impact in



more deprived areas from both a health and financial perspective, a pattern that is likely to be the same here.

Our affordability

In some ways, our strong local economy has added to our challenges. As jobs have been created, the number of houses built has not always kept up and we have exceeded the historic target of creating 1.5 additional jobs for each new home. This places upward pressure on house prices. Private rents and our affordability ratio (house prices compared to earnings) have sharply increased and more people are homeless or in temporary accommodation.

Our skills

The average skill and qualification levels of our residents are now slightly above the national average, but many local companies still struggle to find local workers with the right skills. To be resilient to economic shocks, such as the COVID-19 recession, and meet our ambition for truly inclusive growth, we need to boost the skills of residents so that everyone can benefit from the city's economic

success. Without a better balance of jobs and homes and a skilled local workforce we will rely more and more on workers commuting into Milton Keynes with the resulting carbon emissions, congestion and lower incomes in local communities.

Most of our primary schools achieve a 'good' Ofsted rating, and our students achieve grades that meet the national expectations. Not all our secondary schools perform at the high level we expect but we are working closely together to support our young people who have had their education disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We know that some of our young people's mental health has suffered over this time but are committed to ensuring they are not left behind and can take a full part in the future of our city.

Our carbon agenda

Today, there is widespread global recognition that we must change how we live, work and travel to preserve the planet's scarce natural resources. We have set an ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030 and carbon negative by 2050. Milton Keynes already has made significant progress, achieving a 30% reduction in carbon emissions per head of

population since 2013. We must continue this trend with a strong focus on emissions from transport as these have seen no reduction over the same period. And as individuals and businesses, we will all need to take action that contributes to meeting our ambitious targets.

Our CMK challenges

Our city centre has been doing well and prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the shopping centre had bucked the national trend of declining footfall. But there remains a lack of buzz. Only around 3,500 people live in CMK today and despite the large numbers of companies based in the city centre, parts of it sometimes feel deserted.

We're also missing the flexible, pop-up or cheaper spaces suitable for independent retail, leisure, culture and entertainment ventures.

The COVID-19 pandemic has added to the challenges by accelerating trends in online shopping and home working, both of which impact on our city centre economy and footfall.

Our Strategy for 2050

Our **Strategy for 2050** gives us the opportunity to create a stronger, healthier future for our city and young people. We will build on our strengths to address our challenges. The following chapters set out our approach for how we will achieve this ambition.



Chapter Three | A Sustainable and Green City

Chapter Three | A Sustainable and Green City

Half a century ago, when the original Plan for Milton Keynes was published, there was little concern about climate change anywhere in the world. Today, there is widespread global recognition that we must change how we live, work and travel to preserve the planet's scarce natural resources. Our citizens and businesses – and the council – passionately recognise the need for the city

to become carbon neutral by 2030. Our Strategy to 2050 sets out the next steps in this journey.

The Strategy highlights the need to make a major change in how our city works over the next three decades. As transport is now the largest source of carbon emissions in Milton Keynes, we must minimise the need to travel by car. We will be promoting walkable, compact mixed-

use developments, making walking and cycling the first choice for shorter journeys, and developing a Mass Rapid Transit system for longer journeys.

Since the early 1980s, we have been pioneers in promoting energy conservation, recycling and solar energy generation. We will encourage private investment, and continue to invest ourselves, in waste recovery and recycling, energy

generation from renewable sources, reducing emissions and energy conservation. And, of most importance, we will continue to invest in and expand our 'green and blue' infrastructure – our parks, lakes, and wildlife areas that are loved by our residents and provide major health benefits. This will ensure that Milton Keynes is still a green city leading the world.



Acting to address climate change

Since the early days of the new city, we have been pioneers in promoting energy conservation, recycling, and solar energy generation. Alongside our many other ‘firsts’ were the UK’s first solar heated house in 1972, being the first council to adopt energy standards in buildings and introducing the UK’s first kerbside recycling collection in 1992. We aim to continue this strong track record and for Milton Keynes to be recognised as a green city leading the world.

“Milton Keynes can be the world’s greenest and most sustainable city, using the opportunities of growth to tackle the challenges of climate change and resource competition to create a more prosperous city for all our people and future generations which is carbon negative by 2050.”

Milton Keynes Sustainability Strategy, 2019-2050, Vision

When the original **Plan for Milton Keynes** was published, there was little concern about climate change anywhere in the world. At that time, quality of life and lower energy bills were the drivers for change rather than concern over global warming. Today, there is widespread recognition of the need to act urgently and we are committed to playing our part.

We have set a challenging ambition for Milton Keynes to be carbon neutral by 2030 and carbon negative by 2050. There is great passion amongst our residents to live more sustainably and we will work with them and local businesses on the new approaches that are needed to make this possible. An Action Plan will set out how the **Sustainability Strategy** will be delivered.

Land use and travel

Planning policy can make a major contribution. We aim to make more efficient use of land through higher density development in appropriate locations. We will give priority to reusing “brownfield” sites that have previously been developed and to places that are, or will be, well served by public transport.

We have shown national leadership in promoting electric cars and buses and will continue to do so. But even when all cars are electric powered, and more of the nation’s electricity comes from renewable sources, transport will still be a major source of carbon emissions. A major part of our strategy is to introduce a Mass Rapid Transit network for the city, described in **Chapter Six**, that will help us all to move about in a more energy efficient way. And in **Chapter Eight** we explain our approach to creating neighbourhoods that are more compact and walkable with services and facilities within easy reach so that the need to travel by car is reduced.

Sustainable neighbourhoods and buildings

Milton Keynes has been a world leader in eco-homes and sustainable design since the city’s Home World, Future World and Energy World exhibitions in the 1980s and 1990s. These demonstrated how homes could be more sustainable and energy efficient. We will continue to be a pioneer in green construction.

The design of new communities and the changes we can make in existing neighbourhoods will help



to create more sustainable lifestyles and improve our resilience to climate change. We will require new buildings and development schemes to meet the highest standards of sustainability. This will include:

- the building materials used
- minimising construction waste
- positioning buildings to maximise solar gain
- using solar panels and green roofs
- installing water and energy efficient appliances and technologies
- electric vehicle charging points
- replacing gas heating.

Our approach will include schemes like BREEAM and Passivhaus that rate the energy performance of buildings as these can help enforce high standards. We will also help our residents to understand how to manage their homes in the most sustainable way, including the most efficient way to heat or cool their property.

Meeting our ambitious carbon reduction targets will require the building industry to make major changes to the way it operates. This may add costs and lead to concern

about whether some development schemes will be financially viable. But recent research by the **UK Green Building Council** has looked at the cost and design challenges in achieving net zero carbon performance and recognises that new technology in the coming years will make these targets more achievable and affordable.

The requirement to improve sustainability must be balanced against the urgent need to provide homes that are affordable to buy or rent, and to live in.

Waste recovery and recycling

We are in the top 5% nationally for recycling and, using innovative technology, we generate renewable energy from the waste that cannot be recycled. The Milton Keynes Waste Recovery Park was opened in March 2018 and continues our pioneering approach to sustainability. It brings together state-of-the-art technologies to treat residual waste collected from homes in Milton Keynes.

Together, the technologies increase the amount of recyclable materials which are removed from the waste, in turn cutting the amount of rubbish sent to landfill to around 3%. The treatment processes generate enough energy to power around 11,000 homes.

Energy generated from waste in this way will be used to power our low emission council vehicles including refuse collection lorries and street cleaning services, and potentially electric bus services. This will create a 'circular' economy, where a waste product from one process is used in another.

We are exploring ways to extend this circular economy approach

including using organic food and garden waste to produce gas and provide compost that can be used in our city parks.

Energy Generation, Consumption and Storage

All new development and buildings will be required to meet the highest standards for the efficient use of energy and we will retrofit existing buildings and operations to bring them up to the same level. These changes must be cost-effective for residents and building owners so that the benefits, including lower utility bills, can be shared by all.

We will continue with the approach of our Carbon Offset Fund that has run since 2008. This uses money from new developments to fund improvements in older homes in the city, including cavity wall and loft insulation and providing cashback on new, efficient boilers.

We will also reduce carbon emissions by having more energy generated from renewable sources, such as biomass heating systems and wind and solar farms. We will support the creation of community energy networks that help communities work together to



save and generate energy through measures such as collectively switching electricity suppliers and installing neighbourhood solar and other renewable energy schemes.

New developments provide the opportunity to install local heat and power schemes upfront alongside other essential infrastructure.

As part of the regeneration of the Lakes Estate, a new on-site energy centre is planned that will generate heat and hot water for residents. It is expected to reduce energy bills

for residents by up to 70% and help cut the carbon footprint of each household by 50%.

Energy storage systems will be an important part of our approach. These can help manage the peaks and troughs of daily and seasonal demand for power by storing energy when it is in surplus and later releasing it back into the network when it is needed more. These systems work particularly well for managing wind and solar systems which do not generate a steady and predictable supply of power.



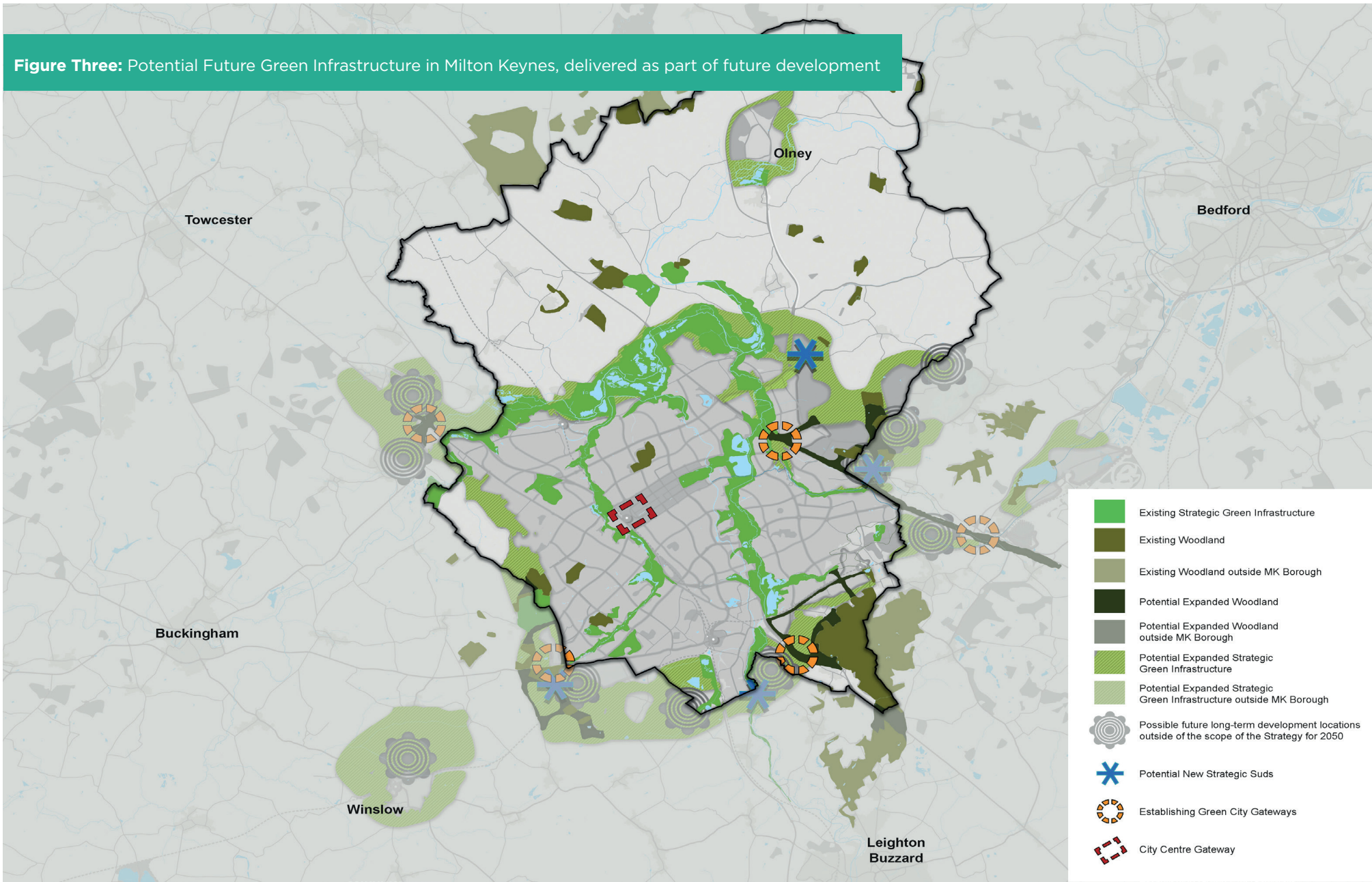
To accelerate the delivery of energy projects across Milton Keynes we are creating an **Energy and Carbon Hub**. This brings together a team with the professional skills to secure investment and develop projects that will contribute toward our ambition for net zero carbon development.

Reducing water consumption

And, while our residents use less water each day than average (131 litres each, compared to 150 litres nationally), a growing population and the risk of increased drought through climate change mean we

must use our water resources more effectively. Our aim is to reduce use to fewer than 110 litres of water per person per day through approaches like the harvesting and storage of rainwater, stormwater and 'grey' water (which is waste-water, other than from toilets, from people's homes). We will also design communities to be water 'smart'. The use of hi-tech sensors in water pipes and systems can help to pinpoint leaks. Within homes, sensors can be linked to apps and allow households to monitor and manage how they are using water, helping sustainability as well as cutting costs.

Figure Three: Potential Future Green Infrastructure in Milton Keynes, delivered as part of future development



A Green and Blue City

Everywhere in Milton Keynes, rich, peaceful landscapes surround our homes. Our 'green' network of open spaces, parks and woodlands and our 'blue' network of lakes, rivers, canal and brooks are gifts which keep on giving. Their value was reinforced during the COVID-19 lockdown when we used them for exercise, leisure and active travel which helped our mental and physical health. Our green and blue networks also provide important habitats for wildlife, support water management and help to reduce

air pollution and store carbon. These benefits were a carefully planned aspect of Milton Keynes and today our 'parkland city' is widely admired – Campbell Park was recently awarded Grade II Registered Park and Garden status.

We have an ambition to be the greenest city and our aim is that around 40% of the city will continue to be green and blue space. The principle of early planning and delivery of green and blue infrastructure is central to our approach. We will create more large-scale open spaces as we grow,



Our physical and natural environment vision is to:

- conserve and protect existing sites of biodiversity, wildlife areas and the principles of multi-functional green spaces, linear parks, wildlife corridors and designated sites.
- restore and manage species and habitats appropriate to Milton Keynes and its wider regional physical and geographical context in a way that mitigates against and adapts to a changing climate.
- create new green infrastructure and biodiversity assets that are interconnected and integrate with the way ecosystems work and enhance the capacity of our natural environment to provide ecosystem services.
- engage people with natural environments rich in wildlife, enabling and promoting access to allow them to enjoy and experience the natural environment and the benefits to public health, regardless of age, race, ability or gender.

Milton Keynes Council 'Greenest City in the World' Physical and Natural Environment: Position Statement, 2019

including new country parks and major extensions to the linear park network to the south, east and west of the city, attracting people from across greater Milton Keynes.

As a first stage in planning those strategic spaces, we have developed a proposal that shows how our major green and blue infrastructure networks might look by 2050, as shown in **Figure Three**. This includes the concept of green gateways at key entry points to the city, which help to display our commitment to our green character.

Everyone should be within a few minutes' walk of a beautiful, open space that connects into the wider network of such spaces. Individual new developments will be required to provide new parks, paths and wildlife habitats. This will include many more trees and planting to help to make local neighbourhoods attractive and add to our quality of life, as well as maintain our green character.

The example of Stanton Low Park illustrates how new development can help produce the net gain in

green space and nature that we seek. The park was created through funding contributions made by the housing developer at Oakridge Park. It covers 57 hectares with meadows and grassland wildlife habitats, play equipment and informal open space that serve the residents of the 530 homes on the estate and beyond.

We will also improve connections in the existing networks, such as linking the Blue Lagoon to Waterhall Park, and fixing missing public rights of way to improve footpaths and bridleways to neighbouring settlements and new developments, as well as ensuring residents in our existing communities have excellent access to high quality open spaces near to their homes.

Milton Keynes – City of Trees

In his interview for the post of Milton Keynes' first Chief Architect, the late Derek Walker said that his ambition was for Milton Keynes to be *“a forest city greener than the surrounding countryside”*.

In its early days, millions of trees and shrubs were planted from the Development Corporation's own nurseries and we will ensure trees continue to be a defining feature

of our great city. We have made a commitment to plant two for every one that is lost. Using the principle of “Right Tree, Right Place” we will increase our stock of trees and tree canopy cover with a range of species. This will help to provide habitats for nature and shade and will also improve air quality and help prevent floods. Our approach will include creating pocket forests and expanding our existing woodland areas.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity refers to all the variety of life, including plants, animals, fungi and micro-organisms as well as to the habitats in which they live. We aim to create a net gain in biodiversity as we grow through conserving and restoring wildlife habitats and by creating new areas for plants and animals to flourish. We will be more ambitious than national policy requires. So, whilst we will protect Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Wildlife Sites and nature reserves, we will go further by creating connected wildlife habitats across the borough and beyond.

Local authority boundaries are arbitrary when it comes to



landscape features and habitats and we will work with neighbouring councils and other partners, including the **Environment Agency** and **Anglian Water**, to make sure we join-up across borders. This includes working with partners across the Oxford-Cambridge Arc to create a plan for the area that covers natural capital and ecosystems.

Managing water and preventing flooding

A consequence of climate change is the increased risk of surface water flooding and repeated property flooding. Our green network integrates with the blue infrastructure network of lakes, rivers, canal and other drainage systems and this helps protect us from all but the worst flood events. The original design of the city included balancing lakes such as those at Willen and Caldecotte which act as flood storage areas to direct flood water away from residential areas. Our blue network also provides further space for both wildlife and recreation.

We will continue to plan for water management at a city-wide level for existing areas as well as for future development areas, using our green



and blue infrastructure network. The frequency of high rainfall events is changing so we need to prioritise work to identify our flooding and drainage requirements as well as explore potential solutions, which may include new balancing lakes, local wet/dry ponds, and strategic river maintenance and management.

We also appreciate that in some of the older parts of Milton Keynes, the drainage networks can lack the capacity needed to be resilient against the climate changing and future growth, so we also need to assess requirements and solutions for those systems as a priority.

At the city scale and beyond we will work with our partners on strategic water management. This is especially important where we need to work across boundaries on shared issues such as managing the catchment area of the Great

Ouse river. We will also continue our support for other projects like the **Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway** and the restoration of the **Buckingham Canal**.

Maintenance and long-term stewardship

The maintenance of most of our green spaces is to a good standard but sometimes we cannot afford essential maintenance. In such places we may need to prioritise quality over quantity. This could mean supporting infill development on some small unbuilt areas within the city, especially where this generates funding to enhance other green spaces or helps to meet our ambition for inclusive growth in sustainable, walkable communities.

The long-term stewardship and maintenance of open space needs to be planned upfront. The **Parks**

Trust was set up in 1992 to own and manage the city's strategic open space network in perpetuity, and today cares for about 25% of the city area. This is supported by the rental income from its commercial property portfolio and allows the **Parks Trust** to focus on the management and protection of our open space network without having to compete with other public services for funding.

We will continue to support the Parks Trust model and involve them at the earliest stages of designing new open spaces and planning long-term maintenance.

The timing of delivery is also important. We want as much of the green infrastructure provision within a new development to be put in place early, before residents move in. This helps the housebuilder by making a new neighbourhood look its best and gives residents pride in their new home with green spaces they can spend time in straightaway.

But we need to make sure these spaces are well maintained and looked after long into the future so that Milton Keynes will continue to be the beautiful green and blue city we know today.

Chapter Four | Affordable and High-Quality Homes

Chapter Four | Affordable and High-Quality Homes

In 1967, government decided to build Milton Keynes to meet the urgent housing crisis in the south east of England. As the largest new town, the government saw the city as a project of national importance. Fifty years later, the National Infrastructure Commission recommended that Milton Keynes should again be a “project of national significance” at the heart of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. The government agreed.

Initially, most of the homes in the city were built in large

social housing estates to very tight budgets. Some of these homes were subsequently bought by their tenants and, in due course, offered for private rent. From the mid-1980s onwards, private house developers built mainly for owner occupation and, today, first-time buyers are offered more opportunities here than anywhere else in the UK. Yet, rents and house prices are far less affordable, relative to incomes, than in the past. We face very severe shortages of affordable housing.

Our Strategy to 2050 highlights the importance of meeting this challenge. We will aim to achieve a very significant increase in the supply of ‘truly affordable homes’ particularly council housing, and we will provide a much wider choice of tenures and types of housing. And we will improve the quality of our existing council homes and homes in the private sector

Many of the estates built in the 1970s are now in need of substantial investment to ensure that the homes meet

modern standards. We have already been working closely with the communities on the Lakes Estate and Fullers Slade; but there is much more to do right across the city.

We will learn from this experience in our approach to regeneration and enable our residents to gain further skills and access good jobs as well as investing in the quality of homes – these are the keys to improving life chances, reducing poverty and enabling people to live healthier, happier lives.





Affordable homes for all

Fifty years ago, Milton Keynes was established as an ambitious national project to meet the urgent housing crisis in the south east of England. The 1970 **Plan for Milton Keynes** highlighted the importance of having different types and tenures of homes at all levels of affordability so the city could become a place that all sorts of people could call home.

We are good at growing – as a new town, that is what we are designed for. However, we know a consequence of our economic success has been the rising unaffordability of housing as the supply of new homes has not always kept up with demand. More households are now homeless or in temporary accommodation and the quality of life for many residents is being impacted.

Our founding vision of MK as a place where everyone can find a home and thrive is increasingly under threat. The pressure on our housing market may increase as people seek to relocate from London to places like Milton Keynes in search of homes with more space as they work remotely and commute less due to COVID-19.

We also know that some of our existing homes and neighbourhoods need investment. Living in poor housing conditions has a serious impact on mental and physical health but many people live in homes that do not meet decent standards. As well as providing new affordable homes for those who need them, we need to make sure today's homes are healthy places to live.

Getting the right mix

To be successful, our ambitious plans for economic growth must be matched by building enough homes for our expanding workforce and the families of our existing residents. And for that growth to work for everyone, we must address our affordability crisis through providing more homes to meet the diverse needs of our residents.

The 1970 **Plan for Milton Keynes** aimed for at least half of the households in the new city to own their home. It was felt then that too many council houses and too few homes for sale on the open market would restrict people's housing choices. Today the risks are very different. Most homes are now built by the private sector and because

of government restrictions, very few by the council for rent. And through 'right to buy', many council-built homes are now in the private sector. This means we don't have enough decent homes for social and affordable rent, private rent or purchase at prices that many of our residents can afford.

Increasing the supply of affordable options

We have a council policy that requires affordable homes to be built as part of new housing developments but the definition of 'affordable' is based against market values rather than income levels so may not be genuinely affordable for many. Affordable homes are often built by housing developers, transferred to housing associations and then rented to households on waiting lists or sold with a discount through schemes like 'Help to Buy' or on a shared-ownership basis.

They are an important part of the solution and we will continue to require affordable homes to be built as part of new housing schemes. We will also encourage other housing providers, which could include community land trusts or co-housing co-operatives, to increase





their delivery of homes at affordable prices, as well as opportunities for households to build equity in their homes.

We aim to provide many more *truly* affordable homes for rent at Local Housing Allowance levels or lower, in a variety of tenures and types. We will build and buy many more council homes for rent over the next decade. On schemes where the council is the lead developer, we will build a higher number of affordable homes than our policy

requires. Our recent proposals at Netherfield and the Lakes Estate included a significant proportion of the properties to be available for rent from the council, including all 66 units at Cripps Lodge. We have also invested in 70 modular homes in Fishermead for homeless families.

Today, around 10% of our households live in council-owned homes. Increasing the number of council homes in the city will help us to be an affordable place for all our people, so through our

housebuilding programme we will aim for 15% of the overall housing stock to be council-owned.

Regeneration and our existing homes

Many of our existing homes and estates, including some of the earliest areas built as part of the New Town, need major investment to bring them up to a decent standard for our residents. Improving these areas is not just about ‘bricks and mortar’ – it must also be about improving access to good jobs and skills that are equally important in improving life chances and addressing poverty.

A major part of our Strategy is to improve the quality of our existing council homes. Major investment is planned alongside our wider regeneration and renewal plans. Homes in the private sector must also be of a higher standard and we will monitor their condition and take enforcement action against rogue landlords where improvements are not made.

Widening our range of homes

As we grow, we will encourage a wider variety of types and tenures

of homes, including more self- and custom-build homes and new affordable opportunities. We wish to see a wider variety of designs that reflect the changes in the diversity, aged, composition and lifestyle preferences of our communities than the relatively standard homes built in recent years and we will encourage more small- and medium-sized housebuilders as one way of increasing innovation. We will also continue to be green housing pioneer and a trailblazer for testing new technologies and designs that help to create healthy, affordable homes for our residents.

In future, more of us will live alone or as couples without children, rather than in traditional family groups, so we will need to adapt. Places with good access to retail, leisure and culture that are close to places of work and well-served by public transit are popular with young professionals and will be important to many of the students who attend MK:U, our new university.

Student accommodation will be provided as part of MK:U’s city centre site and we are developing a framework for CMK which will also consider how to house a growing student population.

Urban living is becoming more popular with older people who wish to live as part of a wider community. As well as developments designed for the over-55s we will need homes within mixed communities that are suitable for our older residents.

Homes must be built to Lifetime Homes standards and be adaptable to changing needs so that people can age without leaving them should their health or mobility decline. Modular homes that are built section-by-section in a factory before being put together on site may be especially adaptable.

We also want to see bungalows and homes with space to adapt for wheelchair accessibility. And more dwellings that are adaptable to be multi-generational will be required as it will be common for two or more adult generations to live together.

We also need our homes and communities to be designed to help to meet our ambition to be a Dementia Friendly City.

This includes measures such as good lighting, reducing excess noise and improving wayfinding. These 'universal design' principles are

features that make a better living environment for everyone. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the trend of more people working from home so designs that allow one or more people to work or study from home will be important.

People have appreciated having access to private outdoor space during lockdown, so as well as new houses with gardens we want to see apartments that have a balcony or access to a shared garden or terrace for all residents. And

because of the impact that living in poor quality places can have on health, we will resist unsuitable conversions of office and other buildings into homes and ensure that all new homes meet minimum space standards.



Chapter Five | Our Diverse and Inclusive Economy

Chapter Five | Our Diverse and Inclusive Economy

Over 50 years, we have attracted investment from companies around the world to create an exceptionally diverse and resilient economy. With 182,000 people working in MK and at the heart of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, we are an economic powerhouse, one of the most productive cities in the UK.

We are confident about our future prospects. By 2050, there will be a further 50,000-90,000 jobs in the borough. As our population grows, so will our 'foundational economy' - creating jobs to meet everyday needs. We will promote high quality jobs as an important route out of poverty. Our construction and logistics sectors will remain strong. Yet, it will be our 'knowledge-intensive' industries, such as technology and high performance engineering, which will drive our growing economy.

The city has a global reputation as a centre for innovation. With our track record in sustainability we will continue to be attractive for companies investing in the green

economy. The city's economic success depends on whether our workforce has the skills to match the needs of our employers. Today, for some of our residents this is not the case. To address this, we want to achieve high standards in all our secondary schools and provide more STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) opportunities. Our new Institute of Technology will open in Bletchley in the near future. And with Cranfield University we are creating MK:U, a new university focused on the skills needed for the digital economy. The main MK:U campus is planned to have around 15,000 students enrolled by 2039.

Many of the new knowledge intensive jobs will be located in CMK. To take full advantage of East West Rail linking us with Oxford and Cambridge, Bletchley will also become a popular business base. We have plenty of vacant employment land throughout the city and there is also scope to redevelop some of our original employment areas. We are ready to meet the needs of 21st century companies.





Milton Keynes is an economic powerhouse and one of the most productive cities in the UK – in the five years to 2019, Milton Keynes contributed 18% of all employment growth across the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

We are confident about our future prospects but know that the benefits of living in one of the UK’s most successful cities are not felt by all our residents. An economy that provides jobs for all is not enough by itself to make MK a fairer place. Before COVID-19, over three quarters of our children living in poverty were in households where at least one adult was working. To tackle the deep-seated issues of deprivation and child poverty, we

will need better access to good quality jobs for everyone, and a strong focus on education and skills development. This is even more important as the impact of the COVID-19 recession will fall most heavily on our more disadvantaged residents. Brexit will bring further economic uncertainty.

An inclusive and flexible economy; jobs in a range of sectors

As our city grows, so will the ‘foundational economy’ that covers those basic goods and services on which every Milton Keynes citizen relies and which keep us safe, sound and civilised. Care and health services, food, housing, energy,

construction, tourism and retailers on our high streets are all examples of the foundational economy. The health and social care sectors already employ around 1 in 10 of the working population and, as our population ages, that is likely to grow further. Those working in the caring professions and the service sector have been valued more than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All our jobs must be good quality jobs. **Milton Keynes Council** is an accredited Real Living Wage employer, a standard that is based on paying workers the true cost of living as a way of addressing in-work poverty. We will continue to champion the adoption of this standard across all the city’s employers.

It will be ‘knowledge-intensive’ businesses, such as finance, digital, and technology, and green jobs in low carbon industries, that drive our future economic growth and help us to compete successfully with other global city economies. The creative industries will also be important as our high-tech businesses will need people who can think creatively and integrate design with technology. Our existing strengths in these business

sectors, together with our central position in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and skills initiatives like **MK:U** and the **Institute of Technology**, make this ambition realistic.

The great majority (98.2%) of our 14,000 businesses are independent, small and micro-businesses which are the lifeblood of our economy. In the technology sector, these businesses have established networks and regular meet-ups to help them innovate and support each other. These provide a vital foundation for growing the industries of the future, so we will provide support to help them thrive. We also want to encourage innovation networks that link university and business research and development facilities across the city to support collaborative working between businesses, academics and technologists. In planning our new Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) network we will look at how best to provide routes that link these facilities and bring to life an idea we call a city-wide ‘innovation campus’. You can read more in **Chapter Six** about our MRT proposals.

Our construction and logistics sectors will remain strong. Logistics covers the management

of transportation, goods and information from one place to another to supply business needs and, increasingly, internet shopping. The sector is a major part of our economy and locations like Magna Park will continue to be of major importance because of our strong road and rail links and the ongoing demand for the movement of goods. But the industry is facing changes from trends such as autonomous vehicles and new approaches to last mile delivery. It is likely that the number of logistics jobs will fall over time and the remaining jobs will change to become more tech-based and more highly skilled.

Skills for the future

Our economy will succeed by having a future workforce that has the right skills to match the changing nature of work and the needs of employers. We know that around one in five of the jobs in Milton Keynes today are in business sectors that are likely to shrink due to automation.

We have a high proportion of residents without higher-level qualifications and more than 9,500 people in MK have no formal qualification. To make our economy work for everyone, we must make

sure all our people have the skills needed to get good quality jobs. Our council regeneration policy will help people in our most deprived neighbourhoods to improve their life chances through early childhood intervention, skills development and better access to jobs. And we aim to raise the aspirations and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other groups who do less well than their peers at every stage of education. This will include helping all our secondary schools achieve high standards and supporting new approaches in which businesses are working closely with our education providers to create new opportunities for all students.

We will also encourage pupils to consider applying to university and the council will show leadership by providing apprenticeships and other opportunities for young people to train and gain work experience.

MK:U, a new city centre university we are creating in partnership with **Cranfield University**, is at the heart of our approach to developing high level skills. Having our own undergraduate university will help reduce the flow of talented young people who leave to study elsewhere in the country.

It will also attract new talent. **MK:U** will focus on the digital economy and use the city as a 'living laboratory', building on our global reputation for new technologies such as driverless cars and delivery robots. Industry partners have been closely involved in designing a curriculum that will create work-ready graduates with transferable skills. The main **MK:U** campus is planned to open in 2024 and grow to around 5,000 full and part-time students within five years and 15,000 students by 2039.

And in Bletchley, the new **South-Central Institute of Technology** (IoT) will specialise in developing skills for

the digital sector, providing higher level technical learning for over 1,000 students within its first five years.

These new initiatives will add to our existing education provision which includes the pioneering **Open University** and **Milton Keynes College**. Our **Learning 2050** project is focused on improving Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) teaching across schools at every level and **MAKE**, the **Milton Keynes Cultural Education Partnership**, is working to help students develop the creative thinking skills that are important in innovation.





The scale of jobs growth

Growing the economy at the same rate as we have seen over recent years would create around 60,000 additional jobs by 2050 and take the overall total number of jobs across the

borough to 240,000. The **National Infrastructure Commission's** analysis of the economic potential of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc showed that a very ambitious level of investment and support could more than double the rate of growth to produce

around 130,000 additional jobs in the borough by 2050. In the light of COVID-19 and the associated recession, we now anticipate that net growth of 50,000-90,000 jobs is possible in the years to 2050. If we take no action it is likely that

the jobs growth will be towards the lower end of this range. But we know our economy has great potential so we will plan to achieve the higher end of the jobs range by creating the right conditions for growth, including;

- **full delivery of our Mass Rapid Transit system to better connect the city,**
- **achieving our ambitions for a new undergraduate university, MK:U,**
- **promote the growth of existing businesses together with national and international inward investment, building the reputation of Milton Keynes as a leading European business city,**
- **targeted investment in green and environmental businesses,**
- **improved knowledge sharing and innovation through developing self-employed and small- to medium-enterprise (SME) networks, and**
- **delivery of our housing ambitions and better housing affordability.**

The location of jobs growth – where will people work?

We have a good supply of vacant employment land to support the future growth of our economy – the local plan already identifies 282 hectares across the borough. We cannot predict with certainty what more will be required up to 2050 but we will provide new employment areas in future local plans to meet a variety of employer requirements.

Milton Keynes was designed to have employment dispersed across the city in places like Kiln Farm, Knowlhill, Tongwell and Mount Farm. But over recent decades the attraction of CMK as a location means that many jobs are now based there. Of the 182,000 jobs in Milton Keynes today, around 41,000 (23%) are within CMK, including almost half our knowledge-intensive jobs. Predicting the need for different types of employment space is complicated by the rapid

changes we have seen in where and how we work. A big shift to homeworking means we might expect a drop in demand for new office space, but we also anticipate an increase in companies looking to relocate out of London and other big cities to set up a base here.

We also expect more demand for flexible workspaces and shared facilities where desks or meeting spaces can be hired on an ad-hoc basis. Excellent internet and digital

connections are vital to support these new work patterns and for knowledge-intensive businesses. The recent investment by CityFibre to provide Gigabit internet access to homes and businesses in all parts of the city is an important step.

Over the medium and longer term, we expect some level of return by companies to centralised office locations because face-to-face working will still be valued. Knowledge-intensive businesses





Bletchley has the potential to become a significant location for technology companies.

The existing approach to dispersed employment at locations across the city will continue. Within major new neighbourhoods there will be employment areas for office, manufacturing and knowledge-intensive jobs. And in our local centres there will be flexible workspaces where homeworkers might spend some of their time, and small-scale business units where jobs in the service, retail, social care and education sectors might be based. The logistics industry will continue to need large, flat sites that have good links to the transport network. We may see a continued need for large floorplate warehouses to stockpile goods in case supplies of goods are disrupted in future, as happened during the COVID-19 pandemic. We also expect to see new approaches to help manage the increased levels of online shopping and delivery vans we have seen recently. An example of this is to develop urban consolidation centres on the edge of the city to combine 'last mile' deliveries and reduce the number of vehicle journeys (and the emissions and congestion they create) into and within the city.

have traditionally located in city centres where people, ideas and innovation come together. The planned level of investment in CMK and the benefits of being located close to similar businesses mean it will remain the focus for office-based activity in the city. Based on our revised expectations for the overall growth of jobs in Milton

Keynes, by 2050 we expect that CMK could see some 10,000-18,000 net additional jobs.

We don't know exactly what sort of space will be needed, but CMK has plenty of vacant land and buildings and redevelopment sites to accommodate the predicted demand and more.

Central Bletchley is also an opportunity for economic growth because of its location at the intersection of the West Coast Mainline and East West Rail. This will bring stronger links with Cambridge, Central Milton Keynes and Oxford. The opening of the new **Institute of Technology** and the legacy of **Bletchley Park** means that Central

Chapter Six | Mobility for All



Chapter Six | Mobility for All

In the 1960s, when the original Plan for Milton Keynes was prepared, most people felt that the motor car had an assured future, largely because of the advantages it offers for door-to-door travel. Today, it is easy to move around our city by car; this is one of the keys to our success. But now our world is very different. We know we have to mitigate the impact of climate change and to promote more active travel to live longer, healthier lives. Congestion on our grid road

system is increasing rapidly and we need to make sure that everyone can move around the city easily to access jobs, services and healthcare, not just those with use of a car. This is an important part of our approach to tackling poverty.

We need to make walking, cycling and scooting our first choice for shorter trips. Our world class Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) system will be best for longer trips. As demand builds up, our MRT network

will open in phases but by 2050 all routes will be fully operational. Of course, cars (powered by electricity and some self-driving) will still be the 'go-to' choice for some for a good while. But because the alternatives will be so attractive, many will choose not to own a car. Our Strategy is about providing everyone with more options in how they move around.

As envisaged in the original plan, our grid road corridors will be adapted so that they are suitable for our MRT vehicles as well as other forms

of public transport and cars and with space for bikes too. And our range of mobility options, including a fleet of self-driving taxis, will be provided as a seamless service with common ticketing and booking systems and linked-up schedules.

Today, transport is the largest source of our carbon emissions. By 2050, our transport revolution - providing mobility for all - will help to make sure our carbon footprint is lower than any other UK city and one of the lowest in Europe.

“Easy movement and access, and good communications” was one of the six goals of the original 1970 **Plan for Milton Keynes** and this has been achieved for many people. A fundamental part of our Strategy for 2050 is to maintain this advantage over other places by giving people more choice in how they travel around the city.

Our city was created using a design and policies that have made travel by car easier than other means. For many people, cars will be the ‘go-to’ option for the foreseeable future and the increasing use of electric cars will mean a reduced impact on the environment, but our approach is to change the balance and make ‘active travel’ through walking and cycling more attractive for many journeys and make public transport and new mobility services the obvious choice where that isn’t suitable. This will reduce carbon emissions and pollution and help improve our health.

The importance of mobility for all

Everyone should be able to move easily around the city. Households in the parts of Milton Keynes with the highest levels of deprivation

tend to have the lowest levels of car ownership. This means their residents are often the least able to access jobs, services and healthcare where journeys are difficult by public transport – half of all bus users indicate that they have no other transport option.

We also know many young people choose to not own a car, and opt instead to walk, cycle, or use public transport or taxis.

Our Strategy will make it easier for everyone, including our younger and older residents and people with disabilities, to enjoy easy movement and access.

The impact of our mobility choices

Vehicle emissions are a major contributor to the climate change emergency. When the 1970 Plan for our city was developed there were few concerns about sustainability and our use of natural resources. We now recognise the need for urgent action. We have shown national leadership in promoting electric cars and buses and will continue to do so but decarbonising transport alone will not solve our wider mobility challenges.



Figure Four: The road space needed for different vehicles





More cycling and walking

During the COVID-19 lockdown, many people enjoyed walking and cycling more. Walking and cycling help to address congestion, encourage more visible life in our public places and bring more activity into our day-to-day lives. Our city benefits from an extensive 320km Redway network of shared walking and cycling routes that are segregated from traffic, but they tend to be used for leisure cycling rather than commuting. We will improve and extend the network through providing more direct routes for commuting and giving Redway users priority over road users at appropriate locations. We are creating 'Super Routes' by investing in upgrades to the cross-city Redways that run parallel to the grid roads and making them safer and more attractive. We are also investing more in the maintenance of our wider Redway and footpath network.

Our future communities will be designed to encourage more cycling and walking, including cycle hubs at transport interchanges and extending the cycle network to new growth areas to link up with existing communities. In locations

where we have a very high number of cycle users, we will consider segregated space for cyclists and pedestrians to improve everyone's safety – this might become even more important as we see more e-scooters and other forms of powered micro-mobility.

A Mass Rapid Transit network

The original 1970 Plan for Milton Keynes created our grid road network with the flexibility and space for a fixed-track public transport system. Through our long-term planning we can now deliver a modern version of this in the form of a Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) network. This would be a public transport system with frequent services to and from our key destinations, capable of carrying many passengers at times of peak demand with competitive ticket prices.

New electric-powered vehicles, similar to a tram in functionality and quality, can run on road surfaces rather than expensive, fixed rail infrastructure, and in future will be driverless. To be attractive, journey times must be reliable, so our MRT vehicles cannot be caught up in traffic. The generous space built into our grid corridors means we can

Traffic congestion in the city is not at the levels seen in other UK towns and cities but is becoming worse. Some key grid road junctions will exceed their capacity, although the COVID-19 lockdown means this will likely be later than the previous forecast of 2031. The 'grid lock' that will result if we fail to act would hold back our economic ambitions and damage our quality of life. Constructing new road capacity does not provide a long-term solution as increasing road space is proven to create more traffic, so we will find ways to use our generous road space more efficiently.

The illustrations in **Figure Four** demonstrate the road space needed

to move 180 people along one of our grid roads in a range of different vehicles. Moving away from single-occupancy vehicles to other means of travel will not only help provide mobility for all but will also allow our existing road infrastructure to carry more people.

Our parking provision is generous because of our historic focus on cars, especially in our city centre, where we have a high ratio of parking spaces to jobs and relatively low parking charges. More than one fifth of the valuable space in our city centre is car parking so attractive alternatives to the car will create possibilities to use some of that space differently.



Figure Five: An illustration of how one side of a dual carriageway could be used for Mass Rapid Transit services.



Figure Six: An illustration of how an additional carriageway could be created for Mass Rapid Transit services.



create lanes alongside or within the existing carriageway (for example, by using one of the lanes of a dual carriageway). The illustrations in **Figure Five** and **Figure Six** show examples of how that could work. Dedicated routes for MRT will also be created to link with new or existing settlements nearby. In some places, our MRT vehicles might run within traffic for short distances with measures that ensure they are given priority. Using the flexibility built into our design, initial modelling has shown that about 90% of our network could be on segregated routes. The network could also accommodate smaller, connected and autonomous vehicles as such solutions emerge.

The route network

Our MRT network will connect key journey origins and destinations across the city as well as those places (both existing and new) that have the greatest potential for future development. Our initial plans for the route network are shown in **Figure Seven**.

Social distancing and changes to work patterns resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to have an immediate impact on

the use of public transport but our Strategy takes a long-term view and we expect that demand for public transport will return, albeit not to the levels previously seen for some time. To allow flexibility to cope with uncertainties about demand, we will build up our future network in a phased way, with an initial roll-out of some core routes that can be expanded and supplemented over time.

The most notable journey patterns today are from people travelling into CMK. This will continue with more jobs, as well as other services and activities, located in our city centre in future. The initial network includes cross-city routes passing through CMK via a loop of services along Silbury and Avebury Boulevards so that passengers have the choice to change services at several points on the loop. As in other locations, routes would be segregated from normal traffic by using one side of the boulevards for the MRT vehicles, leaving space for car traffic on the other carriageway.

Further work is needed to define the final network of MRT routes and the engineering solutions for junctions and stops. As a first step we will identify the sections of

our future network routes where bus/MRT priority and junction improvements will be necessary, for example those roads and corridors which have the greatest congestion. We will also make improvements to bus route infrastructure using developer funding, government grants and other sources of funding. And we will develop Enhanced Bus Partnerships on some future network routes to run high quality, low- or zero-emission vehicles prior to the introduction of dedicated MRT vehicles.

A joined-up policy approach

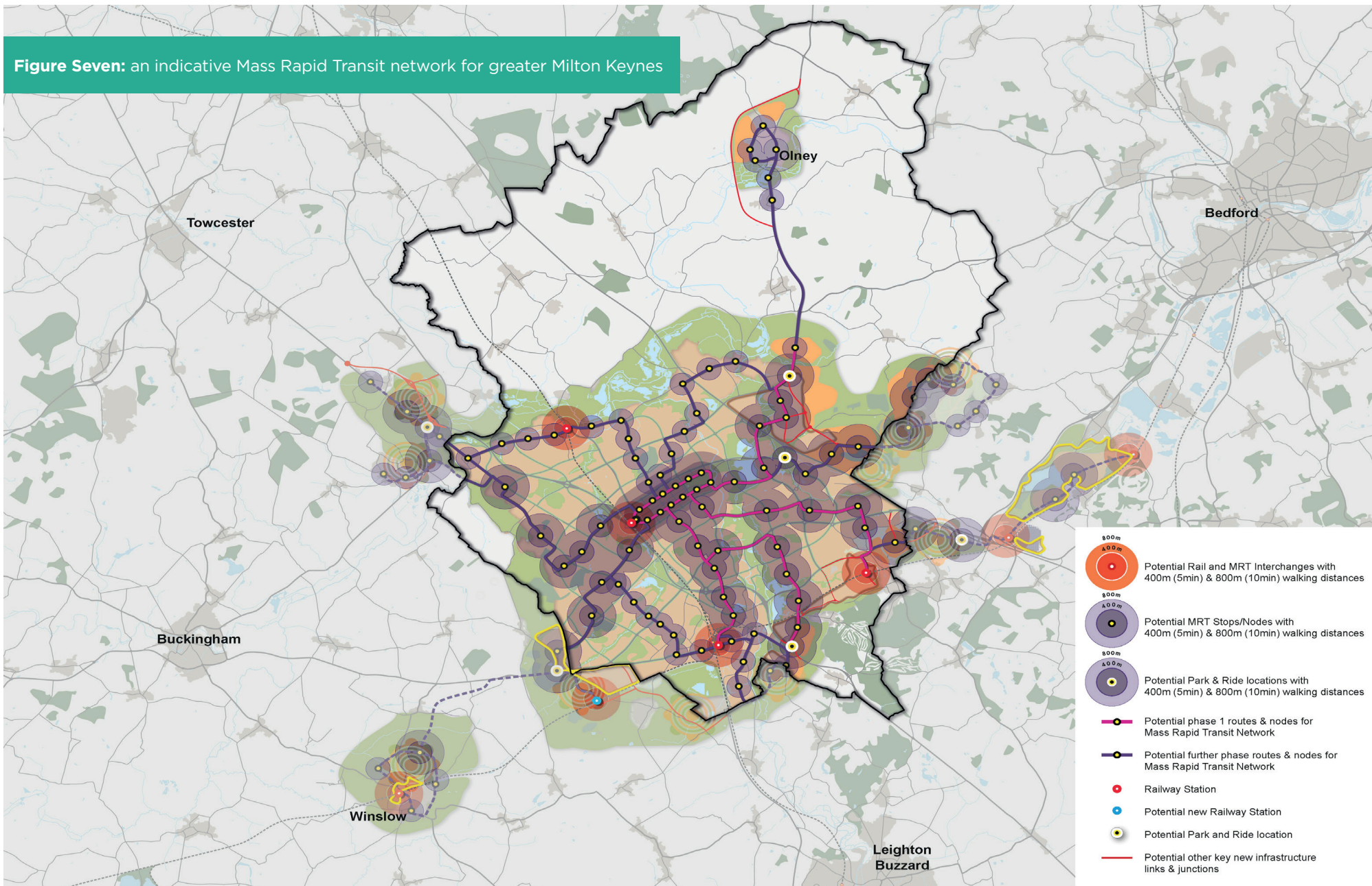
Our transport, parking and land use approaches will work together to deliver our improved mobility network. For example, with ‘park and ride’ services we will ensure the overall service is more attractive in cost and time than driving to and parking in our city centre. And MRT services will be made attractive through having priority over regular traffic, where necessary, and fares that are competitive with parking charges.

In some locations, the area around MRT stops will provide an opportunity for future development. This in turn will mean more people

living along the line and more users of the services. We will use transit-oriented development principles and the 15-minute neighbourhood concept (see **Chapter Eight** for more detail on this approach) to design communities that are more walkable and that provide excellent access to the mobility network. Places that are not dominated by cars can instead be shaped around our residents, perhaps by restricting car movement in some areas or by lowering speeds – our existing policies already require new estate roads to have a 20mph limit. This will improve road safety and benefit the health and wellbeing of our residents.



Figure Seven: an indicative Mass Rapid Transit network for greater Milton Keynes



The wider mobility network

Demand Responsive Transport and local bus services

The new MRT network will be phased over some years but even when fully implemented the fixed routes will not provide a stop on a route for every community. And we know our rural areas have very poor access to public transport at some times of the day or week.

So to make sure everyone can access alternative modes of transport, we will have a wider network of mobility services in place that supplements and integrates with our MRT system.

Unlike our MRT system, some of the routes on this wider network may not be separated from road traffic but, where appropriate, they could be served by the same vehicles and share the 'look and feel' of the rest of the MRT network.

We also expect local buses to continue to serve parts of our borough, although some of these routes will be replaced by the MRT network in time.



How innovative mobility services can help

Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) is one of a mixed economy of innovative mobility services that is emerging in Milton Keynes. We have already begun to introduce DRT services to replace some low demand bus routes.

DRT is based on minibuses and taxis that alter their routes based on the demand from customers rather than sticking to a fixed route or timetable. Route-planning software enables shared rides for some journeys making it cheaper than private hire. Such flexible services will help passengers in areas that aren't served directly to link quickly to the core MRT routes and other public transport services. They will also help access parts of the city that do not have an MRT stop close by.

We are now served by city-wide bike and e-bike hire and we were the first UK city to trial commercial e-scooter hire. These schemes will be enhanced by our improved cycling infrastructure. We will also support car clubs and flexible car hire services so that people can access a car for those journeys that are not feasible by other means.

Technology also allows people to plan journeys across different transport modes, book on-demand shared services and pay for journeys or 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 shortly.

The road network

Most of Milton Keynes is laid out as a loose grid of 1km squares bound by our unique network of high-speed grid roads. We will maintain this existing grid road network and ensure it is well-connected with new development areas.

Our grid network can be thought of as providing multi-modal corridors which have the room to cater for a range of transport options, including cars and our Mass Rapid Transit vehicles. The design of new roads to link up with new communities will be future-proofed to accommodate our planned MRT system and infrastructure. This means providing corridors that are wide enough for a range of solutions without making walking difficult between areas



or undermining our principles for placemaking in new developments.

We must address our road safety challenges as there was an average of 68 people killed or seriously injured each year on our roads between 2013 and 2019. We will use the grid road principles of safe crossings and paths for pedestrians and cyclists, and green planting and wildlife corridors along routes, and ensure that they are adaptable

to future needs. In all cases we will ensure that road layouts respect the form and character of existing neighbourhoods, villages and towns, and manage the traffic impact of new development; there is no 'one size fits all' approach. Underpasses have been an important asset for our grid network. We will give critical consideration to grade separation and road crossings as our road network expands and as we design new neighbourhoods.

Chapter Seven | Central Milton Keynes and Our Centres

Chapter Seven | Central Milton Keynes and Our Centres

As planned fifty years ago, Central Milton Keynes (CMK) is the heart of our city. We are the most popular shopping destination in the region and CMK is the best office location between London and Birmingham. And our culture, entertainment and leisure attractions bring visitors from far and wide. But we are seeing a revolution in how we shop and where we work. The rapid growth of online retailing and remote working means there is no room for complacency about the core of our city.

Yet we are confident that by 2050, CMK will be the vibrant centre of a prosperous Greater Milton Keynes serving many millions of people within a 45-minute journey. Some 15,000 students will be enrolled at MK:U. This will help to attract the companies who will create a further 18,000 jobs in CMK. Some companies will relocate from London to provide HQ offices closer to where their employees want to

live, and work from home for part of the week.

Including Campbell Park, some 25,000 or more people will call CMK home. They will find everything they need for a rich life within a short walk, scoot or bike ride; CMK will be the exemplar 15-minute neighbourhood.

Bletchley is set to see its economy grow strongly thanks to new links to Cambridge, Central Milton Keynes and Oxford. With Bletchley Park and the new Institute of Technology, we expect many technology companies will choose to locate in Bletchley. The original vision of a Bigger, Better, Brighter Bletchley will finally be realised.

Every community will continue to enjoy easy access for their day to day needs from a local centre. And the historic towns of Stony Stratford, Newport Pagnell, Olney, Wolverton and Woburn Sands will continue to offer their own distinctive speciality shopping offers.



Central Milton Keynes

The role of CMK

The 1970 Plan for Milton Keynes knew that CMK would be the focus of the city for many activities.

Today, CMK is an important location for employment, with almost a quarter of the borough's jobs. Only a relatively small number of people live in CMK today, but it is an increasingly popular place to live with more than 5,000 new homes already planned. CMK is also home to many of our cultural, retail and leisure facilities and is blessed with one of our most iconic green spaces in Campbell Park. It will be even more important in 2050 as the city centre for all those people living in greater Milton Keynes and as a major urban centre within the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

“ A place simply to go and be in, to be anonymous or dress up for; to be able to watch the world go by; to see and be seen; a place to find out what is going on and to participate in events. ”

The Plan for Milton Keynes, 1970





There is much to celebrate about the iconic modernist design of CMK, but some elements create challenges. Our network of step-free paths and covering structures (including our porte cocheres and ground floor colonnades on many buildings) provide shelter and an accessible environment for pedestrians, wheelchair users and parents with pushchairs. But our wide boulevards and rows of parking in front of low density, spread-out buildings mean we lack a sense of vibrancy and activity on the street.

New opportunities in the city centre

We want more people spending more time in our city centre. Inevitably, CMK has felt the impacts of the COVID-19 lockdown, with lower footfall as fewer workers, shoppers and other visitors spend time there.

Before lockdown, high street retail was already suffering from the growth of online shopping, so long-term success will rely on us creating new reasons for people to visit and spend time in CMK safely. We want a diverse offer with more variety and independent businesses, retailers and places to eat, drink and play.

We may benefit from more companies relocating from London to provide (smaller) HQ offices closer to where their employees want to live, and work from home for part of the week. We have room to provide more offices and space for homes, retail, community, cultural and leisure facilities. Some land is already vacant, or has never been built on, and there are vacant or under-used buildings ripe for refurbishment or redevelopment.

There are some places in CMK where it would be appropriate to build at greater heights and densities. Hotel La Tour, a new 14-storey luxury hotel overlooking Campbell Park, is an example of this currently under construction. We have the space and opportunity to deliver a stronger CMK, whilst retaining the iconic structure and character that contributes to our distinctive heritage.

Our principles (discussed in **Chapter Eight**) for creating high quality places also apply to development in the city centre. CMK should be the ultimate 15-minute neighbourhood where residents, visitors and workers can easily walk or cycle between different areas.

A future framework for CMK

Our overall strategy for our great city requires a clear vision for CMK that helps us create a stronger city centre with a thriving economy and where different activities are in the right locations and fit together well. It will also help us to integrate commercial and public sector projects as they come forward and to understand which types of facilities and activities we might want to encourage in which places. Through our **Renaissance:CMK** project we are working with **Milton Keynes Development Partnership** to create a new framework for growth and investment in CMK.

The CMK framework will help bring investment to address some of the challenges we face in the city centre, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and recession.

We want to create a city centre that links up people-friendly public spaces and activities that serve a wide range of visitors. This will build on the new developments that are already underway in CMK.

We have plans for Station Square (the area around Milton Keynes Central Station) that will improve its

role as one of the major gateways for those arriving in the city.

We also have a project to extend and improve our open market and are considering how Midsummer Boulevard East, the area between the shopping building and the Point and towards Campbell Park and the Gallery, could become a pedestrianised space that can

be used for a variety of events and purposes.

The framework will also look at other opportunities along with the facilities our city centre should provide for our people in the future. Our new university in CMK will create a major focus for city life with businesses and venues that

cater to our new student population. And we have an ambition for a new city centre music venue to complement our successful theatre and recently extended art gallery. As the city grows, we will be able to invest in the projects, venues and activities that any big city should have, bringing new opportunities for residents and visitors alike.





Central Bletchley

Bletchley was one of our towns that already existed when the area for the new city was designated. It grew during the Victorian era as the crossing point of the London and North Western Railway and the Oxford-Cambridge 'Varsity Line', and Bletchley Park is famous as the home of the World War II Codebreakers.

Bletchley is again well placed for strong economic growth with excellent and improving transport connections. Stronger links to Cambridge, Central Milton Keynes and Oxford will give the town the opportunity to become a significant technology hub that builds on the legacy of Bletchley Park. This will be further supported by the new **Institute of Technology**. The town's future economic potential creates

the opportunity for comprehensive redevelopment which is described in our recent prospectus for Central Bletchley.

Bletchley has the flexibility to see an increase in a range of uses. This could include office-based employment space and new retail and leisure facilities to support existing and new residents and employees. There is scope to build new homes at higher densities and above shops and offices to create a more vibrant mix of uses and support local services.

The **Institute of Technology** and **MK College** campus will form a learning hub within the town. We also have the opportunity for comprehensive development around the station which will help create a positive experience for those arriving by train.

We want to transform Queensway to become a much stronger high street for Bletchley and improve pedestrian links from the station to the town centre. The opportunities for Central Bletchley work well alongside those in CMK and will help provide regeneration and investment to this important part of our borough.

“ 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, December 2019

We are working with the Town Councils that serve the area, local residents and stakeholders on a £25 million Town Deal programme for Bletchley and Fenny Stratford that will take forward many of these initiatives. Investment has already been secured to improve cycling and pedestrian links across Bletchley and connect them to the rest of our city network.

A rich network of Local Centres

The original **Plan for Milton Keynes** recognised the importance of every community having easy access to

day-to-day services. It established a layout for the urban area that included local centres, often shared between grid squares to encourage people to move between estates. Our local centres provide a variety of shops, schools, community and health centres, places of worship, pubs, cafes and takeaway restaurants. They are complemented by larger centres at Kingston and Westcroft, each focussed around a supermarket and other retail units and facilities.

The town centres of Wolverton, Bletchley and Fenny Stratford, and Stony Stratford pre-date the new city. Outside the urban area are the historic market towns of Woburn Sands, Newport Pagnell and Olney, and a variety of other smaller villages, many with a few shops and facilities to support their local communities. Our villages and other small settlements are the heart of our rural communities.

Our dispersed pattern of facilities and services in local centres right across the city means that most residents are within an easy walk of somewhere that can serve their everyday needs – an example of the 15-minute neighbourhood. During the COVID-19 lockdown we know





that many people appreciated this and shopped locally, perhaps as part of their daily exercise, rather than going to a large supermarket.

Local centres will continue to be part of the design of new neighbourhoods. They provide a focal point for activity and spaces where our residents can come together. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, local groups played an important role in looking out for vulnerable and isolated people, creating support networks and reducing isolation and loneliness. We want to maintain this community spirit and to encourage investment in our Local Centres by their landlords.

Local centres provide the perfect location for stops and interchanges on our mobility network. New, as well as many existing, local centres will be suitable places to encourage higher density development as part of mixed-used schemes that are designed using “transit-oriented” principles. We will make sure centres are well-served by our mobility network and Redways so that residents can access them easily.

Local, district and town centres are likely to be locations for further employment space. We anticipate

there will be more demand for flexible work and meeting space from those based at home for much of their working week. This will help to increase the diversity and viability of our centres as more people use them for a range of different purposes.

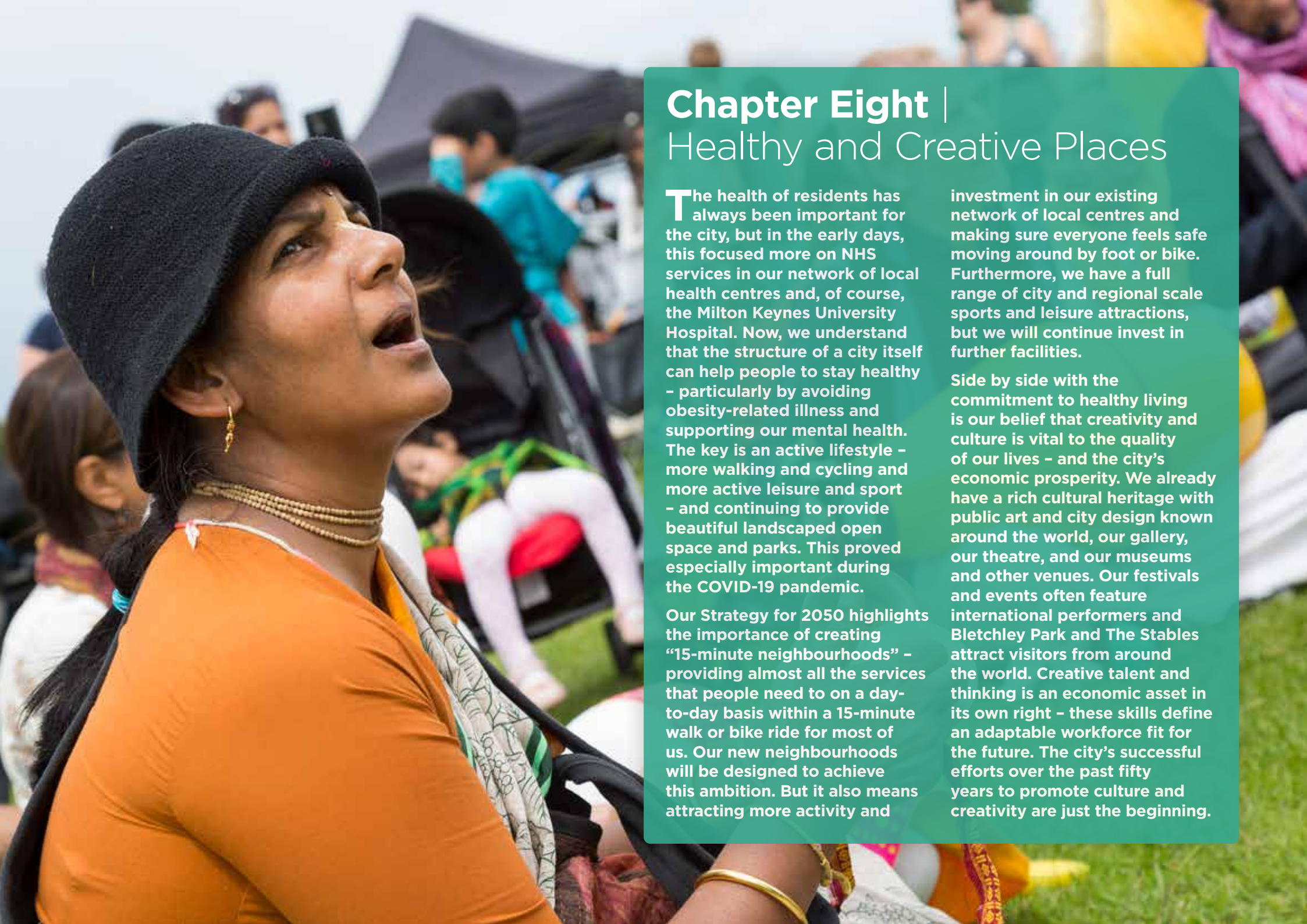
Supporting our rural communities

Development of the right kind in the right places in our rural areas can help to sustain services and facilities within our villages. Our rural communities can be isolated without access to the services and facilities in the city through poor public transport services, and many have suffered from the closure of local shops and pubs.

Many of our Parish Councils have led their communities in developing a Neighbourhood Plan to guide new development that delivers much needed housing and investment to their area, growing communities, providing homes for people who grew up locally and bringing in new residents to help support the life of their village. We support the idea that sensitive growth in our rural communities can help to sustain our vital local services.



Chapter Eight | Healthy and Creative Places



Chapter Eight | Healthy and Creative Places

The health of residents has always been important for the city, but in the early days, this focused more on NHS services in our network of local health centres and, of course, the Milton Keynes University Hospital. Now, we understand that the structure of a city itself can help people to stay healthy – particularly by avoiding obesity-related illness and supporting our mental health. The key is an active lifestyle – more walking and cycling and more active leisure and sport – and continuing to provide beautiful landscaped open space and parks. This proved especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our Strategy for 2050 highlights the importance of creating “15-minute neighbourhoods” – providing almost all the services that people need to on a day-to-day basis within a 15-minute walk or bike ride for most of us. Our new neighbourhoods will be designed to achieve this ambition. But it also means attracting more activity and

investment in our existing network of local centres and making sure everyone feels safe moving around by foot or bike. Furthermore, we have a full range of city and regional scale sports and leisure attractions, but we will continue invest in further facilities.

Side by side with the commitment to healthy living is our belief that creativity and culture is vital to the quality of our lives – and the city’s economic prosperity. We already have a rich cultural heritage with public art and city design known around the world, our gallery, our theatre, and our museums and other venues. Our festivals and events often feature international performers and Bletchley Park and The Stables attract visitors from around the world. Creative talent and thinking is an economic asset in its own right – these skills define an adaptable workforce fit for the future. The city’s successful efforts over the past fifty years to promote culture and creativity are just the beginning.

Our commitment to quality placemaking

Our aim is to design places that improve our residents' health and quality of life, and that inspire people to play an active part in our city. We call this 'placemaking' and it applies to places at all scales, from small, infill developments to new neighbourhoods and our city centre.

Milton Keynes was designed to be different and will always have a distinctive identity. But we want to learn from our own experience and from other places about how we can design places to help us seize our opportunities and address our challenges, whilst maintaining our character and distinctive heritage.

Everyday facilities on your doorstep

At the heart of our ambition is for everyone in Milton Keynes to live in a place that has easy access to facilities and services. People should be able to walk or cycle a short distance, no more than fifteen minutes in most cases, to services they use on a day-to-day basis. This includes shops, schools, a community centre, a local café



or takeaway, playing fields and open space. Our vision is that these can all be accessible without needing to use a car, although we appreciate that for some people, and in some circumstances, car use may be necessary. This “15-minute neighbourhood” idea is gaining international support and fits with the original Milton Keynes principle of local centres within easy reach of home. It also links to the trend we have seen during the COVID-19 lockdown of more people working from home where they can, and using local places to take ‘time out’. In the future, we expect more people will choose to spend some of their working day based in a shared workspace or even a local coffee shop.

Sport is a major part of our city's life. We are proud to be the home of the MK Dons whose stadium is one of the landmark developments in the city and hosted Rugby World Cup matches in 2015. Major events such as being European City of Sport in 2020 and hosting matches for the football Women's Euros in 2022 inspire more people to take part in sport and to exercise regularly. And we know having leisure and sports facilities that are easily accessible for everyone plays an important part



in encouraging healthy lifestyles. Sports pitches, including the potential for facilities to be shared with schools, must be part of all new neighbourhoods.

Welcoming to everyone

Our residents need spaces where they can come together to take part in activities that build welcoming and diverse communities. Access to a range of free and affordable activities is important for all of us, but especially our young people. It is also essential for our many voluntary organisations and the work they do for our communities. Community spaces can help to reduce isolation and loneliness and so contribute to managing our mental health. Schools play an important role as hubs for local communities and this can include sharing the use of their facilities.

Growing and sustaining our community and voluntary sector is an important part of our strategy. We will continue to support the model of the **Milton Keynes Community Foundation** which provides land and income for local charities and other community facilities, and **Community Action:MK** who play an essential

part in supporting and representing our community and voluntary organisations and helping local people to play a role in their community.

Everyone deserves the opportunity to live in a decent home they can afford in a place where they feel proud to live. Our neighbourhoods should have a mix of homes to suit the varied cultural and social needs of our city's households. This is fundamental to making everyone feel welcome and living a happy, healthy life. The diversity of neighbourhoods is made richer by homes and buildings that work for people at all stages of their life. This will mean that even if our health, mobility or cognitive functions decline, we can stay as part of our community. Designing dementia-friendly places in which streets are safe and easy to navigate and building to Lifetime Homes standards should be the norm.

Designing safety into places is important for everyone, especially our young people who say they often feel unsafe in Milton Keynes. We will make sure that paths, road crossings, underpasses and places where people gather are overlooked, well-lit and well maintained.





Busier places can feel safer too – with more people around we can all look out for each other.

How we move around

Our movement choices can help both our health and the environment. Our strategy to provide mobility for all and to make walking and cycling the first choice for most local journeys, will mean we can all make more sustainable and healthy travel choices. This will be supported by working with Thames Valley Police to reduce road speeds within developments and having excellent paths and Redways that link to our wider mobility network. Secure and convenient cycle storage will be important at homes and destinations, with shower facilities at workplaces for active commuters. We should

look at different ways to provide parking, especially as community pool car schemes and other new approaches to mobility emerge.

Green and beautiful

Everyone must have access to high quality spaces where they can spend time outside. Our individual neighbourhoods will contribute to our green city by including many more trees and local open spaces that join up to our city-wide green infrastructure network. And we aim to secure a net gain in biodiversity, so any impact on our wildlife and habitat networks from development will be offset by the creation and improvement of habitats elsewhere.

We will design places that work with the character of their local

area and take opportunities to be pioneering and ambitious to fit with our “different by design” heritage. The new city of Milton Keynes sensitively incorporated historic towns and villages within the designated area and those original settlements are still recognisable in places like Woughton on the Green and Loughton. We will continue this approach where development takes place around a village to protect its character. We recognise the role that our modern heritage offers in creating a sense of place for new communities and we will encourage new developments with a variety of designs, layouts and densities that fit with our patchwork character.

Involving communities

Our approach to placemaking will apply to proposals within our existing settlements as well as new development areas. We will work with communities to design schemes that are sensitive to their local surroundings. This will include redevelopment or intensification in some locations that can benefit our existing communities. We hope the approach will also be applied by our neighbouring councils in designing new communities close to our boundaries.

Our Creative and Cultured City

Creative talent and thinking is an economic asset in its own right – such skills will be essential to building an adaptable workforce fit for the future. The city’s successful efforts over the past fifty years to promote culture and creativity are just the beginning.

Culture makes a place attractive and vibrant and contributes to our wider ambitions for achieving a good quality of life. It helps attract people to live, work, spend time or study here and is an important way of creating a sense of belonging for our residents, especially newcomers to the city. Events hosted by different parts of our community, from a range of cultural traditions, are one way in which we celebrate our diversity.

As Milton Keynes grew from its new town beginnings, public art projects were an important part of building new communities. The Development Corporation had an ambitious public art programme and over 50 works were commissioned. The programme involved the early pioneer citizens in the works, the most famous of which is Liz Leyh’s



Concrete Cows which have become world famous as a symbol of our city. The design of the city and its celebrated new town heritage are also elements of our cultural legacy that provide Milton Keynes with an international reputation.

Today, we are taking further steps to develop our cultural identity through big community events such as Feast of Fire which celebrated our 50th birthday in 2017 and the biennial International Festival (IF) that brings artists from all over the world to Milton Keynes. We enjoy participating in 'culture' in its widest sense. This ranges from attending events at our theatre, gallery and music venues through to big community celebrations at our annual World Picnic, Pride and cultural and religious festivals and our thriving independent dance scene. But despite the diversity and vibrancy of the sector, there are still gaps to address if we are to be a leading creative and cultural city.

Growing our culture

Cultural events and activities can support our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic through providing opportunities for people to spend time together, safely, and

helping bring life back into our city centre to benefit our economy. We need vibrant public spaces where street art and open-air events can take place. We all feel safer and engaged when there is visible activity happening around us. People are encouraged to walk between places when their journey has stimulating features to look at along the way, such as art installations and interesting buildings.

We aim to make our activities and venues welcoming and inclusive. We will use the recommendations from a recent report by **MK Arts and Heritage Alliance** to make sure that everyone feels able to engage in the city's cultural offer.

We will extend our cultural sector in other ways. Working with **The Stables**, our renowned music venue, we have an ambition to see a large music auditorium created in CMK.

We also need smaller and cheaper studios, galleries and venues right across the borough to support independent cultural groups and artists. Opportunities to provide these spaces may be created by the changing demand for office space following the COVID-19 pandemic or using some of our existing vacant

office space. Venues like **MK Museum** and our **Arts Centres** also need investment. We have great breadth and depth in our cultural and creative organisations, but COVID-19 has hit the sector hard and we need investment to nurture our home-grown talent. As part of this, we will prepare a Cultural Infrastructure Plan to identify the range of venues and opportunities that we will need for our growing city.

Before the COVID-19 recession, the creative industries were one of the UK's fastest growing economic

sectors. We aim to provide better creative and cultural education in schools so that we build the creative thinking and skills that will help our future workers adapt to new challenges. As automation in the workplaces increases, creativity will become even more important in future job roles.

We understand the importance of defending, investing in and developing our cultural sector and will integrate creativity, heritage and public art as part of our approach to making great places in our great city.



Chapter Nine | The 2050 Spatial Strategy

Chapter Nine | The 2050 Spatial Strategy

Five decades ago, the original Plan for Milton Keynes set a flexible framework for the city's growth. A series of statutory local plans – most recently Plan: MK – followed. Now we already have allocated or given planning permission for more than 25,000 homes – one of the largest supplies of housing land in the UK. But planning and construction takes a long time and we have to start thinking now about how many homes our growing population will need into the future and where that growth will happen.

Our Strategy for 2050 proposes that we will need some 30,000-35,000 additional homes to meet the needs of future residents, including those already living in the city as they form new households and their families grow, and for our expanding workforce. We have carefully examined where these homes should be built. First, we suggest

that we should complete and possibly extend existing development areas as set out in Plan:MK. Second, we should identify sites for sensitive and selective development within or adjacent to existing communities. And third, we should develop new communities beyond the existing urban area of Milton Keynes, in the right locations and with the right infrastructure and links with today's city. We will discuss with neighbouring councils how to link up with development that might happen close by in their areas.

As with the original Plan, our Strategy for 2050 offers a flexible framework – setting a direction of travel. It is too early to allocate specific parcels of land or specify number of homes and other uses. These are details to be worked out with the involvement of local communities as we develop our next Local Plan.





Our **Strategy for 2050** provides a framework for decisions about how future growth and development can benefit all our residents. This includes where development should take place.

Through **Plan:MK** and existing planning permissions, we have already committed to 25,000 homes being built and this will mean around 335,000 people living in the borough by the early 2030s. Many of these homes are part of large, complex developments that often take many years to be fully completed, so even sites started in 2025 could still be under construction in 2030 or even 2035. You can see those major growth locations in **Figure Two** at the start of this Strategy.

Because of the time it takes to plan and deliver new homes and infrastructure we must start thinking now about what happens after, and alongside, our existing commitments.

This spatial strategy provides a flexible framework for where 30,000-35,000 additional homes could be located over the coming decades to meet the needs of the 410,000 people that we expect to be living in Milton Keynes in 2050.

Our Recommended Strategy

In 2016, our **MK Futures 2050 Commission** put forward a recommendation for how development should be distributed (see box, right).

Our approach to 2050 follows this broad pattern. It uses the directions of growth that have been confirmed through **Plan:MK**, and considers constraints and opportunities, to outline locations for the next phase of development for Milton Keynes, as shown in **Figure Eight**. The general locations shown on the plan are places where new development could happen but do not necessarily indicate the scale or extent of development. And the areas indicated will also include significant amounts of open space and other uses alongside homes.

1. Complete and enhance existing and emerging growth allocations

Plan:MK already includes major growth allocations which are

underway or due to be developed in the coming years. Wherever possible, these sites should be designed (or at least future-proofed) to meet our ambitions for high quality, sustainable communities where Mass Rapid Transit is properly integrated.

There is capacity for some of these existing growth locations to be extended further in the long term, for example the area east of the M1.

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

Within the urban area there are opportunities for redevelopment or infill developments that maximise the use of brownfield and other sustainable, accessible sites and that will not undermine the city's existing character. There are also sites in and around our towns and villages across the borough. Proposals must be sensitive to their location and development will not be appropriate everywhere. Our approach will be selective and give priority to

“ There are many opportunities to accommodate a significant share of the city's future growth, up to 2026 and beyond, through developing/redeveloping selected sites in the existing built-up area at higher densities — this would improve the city's overall offer to residents today.

However, it will not be possible to accommodate most or even a large minority of the city's growth in this way without undermining the city's unique, distinctive spacious qualities — we are in no doubt that this is a view shared by many of the city's existing residents.

Therefore, it would be desirable to accommodate much, but by no means all, of the city's additional inclusive growth to 2050 in substantial new developments; these would be adjacent to the city (possibly even on the east side of the M1) and elsewhere inside the wider functional economic area.”

Making a Great City Greater, 2016, p37



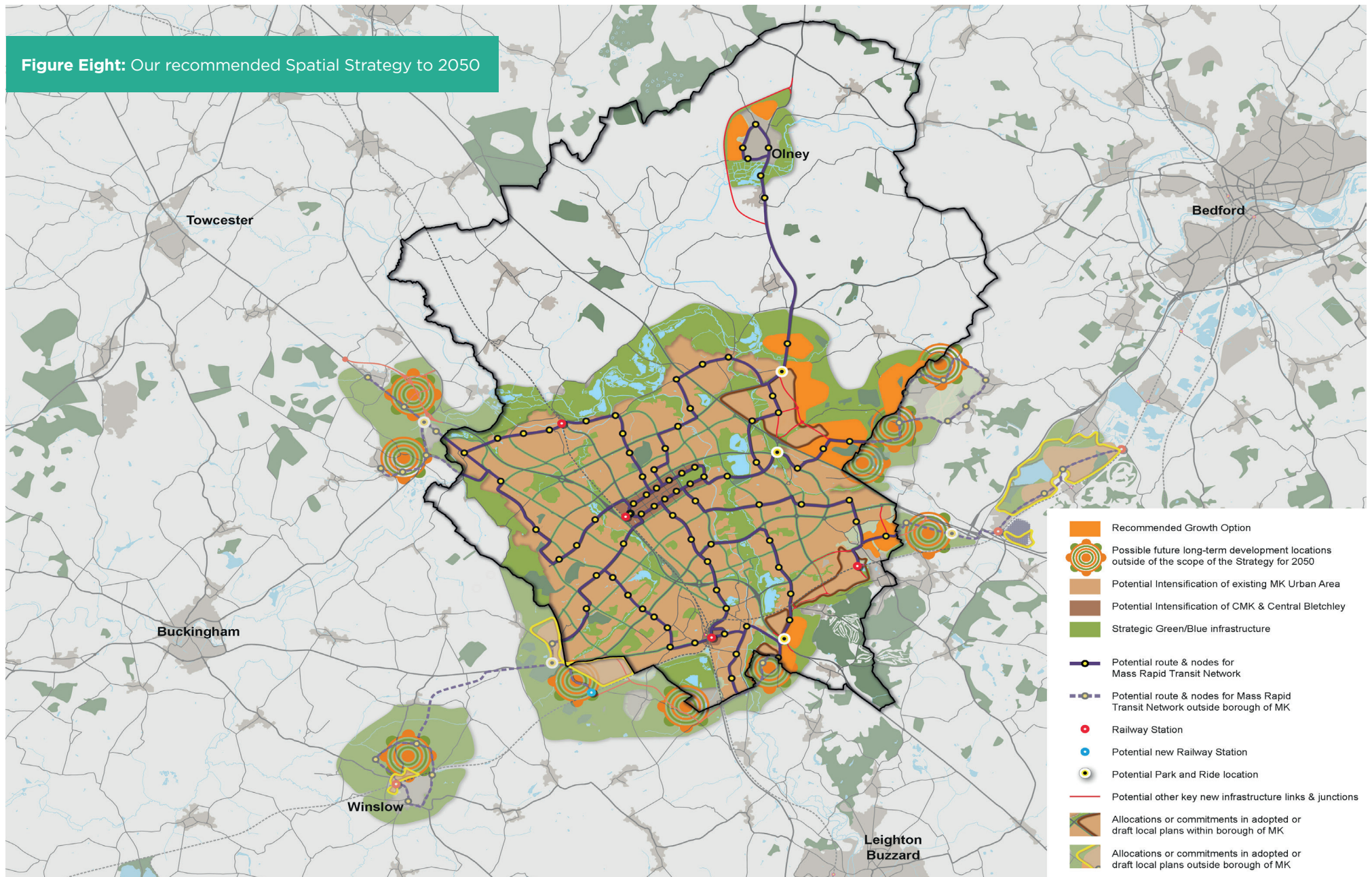
brownfield sites – those that have been built on before but can now be redeveloped – to make the most sustainable use of land. This could include redeveloping employment sites that are underused or no longer fit for purpose while retaining land, of the right type and in the right locations, for future businesses.

Town, district and local centres and CMK are particularly important locations where opportunities like this will be considered, as well as the ‘Reserve Sites’ across the city that have already been safeguarded for future development.

Stops on our new mobility network are also likely locations for sustainable future development and our work to determine the most appropriate routes for MRT services will explore the possibilities for where this can happen.

There is the capacity for many more people to live in Central Milton Keynes, alongside our planned growth in jobs, leisure, culture, retail and community facilities. Central Bletchley is also poised for major regeneration and will be home to many more residents alongside wider investment as an important rail hub.

Figure Eight: Our recommended Spatial Strategy to 2050



In all cases, proposals will be designed at a scale and density, and with a mix of house types, sizes and tenures, that enhances the character and attractiveness of the area.

3. Development of new communities beyond the existing urban area of Milton Keynes which

a. are based around transport links, including Mass Rapid Transit services,

b. maximise links with existing and planned infrastructure, and

c. continue existing directions of growth.

Beyond our city boundary are other sensible locations for long term growth. This includes opportunities for extensions to existing directions of growth such as East of the M1 where a new bridge over the motorway will provide access to a development of 5,000 homes, with the first 1,500 homes built by 2031 alongside a new health centre and primary school. There is potential for further development beyond this over the long-term.

The east-west corridor to the south of the city and into north

Buckinghamshire and Central Bedfordshire will benefit from new rail services as part of East-West Rail. Our MK Futures 2050 Commission and the National Infrastructure Commission both recognised this will create opportunities for development over the coming decades, including around train stations and other areas that would be linked with our MRT network.

Our neighbouring council areas may also pursue development opportunities created by East-West Rail and that could link with our mobility network. We believe there is potential beyond the plans already committed in our neighbouring areas to grow the population across the Greater Milton Keynes area to around half a million people without creating an undue burden on the area. Proposals in areas beyond the Milton Keynes boundary are outside the remit of this Strategy but we hope to work closely with our neighbouring councils to develop joint proposals for growth that reflect the economic, social and physical links across our formal boundaries.

All developments will be designed using our placemaking principles to create walkable “15-minute

neighbourhoods” that have strong links to our mobility network and other services, including our open space and Redway networks, so that residents enjoy an excellent quality of life and sustainable travel options. We will also use measures such as green landscape buffers to help protect and preserve the character of existing settlements.

Discounted options

In developing this spatial approach, we discounted some options as being unsuitable for our city’s development to 2050. This includes the potential for major growth to the north of the city due to the scale and cost of the infrastructure that would be required to build connections into the existing city across the floodplain of the River Great Ouse and the environmental impact when compared to other options.

We have also discounted the development of a large new ‘sister’ town within or near to the borough as this would divert investment and economic growth away from Milton Keynes, to the detriment of our residents. We believe our approach will provide benefits and investment for the whole of Milton Keynes, with a diverse range of sizes, types

and location of sites for future development.

Building Communities

This Strategy is about the healthy, inclusive communities and strong economic future we are trying to achieve for our residents, not about housing numbers. However, effective planning requires some idea of our city’s future scale to help us to understand the sorts of facilities and services our communities will need to thrive. We will design new neighbourhoods at a scale that can support the delivery of infrastructure. A development of around 5,000 homes, which could include existing homes nearby, is often considered to be the right size to support a secondary school and local centre with the right range of facilities.

Another broad principle we have assumed is that about half the land in any major development will be ‘unbuilt’. This will provide significant open space to maintain our green character, as well as protecting our heritage assets and creating buffers for existing communities. In the remaining area, space will be needed for uses other than residential development as we want

new homes to have all the facilities that are important to a community within easy reach - usually within a 15-minute walk. And in all cases, we will fully involve local communities in shaping the future of their neighbourhoods and our great city.

Building in Flexibility

Our recommended approach provides more than enough space to grow by 2050 to meet the needs of the 410,000 people that will live here. It provides for a variety of types, sizes and locations of development, including smaller sites that are likely to be more suitable for small- to medium-sized housebuilders. And we want to see self-build plots included as part of housing sites so that homeowners can build their own.

A variety of homes phased over time in this way will allow flexibility to respond to changing circumstances and homeowner requirements, and a range of development sites and locations will help to ensure a steady future supply of homes.

Of course, our recommended spatial framework is not intended to be definitive and will be tested further through the Local Plan process.



Chapter Ten | Making it Happen

Chapter Ten | Making it Happen

In 1967, government established the Milton Keynes Development Corporation to plan, finance and build the new city. They laid the foundations for the successful place that we have today.

They did this by taking most of the increase in land value and profit arising from new development and re-investing it in the city's infrastructure and amenities. In 1992, Milton Keynes Council started to take over responsibility and now,

outside of CMK, virtually all of the land suitable for new development is controlled by private builders. We are not confident that new communities being built under the current approach will match the aspirations set out in this Strategy or the standards that our residents expect.

To address this challenge, we are exploring new forms of delivery and governance which will provide much

stronger democratic control over future developments. One option being considered is to establish a new locally led development corporation financed by government. In any event, we wish to ensure that much more of the value and profit from housing growth is invested in education, community and health facilities, open space, sports and leisure, and transport infrastructure. This will be key to the city's future.

In recent years, we have successfully secured significant investments from government to help the city's growth and we are in no doubt that that future investments will be required. We hope to work more closely with neighbouring councils, government and other partners to deliver our Strategy for 2050. These partnerships will be key to realising the full potential of Greater Milton Keynes.





The 1970 **Plan for Milton Keynes** set the framework for the first decades of our city's life and this was accompanied by a **New Town Development Corporation** established to provide leadership and secure investment for the growth of the city. These arrangements ensured that the essential infrastructure and facilities for our communities were in place when people moved into their new homes. That 1970 Plan and the Development Corporation, supported by major investment from the government, created much of what defines MK today.

We share the concerns of many of our residents that what has become the 'normal' development process today is not up to the standard enjoyed in our early years. We are not confident that the new communities being built now will match the aspirations set out in this Strategy.

Under the current approach, even where a council provides a strong vision for its area through a Local Plan it is still delivered by developers. If the development is not of a high quality or does not provide the infrastructure and services needed

to support the larger population, it is understandable that our wider community is not supportive.

We have modified our initial thinking about this **Strategy for 2050** because of the impact of the COVID-19 recession. The great uncertainties brought about mean it is challenging to define some of the details of our approach. But we are clear that an ambitious vision and policies that can guide our progress through long-term uncertainties is needed now more than ever. We are realistic about what we can deliver within current arrangements and resources but have set out an approach that is flexible and can support greater ambition if we can secure the right investment and delivery arrangements. As in 1970 we need a powerful partnership with government.

Milton Keynes has not succeeded by waiting and reacting but has prospered through its distinctive approach to creating and delivering its own future.

A new delivery model

We will explore new governance and delivery models that give us greater democratic control over the

quality and pace of development. The conclusion may be that different approaches to fit the variety of opportunities across the borough might serve us best. One of the options is to create a localised version of a New Town Development Corporation that works to our vision and plans.

Any future arrangements should enable us to meet three principles:

- strong vision and leadership, driven by high quality community engagement;
- mechanisms that enable us to secure more of the value of development and land value 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 as part of long-term stewardship.

Vision and leadership

Our Strategy sets our ambitious vision for the long-term future, looking ahead to 2050. This is beyond the usual Local Plan timescales which typically have a 15-year horizon. By setting out our agenda for a longer period we can take opportunities that might not

otherwise be available and ensure the benefits are shared across all our communities. Our Strategy provides the basis for discussions with central government, utility providers and other agencies about the investment and support we need to deliver our ambitions. A good example is the support we gave to **Milton Keynes University Hospital's** successful bid to government for investment

in a new Women and Children's Hospital. Our long-term strategy will help make the case for similar investments that will serve us for the long-term rather than piecemeal reaction to pressures as they arise.

Through a new CMK framework, we will guide investment to address some of the challenges we face in CMK, including the impact of the

COVID-19 pandemic and recession, and create a more integrated, better connected and vibrant city centre, with public spaces that are far more people-friendly. And we are working on a Town Deal programme for Bletchley with the Town Councils, residents and stakeholders.

Involving communities will be integral to our process, helping



to shape the detail of proposals as they are developed. Some of our communities have already recognised the benefits that can result from well-planned growth, as demonstrated in the result of the Fullers Slade ballot in 2018, where the local community voted in favour of refurbishment and improvements to existing homes enabled by building new homes in their estate. Through their close engagement in development frameworks and design codes, local communities can influence the way their local area changes and grows.

Our Strategy for 2050 has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment that found the strategy advances equality of opportunity in numerous ways and mentions, and has regard to, the need for inclusivity, diversity and meeting the challenge of child poverty. The Impact Assessment notes that as the Strategy is delivered, we will need to give attention to the factors that have led to persistent child poverty and focus on designing in access to all and developing a 'welcoming spirit'. These themes are integral to our Strategy but there is a risk they could be disregarded as we deliver our ambitions if they aren't given the right attention.

Value capture and infrastructure provision

We understand the concern that many residents have about the right infrastructure needing to be delivered alongside growth. We know that health facilities – the hospital and doctors' surgeries – and schools are particularly important to our citizens. With any level of growth there is a need for a wide range of infrastructure and once our **Strategy for 2050** is adopted we will undertake a comprehensive assessment of infrastructure, services and other essential requirements. This understanding is vital to secure funding and to manage and phase the development process.

Developers and landowners involved in new development are required to contribute to the cost of affordable housing and essential infrastructure. This includes the physical, social and green infrastructure that is important in creating high quality development and reducing any negative impacts on the wider area. The level of investment we require for affordable housing, public services and infrastructure in all its forms cannot be gained through existing developer contribution approaches alone.

In the past, we used the **Milton Keynes Tariff** mechanism in our major expansion areas to fund essential infrastructure. This provided certainty upfront for developers about costs and communities were assured that infrastructure and facilities would be provided as part of a new estate. It helped us to meet the principle of "I before E" – Infrastructure before Expansion. This ability to provide infrastructure in advance of people moving into their new home is

integral to delivering good growth that benefits everyone, including those in established communities that fear pressure on existing services and infrastructure. Current national planning policy restricts our ability to introduce a similar borough-wide arrangement today, so through our work to consider alternative delivery models we are exploring opportunities to replicate the features that made our Tariff so successful, including upfront funding for infrastructure.



We will also consider mechanisms that allow us to capture the uplift in land value from new development and pursue strategic relationships with central government to secure long-term grant funding.

An important part of our future infrastructure requirement is the provision of Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) as part of a much-improved mobility network. An initial estimate for the overall capital cost of building our core MRT network is over £1 billion but we need to do significant further work on route modelling, phasing and engineering to confirm this. New development will be designed in a way that supports the operational viability of mobility services in line with our placemaking approach in **Chapter Eight**, but the initial delivery of the network will be funded through developer contributions (including ‘works in kind’ by the developer to put in routes and infrastructure within new communities) and further public and private investment.

We are planning to phase our MRT network with an initial roll-out of some core routes that can be expanded and supplemented over time. We are also considering the most appropriate governance

arrangements for our future mobility network which will also influence decisions about funding and viability.

Future stewardship

The long-term maintenance and stewardship of assets is an important element of delivering our growth agenda. The Parks Trust model for managing our strategic green space network works well because a property portfolio was also transferred to the Trust to generate income to fund ongoing maintenance. The Milton Keynes Community Foundation model has also enabled the provision of land and income for local charities and other community facilities. As we grow we will continue to create arrangements for future stewardship, including support for the Parks Trust and Community Foundation models.

Partnership working

Milton Keynes was created with major national investment to meet national strategic priorities. We now need a new and powerful partnership with government. Working closely with government departments and agencies, such as **Homes England**, on our shared

ambitions for long-term, high quality growth will help secure investment by aligning priorities and resources. It will give confidence to communities that growth is being done properly. We will also aim to work on delivery in partnership with the housebuilding industry and landowners.

When developing proposals for new delivery mechanisms we will consider how they could be extended to cover our neighbouring councils (or parts of their areas) if those partners wish to work with us on cross-boundary growth and investment opportunities in that way. We will not pursue local government boundary reviews as part of our growth agenda; we believe there are ways that neighbouring councils can work together in a positive way through existing and new arrangements without the need to change local authority boundaries.

We will continue to work with local and national partners as part of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and the **South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership**. This helps with effective spatial planning across the wider area that can respond to and, in turn, help frame

our local vision and ambitions. We will work closely with Town and Parish Councils across Milton Keynes in delivering our Strategy for 2050, to ensure there is local involvement at all stages.

Achieving our Big Ambitions

The impacts of COVID-19 will take many years to be fully revealed. The detailed actions and policies that will deliver this Strategy for 2050 will be set through future Local Plans and other council strategies. As these are developed it will be important that they pay due regard to the impacts of COVID-19 as these are understood at the time.

COVID-19 may have changed some of the context in which we are working but it hasn’t changed our long-term vision for sustainable, net zero carbon growth that provides an excellent quality of life for all who live here today, and for those who will want to in future.

Working across Greater Milton Keynes with our partners, stakeholders, investors and local communities, we can deliver the promise of our **Seven Big Ambitions** and make our Great City Greater.

A note on the Strategy for 2050

We prepared this **Strategy for 2050** following the recommendation of our **MK Futures 2050 Commission** and their report “**Making a Great City Greater**”, published in 2016. It provides a vision for the future of Milton Keynes borough over the coming decades, which local plans and other Council and partner plans, policies and strategies will help to deliver. The Strategy isn't itself a statutory planning document.

We prepared the **Strategy for 2050** during 2019 and 2020 using evidence and information that is referred to throughout the document, much of which is available to view on our website at www.MKFutures2050.com including a **Strategic Growth Study**. This Strategy takes forward many of the proposals made in our supporting studies but in some places takes a slightly different stance, and where that is the case, this Strategy takes precedence.

Over the last three years, we have also talked to many members of the public, stakeholder groups,

young people through our ‘Forging the Future’ work in local schools (and some of the feedback we heard from them are included in our **‘Postcards from the Future’** earlier in this document), and other organisations. We are grateful to them for the views and feedback we have heard throughout which have helped us to develop this Strategy.

We ran an 18-week engagement programme on a draft of the Strategy for 2050 between January and May 2020 which included a period when the country was in lockdown as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We also ran a further round of engagement to gather views on the potential long-term impacts of the pandemic. The comments we received have helped us further refine this Strategy for 2050 and we have prepared a supporting document that summarises the feedback we received and how we have responded. The Supporting Statement is available online at

www.MKFutures2050.com alongside a more comprehensive summary of the many comments received.

We prepared the Strategy during a time of uncertainty in various projects and events which we know could have an impact on its contents and delivery, including the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic recession, Brexit and a new relationship with the European Union, the government's intentions for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, the ‘pausing’ of the proposed

A421 expressway, likely changes to the planning system following the Planning White Paper, and the creation of unitary councils in neighbouring areas. We have used the best available knowledge at the time in preparing the Strategy, which is intended to be flexible to adapt to changing circumstances.

At a time of great uncertainty and volatility it is even more important for us to have a vision of what we are trying to achieve for Milton Keynes.



References and Links

Chapter One – Introduction

City terminology – 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 ‘Greater’ Milton Keynes to refer to the borough plus nearby settlements in neighbouring Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire and Central Bedfordshire that relate closely to the city and its economy. The term has no formal status but is intended to describe Milton Keynes within its wider context.

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 led to the proposals. It also recommended proposals at a greater detail than in Volume One.

MK Futures 2050 Commission – this 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. The Commission’s report “Making a Great City Greater”, is available at <https://www.mkfutures2050.com/read-our-report>

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 in a joint declaration between Government and local partners. Further information is available at <https://nic.org.uk/studies-reports/growth-arc/>

Planning White Paper – the government’s programme of reform to the planning system could have an impact on how the strategy will be delivered. This could be through the preparation a different type of local plan or new mechanisms for securing funding to deliver new infrastructure. These reforms are currently at an early stage (Planning White Paper published for consultation in August 2020) and future local plans will need to respond to the relevant guidance and regulations as they change. The government has also consulted on a new standard methodology for assessing local housing need. While it is possible that new guidance will change the annual requirement for new homes, our ambitions for a strong, growing city will drive our approach locally.

Housebuilding rates – the housing completion statistics for the periods April-June and July-September 2020 have shown that despite all construction being stopped as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, all sites resumed operations and the output from

some of the bigger strategic sites has been encouraging. At the end of September 2020 (the midpoint of the monitoring year), there have been completions that meet 47% of the annual target, and more than enough ‘starts’ to meet the annual requirement. We will continue to monitor housing completions and the ongoing impact of the recession.

Other links – life expectancy <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/2016-2017-joint-strategic-needs-assessment/draft-16-17-jsna-place>. Plan:MK, adopted 2019 <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/plan-mk>. Mid-year population estimate, ONS (2019) – 269,457 population of Milton Keynes Borough

Chapter Two – Milton Keynes – our successes, challenges and opportunities

Ethnic diversity – information from The Campaign Company (2019) and Cohesion ATLAS interim findings to be published as part of the Child Poverty Commission

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. In 2018 the proportion aged 65+ years old was around 14% and is predicted to increase to 20% by 2040.

Unemployment – we saw unemployment rise to 6.3% (or 10,750 individuals) in July 2020 compared with 2.1% (or 3,500 in-

dividuals) a year prior in July 2019 (ONS Claimant Count July 2020) and 43,400 employees were furloughed (approximately 30% of eligible jobs). <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-august-2020>

East West Rail – the first phase of East West Rail (Western Section) involves re-laying 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, 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. <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/>

A421 Expressway – previous plans for a motorway-grade A421 Expressway to improve road connections to Oxford and Cambridge have now been put on hold. Highways England state they are pausing further development of the Oxford to Cambridge expressway project while they undertake further work on other potential road projects that could support the Government’s ambi-

tion for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, and benefit people who live and work there <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/oxford-to-cambridge-expressway-home>

Homes to jobs ratio – figure derived from comparing employment figures (ONS, Business Register and Employment Survey, 2012-2017) against the number of homes delivered 2012-17. In Plan:MK, the aim is to achieve a 1:1 ratio of new jobs to each new home to address this challenge.

Private rents – 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. Also see Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings ONS, 2018 and Valuation Office Agency, Private rental market summary statistics: April 2018 to March 2019, Table 2.7 June 2019, ONS, Ratio of House Price to Earnings 2008-2018 (Accessed Nov 2019)

Qualifications – 9,200 (5.4%) people in MK hold no formal qualification whilst 74,900 (43.9%) hold a level 4 or above qualification (which is the equivalent of a degree or NVQ level 4-5) The 43.9% at level 4 or above is a higher proportion than the Great Britain figure of 40.3%. Labour Market Profile. Milton Keynes – Qualifications, Nomis (Jan 2019 – Dec 2019) <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157283/report.aspx?town=milton%20keynes> .

Schools – 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

Other links – PWC Good Growth for Cities data 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, <https://www.pwc.co.uk/industries/government-public-sector/good-growth.html/>. Centre for

Cities, Cities Outlook 2020, Page 54 <https://www.centreforcities.org/publication/cities-outlook-2020/> Testing Innovation in the Real World; Real-world testbeds, NESTA, October 2019 https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/Testing_innovation_in_the_real_world.pdf. Santander Digital Hub Public Consultation Documents, January 2019 <https://santanderdevelopmentmk.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Public-Consultation.pdf>. Health and Wellbeing in Milton Keynes, 2019 at CMIS. “Our children deserve better”; the interim report of the Milton Keynes Child Poverty Commission, March 2020. See CMIS, Cabinet meeting papers, 10th March 2020. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment information at <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/2016-2017-joint-strategic-needs-assessment/draft-16-17-jsna-place> and <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/2016-2017-joint-strategic-needs-assessment/2016-2017-jsna-adults/2016-2017-jsna-health-conditions>. Office for National Statistics, Deaths involving COVID-19 by local area and socioeconomic deprivation: deaths occurring between 1 March and 31 July 2020 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsinvolvingCOVID19bylocalareasanddeprivation/deathsoccurringbetween1marchand31july2020>. City centre footfall <https://www.miltonkeynes.co.uk/our-region/milton-keynes/our-footfall-is-not-declining-say-bosses-at-centre-mk-in-milton-keynes-1-8757109>

Chapter Three – A Sustainable and Green City

Task and Finish – the council’s recent Climate Change Task and Finish Group involved stakeholders and members of the public from across MK to think about how the city should respond to the climate change emergency. Public documents available as part

of the work are available on CMIS at <https://milton-keynes.cmis.uk.com/milton-keynes/PublicDocuments.aspx> (at 12.08.20)

Planning Policy – a Supplementary Planning Document is currently being prepared to supplement Plan:MK Policy SC1. The government has also recently consulted on changes to the building regulations as part of its Futures Homes Standards approach. We are one of the first local authorities in England to require developers to show that the performance gap between the ‘as designed’ and ‘as built’ building has been closed. Policy SC1 in Plan:MK contains the requirement for developers to carry out post-construction and post-occupancy assessments of carbon emissions, energy use, overheating risk and indoor air quality performance in new buildings.

Sustainability Strategy – this was adopted in 2019 <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/environmental-health-and-trading-standards/mk-low-carbon-living> An action plan for delivery is currently being developed.

Circular economy – an alternative to a traditional linear economy (where a product is made, used, and disposed of) in which we keep resources in use for as long as possible, extract the maximum value from them whilst in use, then recover and regenerate products and materials at the end of each service life. <http://www.wrap.org.uk/about-us/about/wrap-and-circular-economy>. Currently, Milton Keynes is 14th out of 392 Councils and 3rd out of 93 Unitary Authorities for its recycling rate.

Carbon offset fund – the Milton Keynes Carbon Offset Fund is a fund of money resulting from developer contributions from new buildings in the borough that aren’t carbon-neutral <http://www.nef.org.uk/success-stories/case-studies/milton-keynes-council-milton-keynes-carbon-offset-fund>

and <http://www.nef.org.uk/about-us/insights/milton-keynes-pioneering-carbon-offset-fund-six-years-on>

Water consumption – refer to Part L of Policy SC1 in Plan:MK. Greywater is the relatively clean waste water from baths, sinks, washing machines, and other kitchen appliances, which can be treated and recycled to be used to provide water for washing or flushing toilets, reducing the need to use potable, drinking water. For information on water smart communities, see <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/siteassets/household/about-us/aws-water-smart-communities---flyer.pdf>

Council policies – Physical and Natural Environment Action Plan Key Priorities 2020 (see CMIS for Cabinet on 10th March 2020 <https://milton-keynes.cmis.uk.com/milton-keynes/Calendar/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/6392/Committee/1257/Default.aspx>) and Physical and Natural Environment Vision adopted at Cabinet meeting, 5 November 2019, item 10, [Environmental Policy: Core Outcomes, Greenest City in the World](#)

Natural capital – this refers to our natural resources, including geology, soils, air, water and all living organisms, that create the assets and ecosystem services which make human life possible.

Stanton Low – Cabinet decision to transfer Stanton Low Park to the Parks Trust, 12 March 2014 available on CMIS

Wildlife sites – it is important to recognise that there are many other sites, which can be equally important as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, for example, but which do not have the same level of protection. Many of these sites have been identified in the Borough and are classified as Milton Keynes Wildlife Sites (MKWS). There are 16 MKWS and approximately 200 local wildlife sites in the Borough.

Flooding – this can be from a variety of sources depending on location, including rivers, seas, surface water, reservoirs, ground-water, water mains and sewers. As part of the innovative design for Milton Keynes, the Development Corporation designed and implemented the city-wide drainage system, creating balancing lakes and protecting the existing floodplain corridors of the rivers. It operates in such a way that surface water from the originally planned developments for the area is managed by passing through one storage area to the next as well as accommodating any river flooding across Milton Keynes through the green corridors cared for by the Parks Trust.

Arc-wide planning – the creation of a Local Natural Capital Plan for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc is the first step in ensuring a natural capital baseline and framework is provided that helps to monitor environmental change and de-risk growth. <https://www.oxcamlncp.org/>

Other links – Information on the Council's work on the Lakes Estate <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/pressreleases/2020/oct/green-light-for-mk-s-first-major-regeneration-project>. Research by the UK Green Building Council, Building the Case for Net Zero, September 2020 <https://www.ukgbc.org/ukgbc-work/building-the-case-for-net-zero/>. Campbell Park awarded Registered Park and Garden status <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/pressreleases/2020/aug/campbell-park-in-milton-keynes-awarded-grade-ii-registered-park-and-garden-status>. National policy on biodiversity net gain is within National Planning Policy Framework, Chapter 15, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf. Canal and waterway schemes at <http://www.b-mkwaterway.org.uk> and <https://www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk/>

For more information about the role and the work of The Parks Trust, go to www.theparkstrust.com

Chapter Four – Affordable and High-Quality Homes

Affordability – 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. 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](https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/analysis/affordability-in-the-private-rental-sector-shelter-july-2019-housing-benefit-freeze-9-in-10-homes-unaffordable-for-families), Shelter, July 2019 [Housing benefit freeze: 9 in 10 homes unaffordable for families](https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/analysis/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.

Decent Homes – a Council Housing Stock Condition Survey in 2016/17 showed that 35% of council homes did not meet a decent standard, compared to 13% nationally. Milton Keynes Council Housing Strategy 2020-2025 <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/assets/attach/64674/Milton-Keynes-Housing-Strategy-2020-2025.pdf>

Investment in our housing stock – this is supported in our new Housing Strategy 2020-2025 that aims to ensure that everyone has access to appropriate, safe and secure housing that meets their needs. <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategies-policies-and-guidance?chapter=3>

Council housebuilding – 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). The government previously restricted the Council's borrowing for housing, which limited the amount of new council housing that could be built. However, the borrowing cap was abolished in 2018 which will enable a more ambitious programme of council housing development.

Affordable housing policies – 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. The government's Planning White Paper proposes changes to the planning system which will impact how affordable housing is secured and may increase the threshold over which affordable housing should be provided. There is a risk that these changes may reduce the overall amount of affordable housing delivered.

Truly affordable homes – we define 'truly affordable homes' as homes for rent at Local Housing Allowance levels or lower. Recent council-led examples include <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/pressreleases/2020/feb/new-affordable-family-homes-in-netherfield> and <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/pressreleases/2020/jul/new-modular-homes-for-homeless-families>. We have committed to building 500 new council homes by 2022 with a further 700 by 2030 and will establish a housing company to build an additional 2,000 truly affordable homes for local families. This Local Housing Company would offer the council additional flexibilities in its housing offer to residents, and set a 'good landlord' standard to positively influence other providers of housing. We are also adding to our council housing stock by buying homes from the open market.

Community-led Regeneration – our Community-Led Regeneration and Estate Renewal

Strategy 2020, was adopted October 2020. <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/pressreleases/2020/oct/council-s-new-estate-renewal-plans-focus-on-improving-life-chances>

City centre living – [The UK's rapid return to city centre living](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-56425118), BBC News, 22 June 2018. [Why boomers, not millennials, are fuelling the urban apartment surge](https://www.curbed.com/story/2019/11/why-boomers-not-millennials-are-fuelling-the-urban-apartment-surge), CURBED, 12 November 2019, and IBI; [Future Communities and Meeting Housing Need](https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/pressreleases/2020/oct/council-s-new-estate-renewal-plans-focus-on-improving-life-chances)

Space standards and design – we have policies in place through Plan:MK and the Housing Strategy that require new homes to meet [Nationally Described Space Standards](https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/pressreleases/2020/oct/green-light-for-mk-s-first-major-regeneration-project) 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?](https://www.cambridgecentre.org.uk/publications/multigenerational-living-an-opportunity-for-uk-housebuilders/) Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research, 2015. Universal design is the design of buildings, products or environments that makes them accessible to everyone, regardless of age, disability or other factors. Our placemaking principles and focus on walkable neighbourhoods which encourage easy access for everyone is an example of how this should work. The Council Plan 2016-2022 includes the commitment to "Support becoming a Dementia Friendly city, to improve the lives of those most in need of help".

Chapter Five – Our Diverse and Inclusive Economy

Economic growth and forecasts – Milton Keynes Economic Growth and Employment Land Study, GVA, June 2017 at <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/employment-evidence-base?chapter=2>. Centre for Cities, The Future of Work in Cities, [Cities Outlook 2018](https://www.centreforcities.org/research/cities-outlook-2018/). Ortus, MK Economic Growth Study 2019

at <https://www.mkfutures2050.com/evidence-for-the-strategy-for-2050>. The Ortus report, 2019, makes assumptions on the demand for services associated with new housing development and the number of jobs created by new homes. The Ortus Report prepared in 2019 considered two sub-scenarios within its High Growth scenario to look at particularly high proportions of jobs being located in CMK. This work has been refreshed by Urbisolve for the final Strategy and is available at www.MKFutures2050.com

Living Wage – this is calculated by the Living Wage Foundation <https://www.living-wage.org.uk/>

Business size – 2019 statistics taken from NOMIS <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157283/report.aspx>. Micro is defined as 0-9 employees and Small businesses are defined as 10-49 employees

Other Links – Learning 2050 <https://www.mkfutures2050.com/project-three-learning-2050>. Milton Keynes Cultural Education Partnership <http://aha-mk.org/develop/make/>. Milton Keynes Council Community-Led Regeneration and Estate Renewal Strategy 2020, CMIS, Delegated Decision 20 October 2020. [NIC Supporting Evidence, Cambridge Econometrics and SQW, November 2016](#). Figure relates to MK borough. [Beyond the High Street: Why our city centres really matter](#), Paul Swinney & Dmitry Sivaev, September 2013 Centre for Cities. [Logistics is the New Retail, submission to the NIC Freight Study Call for Evidence by DHL, Axa and UK-BCSD, December 2018](#)

Chapter Six – Mobility for All

City design – the city itself was designed to provide for the forecast growth of 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

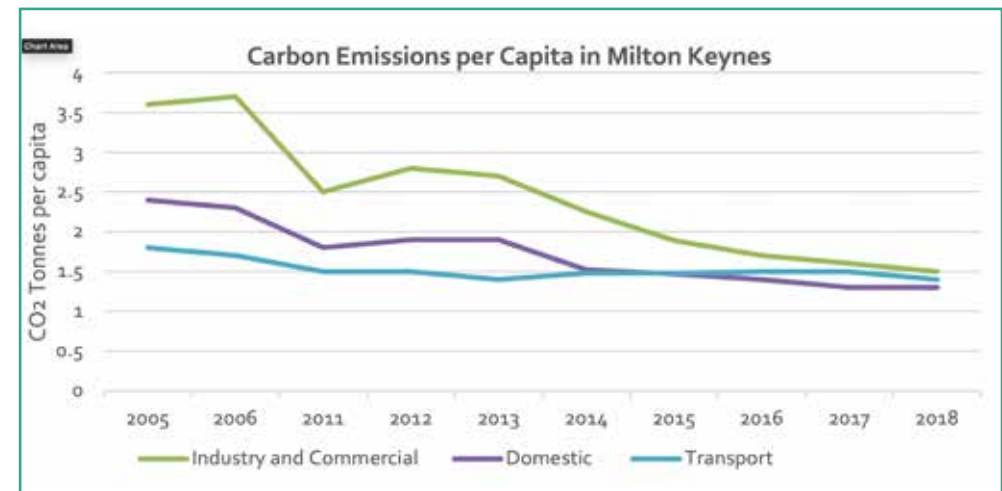
grid road system has enabled convenient and short journey times by car, using a choice of routes which spread traffic across the network. This, combined with the difficulty of operating high-quality public transport within the city, has meant that the car is the dominant mode of transport. In 1970, there 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 <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/highways-and-transport-hub/policy-and-strategy-hub/transport-policy>). 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.

Carbon emissions – the graph below shows carbon emissions per capita from different sources in Milton Keynes. Data show that carbon emissions per capita from all sources have fallen since 2005 – by 46% overall. The fall in carbon emissions for transport, however, represent a reduction of 22% across this period and remains at 2013 levels. Reductions from industry/commercial sources and domestic emissions have dropped by 44% and 32% respectively in the period 2013-2018. (Source BEIS).

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.

The issue for CMK may relate more to the location of the parking in respect to where it is needed most, as the occupation rates show that parking is never at full capacity.



Increasing congestion and induced demand

– 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). 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.

Car-use – 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.

Car parking – many people suggest there is insufficient car parking in CMK. CMK has a far greater level of car parking and at cheaper rates than other city centres.

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), 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. With more walking and cycling and much improved mass transit services in the future, the number of people that need to travel into the city centre by car will decrease. We used Parkulator to estimate the amount of space in CMK taken up by car parking <http://imactivate.com/parkulator/>

Health impacts – increased physical activity would 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

Redways – some of the reasons why our Redways are not as well-used as they might be is because car use is so convenient and because routes are sometimes indirect and confusing to navigate and suffer in places from maintenance and lighting challenges.

Mass Rapid Transit – the original Plan for Milton Keynes 1970, page 35, referred to the future use of the grid road network for mass transit. 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. We know that many people want to see a fixed-rail type system in the city, but the cost of the heavy infrastructure required would be prohibitively expensive. 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 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 implementation approach 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. Further work has been carried out to consider the impact of COVID-19 on the viability of our MRT proposal, available at <https://www.mkfutures2050.com/evidence-for-the-strategy-for-2050>

Segregated routes – 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 by creating segregated lanes in new developments.

Transit Oriented Development – [The place to be – How transit oriented development can support good growth in the city regions](#), Urban Transport Group, January 2019.

Mobility as a Service – this is the move away from personally owned modes of transport towards mobility solutions that are consumed as a service. This might mean a user for a particular journey buying combined 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 the user pays 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.

Other links – 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

Chapter Seven – Central Milton Keynes and Our Centres

Central Milton Keynes – our Strategy 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, including Campbell Park).

Central Bletchley – this will be the meeting point of the West Coast Main Line and East West Rail. Our mass transit mobility 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. The Central Bletchley Prospectus was adopted in December 2019 <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/pressreleases/2019/dec/council-plans-economic-boost-for-bletchley>

Chapter Eight – Healthy and Creative Places

New Town Heritage – 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.

Health in placemaking and culture – What makes us healthy? The Health Foundation, <https://www.health.org.uk/infographic/infographic-what-makes-us-healthy>. 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".

15-Minute Neighbourhood – in a '15-minute city' or '15-minute neighbourhood', everyone can meet most, if not all, of their needs within a short walk or bike ride from their home. <https://www.c40knowledgehub.org/s/article/How-to-build-back-better-with-a-15-minute-city>

Reducing car dominance – 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 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vauban,_Freiburg

Preserving character – 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. We also need to ensure existing businesses and facilities do not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established. Paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Developing the detail with communities – through the local plan or neighbourhood plan process (which will identify and allocate suitable sites), the preparation of development frameworks and design codes, and the formal planning application process, we will ensure existing communities are fully involved and engaged when any such changes are being considered.

Importance of culture – 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). The MK Futures 2050 Commission also recognised the important role of the ‘Creative and Cultured City’ by including it as one of their Six Big Projects and the council and the local arts and heritage sector have a shared Creative and Cultural Strategy. MK Creative and Cultural Strategy 2018-2027 www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/assets/attach/56567/MK-Creative-Cultural-Strategy-2018-2027-Final.pdf

Diversity in culture – a recent report by the Milton Keynes Arts and Heritage Alliance, *Rethinking Cultural Inclusion and Diversity A Call to Action for Milton Keynes* (Sept 2020), has made recommendations about how we can make our cultural offer more inclusive <https://aha-mk.org/inclusion-and-diversity/>

Cultural Education Partnership – MAKE, the Milton Keynes Cultural Education Partnership, is a collaborative charitable partnership that works together to nourish and support the creative and cultural wellbeing of children and young people across Milton Keynes <http://aha-mk.org/develop/make/>.

Making space for culture – as an example, in developing a framework for the future of CMK, we should consider how to find innovative ways of creating and investing in spaces for arts and cultural activity – see Chapter Seven ‘Central Milton Keynes and Our Centres’. Chapter Eight – ‘Healthy and Creative Places’ also includes other ways that we can build consideration of culture and heritage into how we design new places.

Other Links – Creative Places: how can councils support the creative economy? 5 August 2020, Local Government Association <https://www.local.gov.uk/creative-places-how-can-councils-support-creative-economy-5-august-2020>

Chapter Nine – The 2050 Spatial Strategy

Development timescales – 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>

Cross-boundary sites – Figures Two and Eight show major allocations currently identified in neighbouring local plans (including emerging plans). The inclusion of those sites in the Strategy for 2050 does not necessarily mean the Council fully supports emerging proposals for those areas, which need to be assessed through the local plan process.

Chapter Ten – Making it Happen

Legislation – 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.

Types of infrastructure – Physical infrastructure - e.g. transport (including public transport, cycling and pedestrian paths),

water supply and waste management, water recycling, public realm, energy supply, telecommunications, 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.

MK Tariff – this 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.

Planning White Paper – the government’s programme of reform to the planning system could have an impact on how the strategy will be delivered. This could be through the preparation a different type of local plan or new mechanisms for securing funding to deliver new infrastructure, including the potential to centralise developer contributions. This would give greater freedom on how those contributions are spent, but may reduce the overall amount available and impact on the delivery of affordable housing. These reforms are currently at an early stage and it will be necessary to consider how they will impact on delivery of the Strategy – which has been designed to be flexible to cope with uncertainty and future shocks and change.

Partnership working – 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.

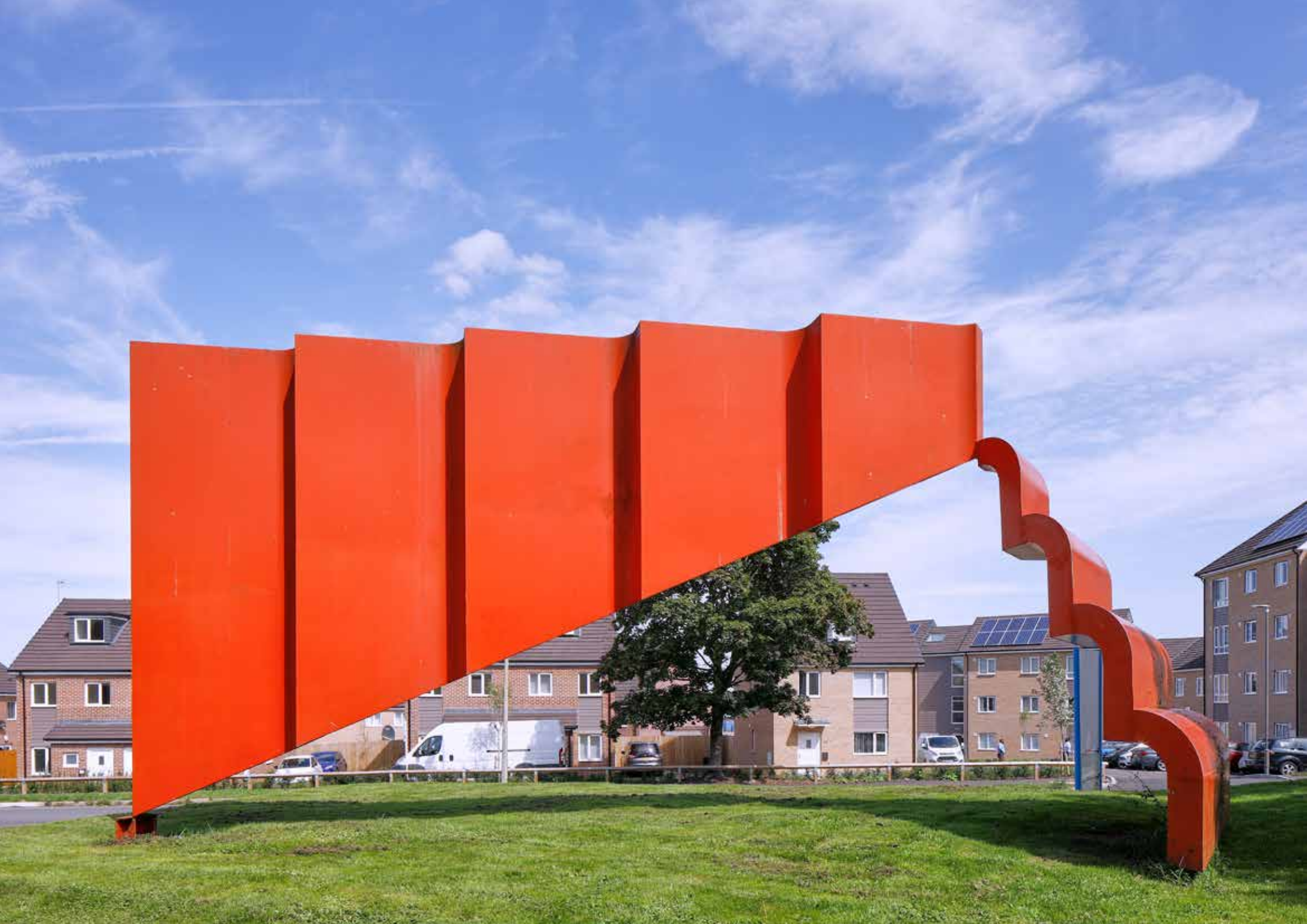
Other links – Community Foundation <https://www.mkcommunityfoundation.co.uk/news-events/milton-keynes-community-foundation-news/2019/october/mk-community-foundation-plans-future-community-land-development/>

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