



The CMK Alliance Plan 2026

A Business Neighbourhood Development Plan for Central Milton Keynes

Consultation Statement: May 2013

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1. Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises the consultation process that informed the preparation of the *CMK Alliance Plan 2026* – a business neighbourhood plan for Central Milton Keynes. The *Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012*¹ require a ‘consultation statement’ to be submitted with neighbourhood development plans which:
- » Contains details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
 - » Explains how they were consulted;
 - » Summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and
 - » Describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.
- 1.2 The *CMK Alliance Plan* has been informed by a great deal of community and stakeholder involvement and consideration of a broad range of issues. A Steering Group was set up from the outset to ensure robust debate and careful consideration of the needs and aspirations of both residents and businesses. Throughout the community and stakeholder engagement process, the Steering Group met monthly and often weekly, to discuss feedback and debate the issues and options.
- 1.3 During January and February 2012, the Steering Group considered several options for the scope of the plan, funding, likely project timelines and a variety of approaches for community engagement.
- 1.4 The CMK business neighbourhood planning process was launched in early April through a newsletter delivered to 850 businesses and 2,000 CMK households in the parish of the CMK Town Council.
- 1.5 During the first phase of public engagement, a series of seed papers were prepared and published on a special website called a ‘wiki’ (www.cmkalliance.co.uk). The wiki was ‘open’ to the public for comments and editing during April and May 2012. During this time, over 800 people visited the website and 150 registered as users.
- 1.6 In addition, eight public workshops were held covering many of the topics and issues raised through the online wiki papers. These were run during April and May 2012 and were attended by around 130 people.
- 1.7 The second phase involved five ‘expert panel’ sessions and over 20 stakeholder meetings to test the emerging proposals and options. These were conducted from June to August 2012.
- 1.8 Using feedback from the first and second phases of public engagement, a draft plan was prepared in August and September 2012.
- 1.9 The draft plan was submitted to formal public consultation for 8 weeks (12th October to 7th December 2012), in accordance with Section 14 of Part 5 of the *Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012*.
- 1.10 The *Consultation Draft* of the Plan was revised in March and April 2013 to incorporate the formal public consultation feedback to produce the *Examination Draft*.

¹ Section 15(1) and 15(2) of Part 5

2. Governance

- 2.1 Whilst under the *Localism Act 2011* the CMK Town Council is the 'qualifying body' for the Plan, it was recognised from the outset that the city centre serves more than just the needs of the local residents and businesses. From October to December 2011, the Town Council met with local business leaders, Milton Keynes Council and other stakeholders to determine the most appropriate organisational structure and process for preparing the plan. In many ways, this was the first crucial step in the engagement and consultation process.
- 2.2 As a result of these discussions, the CMK Town Council formally agreed on 4th January 2012 to set up a Steering Group as a committee of the Town Council to oversee the preparation of the Plan. Voting members of the Steering Group were co-opted as follows:
- » 4 parish councillors put forward by the CMK Town Council;
 - » 4 ward councillors put forward by Milton Keynes Council (MKC); and
 - » 8 members elected from the business community by a specially constituted CMK Business Forum.

The CMK Alliance Steering Group

CMK Town Council
 Rebecca Kurth (Chair)
 Ken Baker
 Linda Inoki
 Andrew Thomas

CMK Business Forum

Paul Hunt (Chair), Managing Director, John Lewis and Chair, MK Shopping Centre Association
 Stewart Bailey, Managing Director, Virtual Viewing
 Allan Banks, Chair, MK Fed of Small Businesses
 David Foster, Chief Executive, The Parks Trust
 Colin Fox, Chief Executive, Milton Keynes & North Bucks Chamber of Commerce (to March 2013)
 David Lock, Chairman, David Lock Associates
 Ruth Stone, Chief Executive, Community Action:MK
 Robert Hall, Director, thecentre:mk (to Aug 2012)
 Clive Faine, Managing Director, Abbeygate Developments Ltd (co-opted advisor)

Milton Keynes Council

Cec Tallack, Campbell Park Ward
 Brian White, Stantonbury Ward (to Jul 2012)
 Paul Williams, Campbell Park Ward (from Jul 2012)
 Catriona Morris, South Linford Ward
 David Hopkins, MKC Cabinet member

- 2.3 The Terms of Reference for the Steering Group are shown in Appendix 1.
- 2.4 To carry-out the day-to-day work of plan-making, communication and administration, a joint project team was set-up as a working partnership between the Town Council, Milton Keynes City Centre Management (MKCCM), and Milton Keynes Council.

Joint Project Delivery Team

Rebecca Kurth, Chair, CMK Town Council
 Robert de Grey, Director, MKCCM
 Kay Greenhalgh, City Centre Manager, MKCCM
 Nick Fenwick, Assistant Director, Planning & Economic Development, MKC
 Diane Webber, Senior Planning Officer, MKC
 Neil Sainsbury, Head of Urban Design, MKC

With administrative, communication and technical support from:

Carmel Blythe, MKCCM
 Leanne Quainton, MKCCM
 Natasha Pile, David Lock Associates
 Alex Hopkins, Edel Langan and colleagues, MKC

3. Launch & Phase I – Website & Workshops

Launch Newsletter

- 3.1 A newsletter announcing the launch of the CMK business neighbourhood initiative was distributed in early April 2012 to:
- » 850 CMK businesses using a combined database of MKCCM and MKC addresses (posted 4th April 2012);
 - » 2,000 CMK households (hand-delivered 2nd April - 9th April); and
 - » MK Council ward councillors and MK parish/town councils (via email).
- 3.2 Copies of the newsletter were displayed in the Town Council's three notice boards (in front of the library, Theatre District, and Campbell Park). Additional copies were distributed at stakeholder presentations.
- 3.3 The newsletter (shown in Appendix 2) contained information to help local businesses and residents to get involved with the neighbourhood planning process – through attending workshops and drop-in sessions or contributing to the online wiki website.

- 3.4 There were also press releases to the local newspapers, with articles published in MK News (4 April) and Business MK (May edition).

Launch Presentations

- 3.5 Presentations to publicise the business neighbourhood plan process during this phase were made to:
- » CMK Development Stakeholders Group (25 Jan & 27 Mar) ~18-20 attendees
 - » Business Leaders Board (6 Feb) ~6 attendees
 - » Urban Eden (25 Apr) ~10 attendees
 - » City Breakfast Club (2 May) ~75 attendees

Wiki Website

- 3.6 The CMK Alliance set up a special 'wiki' website (www.cmkalliance.co.uk) to provide information, obtain feedback, and promote online collaboration. A wiki is a type of collaborative internet software that allows anyone who registers on a website to make revisions and comments to documents posted on the website.

- 3.7 For the launch of the business neighbourhood plan, a series of seed papers were prepared and published on the wiki website. The seed papers provided background information and sought feedback on a range of topics and issues about CMK, including retail, office-based businesses and jobs, tourism, residential accommodation, leisure and recreation, and civic pride and diversity. The wiki was 'open' to the public for comments and editing of the seed papers during April and May 2012.
- 3.8 The website was used to publicise events, provide contact information and feedback forms, and to publish a wide range of documents, including outputs of workshops, minutes of the Steering Group, and the draft Plan for public consultation.

Website Statistics

1st April - 3rd June 2012

(Phase 1 – online editing & workshops)

881 unique visitors

1,968 visits (hits)

119 registered users

8 min 42 sec average duration of visit

3rd June – 10th October 2012

(Phase 2 – expert & stakeholder meetings)

Wiki online editing closed

Website not actively promoted

10th October - 10th December 2012

(Formal Public Consultation)

1,120 unique visitors

1,569 visits (hits)

3 min 17 sec average duration of visit²

1st April - 10th December 2012

(Total during plan preparation)

2,417 unique visitors

4,584 visits (hits)

² wiki not open for editing – plan available for downloading from website

Workshops

3.9 Additionally during this phase, eight public workshops were held covering many of the topics and issues raised through the online wiki papers (Appendix 3).

3.10 The dates and topics for the workshops were listed in the launch newsletter to 850 businesses and 2,000 households. Details and registration information were also publicised on the website. In addition, reminder emails were regularly sent to 400 people on the MKCCM database and 115 registered wiki users.

3.11 These two-hour workshops were held in city centre hotels or community meeting rooms, as follows:

- » Workshop 1: Evaluating Residential Living in CMK (17 April) – 19 attendees
- » Workshop 2: Improving Civic, Social & Recreational Facilities (17 April) – 21 attendees
- » Workshop 3: Job Creation – Attracting Office-Based Businesses & Jobs (25 April) – 7 attendees

- » Workshop 4: Expanding Higher Education & Skills (25 April) – 17 attendees
- » Workshop 5: Retail – increasing the Competitiveness of Retail Shopping (1 May) – 17 attendees
- » Workshop 6: Tourism – Increasing Leisure & Business Tourism (1 May) – 16 attendees
- » Workshop 7: Green Frame & Linkages, Accessibility & Movement (9 May) – 21 attendees
- » Workshop 8: Site Specific Opportunities and CMK-wide Illustrative Plan (23 May) – 14 attendees

3.12 The background / presentation materials and outputs from the workshops are shown in Appendix 3.

3.13 The workshops were attended by around 130 people in total.

4. Phase II – Expert Panels & Stakeholders

4.1 The second phase of community engagement involved five ‘expert panel’ sessions and 25 stakeholder meetings to test the plan’s emerging proposals and options (based on the wiki and workshop feedback). These were conducted mostly from June to August 2012 (Appendix 4).

- » Expert Panel 3: Office Accommodation & Mixed-Use (11 July) – 11 participants
- » Expert Panel 4³: Conference & Exhibition Facilities (31 July – 6 Aug) – 5 meetings (1:1) conducted with Destination MK
- » Expert Panel 5: Implementation & Maintenance (19 Sep) – 8 participants

Expert Panel Sessions

4.2 For the expert panel sessions, local experts and stakeholders were invited to participate in meetings on specific topics. At each moderated session, a ‘panel’ of 6-8 members initially responded to set questions before opening the discussion to a wider group of invited ‘contributors.’

4.3 The meetings and topics were as follows:

- » Expert Panel 1: Community, Leisure & Cultural Facilities (26 June) – 19 participants
- » Expert Panel 2: Transport – Access & Movement (5 July) – 19 participants

4.4 The background / presentation materials and outputs from the expert panel sessions are shown in Appendix 4.

Stakeholder Meetings

4.5 Over 20 meetings with stakeholders were held on a 1:1 basis in July and August 2012. Several presentations were also made to larger stakeholder groups.

4.6 Altogether, the emerging proposals and options were discussed with over 50 local individuals in these stakeholder meetings. Details are shown in Appendix 4.

³ Expert Panel 4 was run as a series of meetings with local conference facility experts

5. Public Consultation (Regulation 14)

- 5.1 A separate document – *the Public Consultation (Regulation 14) Report* – provides more details about the public consultation, including copies of publicity materials and copies of representations received.
- 5.2 This section summaries the public consultation (Regulation 14) process, the issues and concerns raised, how they have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the revised version (the *Examination Draft*) of the Plan.
- 5.3 The *Consultation Draft* of the Plan was submitted to formal public consultation for eight weeks (from 12th October to 7th December 2012). The statutory minimum is six weeks, but two additional weeks were included to allow time for leafleting residents during the first week.
- 5.4 A letter announcing the public consultation, including an 8-page synopsis of the Plan (the *Prospectus*), was distributed to:
- » 850 CMK businesses (posted 12th October 2012);
 - » 2,000 CMK households (hand-delivered 12th - 18th October 2012);
 - » MKC ward councillors and MK parish/town councils (via email); and
 - » Statutory Consultees (mainly via email with some via post).
- 5.5 The *Consultation Draft* of the Plan and *Prospectus* were also available for viewing and downloading as pdf files from the Alliance website (www.cmkalliance.co.uk). The MK Council website⁴ posted information about the Consultation and provided links to the documents on the Alliance website. Milton Keynes City Centre Management (MKCCM) also posted information on their website⁵. A hard-copy of the Plan was placed in the MK Central Library.
- 5.6 On 10th October 2012, a business launch event was held in the recently opened Network Rail National Headquarters building in CMK with 60 attendees from the business community and the local press. A press release was issued to the local newspapers.
- 5.7 Public exhibitions were held with members of the Steering Group in attendance to answer questions, as follows:
- » 17th October, 11am-7pm - Acorn House Reception (5-10 attendees);
 - » 24th October, 11am-7pm - Acorn House Reception (5-10 attendees);
 - » 31st October, 11am-7pm - Acorn House Reception (5-10 attendees);
 - » 2nd November, 12pm – 2pm, MK Central Station, CMK (station concourse);
 - » 14th November, 11.30am-1.30pm, Sainsburys, CMK (entry hall).
 - » 7th November, 8am-9.30am – City Breakfast Club, Doubletree Hotel (75 attendees); and
 - » 8th November, 12:30pm-7pm - Acorn House Reception (5-10 attendees).

Publicising the Consultation

⁴ <http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-policy/displayarticle.asp?ID=86168>

⁵ <http://www.mkccm.co.uk/haveYourSay/cmkalliance/default.asp>

- 5.8 Information about the exhibitions was included in all consultation materials.
- 5.9 Emails were also sent to the 115 registered users of the Alliance website and the MKCCM email distribution list (approximately 400 contacts, mainly businesses in CMK) to announce the public consultation and to serve as reminders nearer the closing date.
- 5.10 Copies of the *Prospectus* were displayed in the Town Council's three notice boards (in front of the library, Theatre District, and Campbell Park). Consultation posters and postcards were also placed on MKCCM Notice Boards in Station Square, thecentre:mk shopping centre and Xscape.
- 5.11 Presentations were also made to two stakeholder groups:
- » CMK Development Stakeholder Group (28 Nov) ~17 attendees; and
 - » MK Forum (1 Nov) ~10 attendees.

Overview of Consultation Responses

- 5.12 A total of 76 formal consultation responses were received. Two representations were received after the deadline, but the Steering Group decided to consider these.
- 5.13 The breakdown of the 76 responses received is as follows:
- » 44 (56%) from MK residents. It was not possible to distinguish responses from CMK residents from other residents in the wider Borough;
 - » 15 (20%) from CMK businesses;
 - » 10 (13%) from the Voluntary Sector or other organisations; and
 - » 7 (9%) from Statutory Consultees.
- 3.1 The main issues raised are shown in Table 1. These are discussed in more detail in the next section.

- 5.14 Other issues raised included:
- » Concerns about land use 'allocations;'
 - » Wording of various policies being too prescriptive or confusing;
 - » Too many principal pedestrian routes;
 - » Requests to include or re-instate the Boulevard through Midsummer Place;
 - » Views that the wording of Policy G1 (protecting the infrastructure) was not strong enough; and
 - » Issues with cycling routes & policies.

	TOPICS RAISED BY RESPONDENTS	FOR	AGAINST	TOTAL NO. OF RESPONSES TO TOPIC
1	generally supporting the overall Plan	40	4	44/76
2	protecting the classic CMK infrastructure	30	3	33/76
3	proposals for smaller independent retailers, the outdoor market and/or market hall	13	4	17/76
4	proposals for more community and cultural facilities, including a wider range for younger and older people and the voluntary sector	16	0	16/76
5	increase the number of parking spaces	10	5	15/76
6	proposed shuttle and transport interchange	10	2	12/76
7	advocating MK wide referendums	12	0	12/76
8	mixed use across CMK and/or the mixture of uses indicated in the proposals plan	7	5	12/76
9	supporting a university in CMK	10	1	11/76
10	creation of a civic or public square and/or public event space	10	0	10/76
11	design guidance for developments (weather protection for pedestrian, building heights)	4-6	4-5	9/76
12	seeking additional language regarding sustainability, with proposals such as extending chp	6	0	6/76
13	proposed housing densities too high	5	1	6/76
14	regeneration of existing sites, especially ageing office stock, not adequately covered by the Plan	5	0	5/76
15	supporting the retention of the qualities of Campbell Park and its surroundings or expressing concerns about development within the Park	5	0	5/76

Table 1: Summary of Main Responses

Revisions of the Plan

- 5.15 How the main issues and concerns have been considered is summarised below. In considering the 76 formal representations, it is important to place the numbers in context: there are 3,000 CMK residents (250,000 MK residents) and nearly 1,000 CMK businesses.
- 5.16 **Support for the Plan:** Of the 44 respondents who provided general comments on the overall Plan, 40 were supportive and 4 were not. Those supporting the plan included residents, as well as local businesses and organisations. Those not supportive of the Plan included major land-owners in the retail and leisure sector.
- 5.17 **Small shops and market:** Of the 17 respondents who commented on the Plan's proposals to encourage the provision of smaller shops, enhance the outdoor market and promote a covered market hall, 13 were supportive and 4 were not. No substantive changes have been made to these elements of Policy SS2.
- 5.18 **Community and cultural facilities:** Of the 16 respondents who commented on the Plan's proposals for community and cultural facilities, all were in favour. No substantive changes have been made to these aspects of the Plan.
- 5.19 **Parking standards:** Of the 15 respondents who commented on the Plan's proposal to increase parking provision in future (by changing the parking standard from Zone 1 to Zone 2), 10 were in favour and 5 were not. Those not in favour included MKC Highways officers and the MK Bus Users Group. After reviewing all of the representations and following further consultation with MKC, the Alliance have re-visited the parking standards and have narrowed the scope to two key issues – parking for office developments in CMK and visitor parking for residential developments in the Campbell Park grid square. The revised Plan (Policy T4) now alters the parking standards for only these two land uses and retains the existing parking standards for other land uses.
- 5.20 **Shuttle and transport hub:** Of the 12 respondents who commented on the Plan's proposal for an intra-CMK shuttle and a second transport interchange/hub in the central retail area, 10 were in favour and 2 were not. No substantive changes have been made to these elements of Policy T2.
- 5.21 **Referendums:** 12 respondents expressed the view that the referendums for the CMK business neighbourhood plan should be MK-wide, since the city centre is a key area for the whole Borough. This is a matter for consideration by the Examiner, in accordance with the *Localism Act* and *Neighbourhood Planning Regulations*.
- 5.22 **Mixed-use development:** Of the 12 respondents who commented on the Plan's mixed-use policies, 7 were supportive and 5 were not. After careful consideration of the responses, the Alliance's view remains that mixed-use development contributes significantly to the vibrancy of city centres in general and CMK in particular. No substantive changes have been made to Policy G6, although the text has been clarified following input from MKC Development Plans officers.
- 5.23 **A university in CMK:** 10 respondents expressed support for establishing a major university in CMK (or expanding the existing University Campus MK). Several supported more specifically the policy of reserving key

sites for this and other major opportunities. One respondent was not in favour. Apart from clarifying the wording in Policy SS1, no substantive changes have been made to this aspect of the Plan.

5.24 **Civic square:** Of the 10 respondents who commented on the Plan's proposals to support a new civic square in CMK (possibly by pedestrianising part of Midsummer Boulevard East), all were in favour. However, in processing other representations, for example expressing the desire to re-instate Midsummer Boulevard through Midsummer Place, it became clear that the brief for a major new civic square in CMK needs to be more carefully researched. The Plan has therefore been revised to incorporate a new Policy SS3 which identifies Midsummer Boulevard East between Midsummer Place and the Market as an Inset Action Plan Area within the Plan, where a detailed design and consultation process is to be undertaken by the CMK Alliance; and that the resulting scheme be processed either as a Modification to this Plan in due course, or be incorporated in a roll forward of this Plan.

5.25 **Design guidance:** 9 representations were received which commented on various aspects of the design guidance for new developments, mainly relating to building heights and providing weather-protection for pedestrians, with roughly half of those responding supportive of some aspects and half not in favour of other aspects. Apart from clarifying some of the wording of these aspects within the relevant Policies, no substantive changes have been made to this aspect of the Plan.

5.26 **Sustainable design and construction:** 6 comments were received seeking additional support or language regarding sustainable design and construction in the Plan, with suggestions such as extending the Combined Heat and Power (CHP) network in CMK. The Alliance view has been that the draft *Core Strategy* and *2005 Local Plan* both contain policies covering efficient use of natural resources and guidance to reduce environmental damage, and there was no need to repeat these in the *CMK Alliance Plan*. However, in response to this consultation feedback, additional text has been added to emphasise sustainable design and construction, and biodiversity in

landscaping, and to refer better to existing policy.

5.27 **Housing densities:** 5 respondents expressed a view that the proposed housing densities are too high. Whilst the Alliance are sympathetic to this view, in order to meet the *Core Strategy's* allocation of 5,000 dwellings in CMK, the densities need to be high. The indicative land uses, including residential development, as expressed in the Proposals Plan, are flexible and subject to alternative proposals and densities with the agreement of MK Council, who will monitor the overall delivery of dwellings and commercial floorspace in CMK. That said, the distribution of residential dwellings has been revised in the Proposals Plan to achieve a better balance.

5.28 **Regeneration:** 5 respondents expressed the view that guidance for regenerating ageing office stock is not adequately covered by the Plan. As stated in the introduction to the Proposals Plan, in the present national economic crisis it has not been practicable to carry out a conventional 'hard and soft' analysis in full, through which an assessment is made on a plot by plot basis of the likelihood of change in the plan

period ahead. The Plan assumes redevelopment proposals will at least aim broadly to replicate as a minimum the existing quantity and mix of land uses, enriched in quantity and mix in response to the overall approach for CMK set out in the Plan.

- 5.29 **Campbell Park:** 5 respondents expressed concern about potential development within Campbell Park. Wording in Policy G4 has been revised to strengthen the intended aim of the policy.
- 5.30 **Minor revisions and corrections** have been made extensively throughout the Plan to address other points raised in the representations, as agreed by the Steering Group and detailed in the Feedback Matrix (Table 4 in Appendix 3 of the Public Consultation Report).

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 This *Consultation Statement* and the supporting appendices, including *the Public Consultation (Regulations 14) Report*, are considered to fulfil Section 15 (2) of Part 5 of the *Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012*.