

A Transport Vision and Strategy for Milton Keynes

Local Transport Plan 3 - 2011 to 2031

Executive Summary



www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/transport-strategy

April 2011



This document has been prepared by
Milton Keynes Council

For further information please contact:
Milton Keynes Council
Transport Policy
Civic Offices
1 Saxon Gate East
Central Milton Keynes
MK9 3EJ

Tel: 01908 252510

Fax: 01908 254212

Email: transport.strategy@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Web: www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/transport-strategy

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Milton Keynes is an innovative, 'can-do' borough. Its unique layout and structure has helped support growth making Milton Keynes the most successful new town in the United Kingdom, and possibly the world. Milton Keynes is economically successful, home to many international companies and organisations including Santander, the Open University, British Petroleum, Mercedes Benz, Red Bull Racing, and it attracts major sporting and music events. Milton Keynes is situated approximately half way between London and Birmingham, and nearly 18 million people live within one and a half hours of the borough¹.

Milton Keynes is expected to grow rapidly over the next twenty years. It is essential that as the borough grows, so does the transport choice available to residents and visitors alike. Making better use of existing infrastructure, improving highway and Redway connectivity and providing an attractive public transport network are key. This will allow Milton Keynes to continue to prosper and provide an excellent quality of life for all of its residents and a positive experience for visitors.

The Transport Vision and Strategy cover the entire borough including the city, the older towns and rural areas. It also covers key corridors and routes to neighbouring areas and beyond, including major urban areas, international airports, ports and the Channel Tunnel. The Transport Vision and Strategy look across the period from 2011 to 2031 and is aspirational, continuing Milton Keynes' history and reputation.

The Transport Vision and Strategy constitute the council's third Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Milton Keynes and was submitted to the Department for Transport by April 2011. The Transport Vision and Strategy set out the borough's policies and programme for delivering local, sub-regional and national policy objectives and will be reviewed on a regular basis and at a minimum every four years. The LTP builds on the borough's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and the spatial planning policies in the Core Strategy as well as policy and guidance at an international, national and local level.

¹ Milton Keynes Core Strategy, Revised Proposed Submission Version, October 2010

A Transport Vision for Milton Keynes

Transport Vision Statement and Objectives

By 2031, Milton Keynes will have the most sustainable transport system in the country, increasing its attractiveness as a place to live, work, visit, and do business. There will be a real transport choice to satisfy individual preferences and encourage more sustainable travel behaviour. The transport system will provide fast and efficient movement of people and goods, and will be accessible for all. Everyone will have access to key services and amenities, including employment, health, education, retail and leisure.

Transport networks, including the unique grid road and Redway networks, will be expanded and fully integrated into new developments and regeneration areas to support more sustainable communities. Connectivity to local towns, major cities, and international transport gateways and networks will be first class; and Milton Keynes will embrace new technology, being an exemplar for the latest developments in information technology, fuel technology, and new forms of transport.

The council will work in partnership with all sectors and the wider community to deliver the transport vision and strategy.

The following objectives for the borough wide Transport Vision and Strategy have been developed:

1. Provide real and attractive transport choices to encourage more sustainable travel behaviour as Milton Keynes grows.
2. Support the economic growth of the borough through the fast, efficient and reliable movement of people and goods.
3. Reduce transport based CO₂ emissions to help tackle climate change.
4. Provide access for all to key services and amenities in Milton Keynes, including employment, education, health, retail, and leisure.
5. Improve safety, security and health.
6. Contribute to quality of life for all Milton Keynes residents, strengthening linkages between communities.
7. Establish a development framework that embraces technological change, in which Milton Keynes can continue to grow, pioneer and develop.

Milton Keynes Borough

The borough of Milton Keynes is one of the fastest growing areas in the country. Between 1981 and 2001, its population increased by 64.4%, whereas the population of England increased by only 5.0%². Within the next ten years, it is estimated that the population of the borough will rise by approximately 20,400 from 242,800 to 263,200 people by 2021 (an 8% increase) and to 300,800 by 2031 (a 24% increase from 2011). In order to meet the housing needs of this growing population through to 2031 in a sustainable fashion, it is critical that all transport networks support and serve new developments and provide good access to other land uses for all residents. If the highway network is to continue to provide and facilitate fast, efficient and safe movement of people and goods, a larger proportion of journeys must be made by more sustainable forms of transport to reduce congestion.

Milton Keynes is a borough with traditionally high levels of employment, exceeding employment rates of the South East and the national averages. In 2008/09, 80.2% of the working age population were in employment in Milton Keynes, compared with 78.6% in the region and 74% in England³. The entrepreneurial nature of the borough exposed Milton Keynes to the first wave of private sector job losses; however this will be a positive attribute for the borough's economic growth, providing resilience to any possible second wave recession. As the economy grows, transport must support and not hinder growth. The provision of high-speed broadband is also important for providing modern connectivity, including home shopping and working, social networking, and the use of collaborative technologies such as video conferencing. Other advances in transport technology will also be important for supporting the growth of the borough.

Whilst a relatively young borough, with a lower national and regional average age, the number of residents over 65 years of age will grow by 102% from 2011 to 2031 from 28,400 to 57,300⁴ (compared to overall growth of 24%). The transport network must accommodate the changing needs of all its residents, as well as changes in need resulting from all other socio-demographic trends.

Travel Patterns

Car travel in Milton Keynes is at present very efficient due to the grid road network and the availability of parking, but this is potentially unsustainable. At current rates of population growth, there will be a 57% increase in journeys by car at peak travel times (2001 to 2031)⁵. However, the city will only be able to provide an extra 25% capacity at peak times through junction improvements and other measures.

Large rural areas, low density neighbourhoods in the city, and the typical complexity of urban estate networks make it difficult to provide a fast, frequent and efficient public transport network to all residents and workers. These issues are highlighted by Milton Keynes's low journey to work public transport mode share of 9%. Coupled with relatively cheap car parking and the efficiency of the grid road network, the vast majority of in-commuters rely on the private car to get to work.

² *United Kingdom 1981 and 2001 Censuses* (Office of National Statistics, 1981 and 2001)

³ The population projections were produced by the Milton Keynes Population Model December 2009 using PopGroup and HouseGroup forecasting software.

⁴ Milton Keynes population forecasts: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=997>

⁵ Milton Keynes Revised Proposed Core Strategy (Milton Keynes Council, 2010)

Milton Keynes is a self-contained city, with 78% of those who live in the borough working in the borough as well. 77% of these residents use a car to get to work on a daily basis despite there being 5,000 jobs which are readily accessible by public transport, cycling or walking. Despite having a unique cycle network, the walking and cycling proportion of journeys to work is also low. Based on the 2001 Census, the percentage of the working population who were in employment and travelled to work each week by foot or cycle in Milton Keynes was 9%, an estimated 10,670 people⁶.

The Strategy

The strategy includes a description of key issues relating to each strand of the strategy, detail of how the strategy strand supports the objectives, and detail of the interventions to be delivered over the short, medium and long term. The delivery of interventions associated with each strategy strand will contribute to multiple objectives. The strategy strands are:

- **Public Transport:** rail, bus, interchange, community transport, taxi and private hire, future modes of transport (and public transport safety and security).
- **Cycling and Walking:** infrastructure and promotion (including safety and security).
- **Smarter Choices:** behavioural change techniques.
- **Highways and Traffic Management:** the fast and efficient movement of people and goods, congestion, parking, air quality, and driver safety.
- **Technology:** information provision, web-based technology, future modes of transport, and alternative fuels.
- **Infrastructure Management:** highway, Redway network and other asset management.
- **Development Planning:** integrated transport and land use planning.

⁶ *Milton Keynes Local Transport Plan 2006-7 to 2010-11* (Milton Keynes Council, 2006)

Focus of the Strategy

The strategy is a long term strategy covering 20 years and in that period it is possible to deliver improvements across all forms of transport, for all journey purposes, for all users. Despite this broad reach, and in consideration of all possible approaches, there is a clear focus for achieving the objectives of the vision – making best use of existing assets, the improved provision of sustainable transport to provide a real and attractive transport choice, and promotion of the transport choices available.

Making Best Use of Existing Assets

In current funding constraints, it is important that the best is made of the borough's existing assets. This includes maintenance of these assets, covered by the Milton Keynes Transport Asset Management Plan; localised junction improvement to increase highway capacity; as well as the increased promotion of existing sustainable transport infrastructure. This focus supports all transport users. For example, better quality roads for motorists and buses with increased capacity, and better quality Redway routes for cyclists and pedestrians.

Improved Transport Choice

If the increased demand for travel that is forecast is to be accommodated whilst maintaining a transport network that allows for the fast and efficient movement of people and goods and at the same time reducing CO₂ emissions, more people will need to travel by more sustainable modes of transport.

The step change required will be delivered through the ambitious and innovative interventions laid out in the strategy. They include the development of a high frequency bus network along core routes, building on the good work delivered by the council and its partners, and ultimately a transition to a rapid transit network. Rural services, feeder services, and Park & Ride will support the network; and interchange facilities, information provision and ticketing will be first class. Rail and coach will continue to provide a transport choice over longer distances and services will be enhanced and promoted. Taxi and private hire improvements will be supported. Community Transport will continue to provide a lifeline to key services for those with greatest need. The world class Redway network will be expanded and improved. Cycling and walking will be given top priority within city estates; and cycling and walking links in rural areas to employment centres and key services will be improved.

Technology and future modes of transport will also be embraced to add to the transport choice available. All interventions will be developed and delivered in partnership with operators, local businesses, the voluntary sector, local partnerships, and the wider community.

Improved Promotion of Transport Choices

In addition, promotion of the boroughs sustainable transport infrastructure will help to generate demand on these networks by raising awareness to residents, workers and visitors of the transport choices that already exist, including home working and shopping. Increased demand will act as a sign that increased investment in infrastructure is warranted, and in turn, ongoing promotion will optimise the benefit of additional investment.

Key Interventions

Public Transport:

- MK Star Bus Network
- Park & Ride
- Semi-flexible urban feeder services
- Increase peak frequency rural services
- Improved interchange
- Rapid transit including defining and defending alignments
- Improved Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) provision
- Integrated ticketing and smartcards
- Alternative fuel buses and supporting infrastructure
- Support for East West Rail and High Speed 2
- Local rail improvements
- Continued provision of community transport

Cycling, Walking and Smarter Choices:

- Expansion of the Redway network into Central Milton Keynes, new developments, regeneration areas and where possible the older towns
- More direct Redway routes and top priority for cyclists and pedestrians within city estates
- Improved walking and cycling access to rural employment areas and key services
- Improved maintenance and lighting of Redways
- Improved walking and cycling access to the public transport network
- Cycle hire
- Co-ordinated package of Smarter Choices interventions

Highways and Traffic Management, Road Safety and Infrastructure Management:

- Expansion of grid roads into and through future Expansion Areas
- Dualling of A421 from M1 Junction 13 to the M40 in Oxfordshire
- Junction improvements
- Improved access to / from the M1 Motorway
- Improved freight partnership working
- Ongoing funding for road safety engineering and education, training and promotion
- Intelligent Transport System package of interventions and improved broadband coverage
- Alternative fuel private vehicles and supporting infrastructure
- Improved maintenance to the highway network

Development Planning:

- Appropriate parking standards for new developments and in regeneration areas
- Improved integration of spatial and transport policies including improved partnership working between Milton Keynes Council, the Homes and Communities Agency, and developers.

Planning and Delivery:

- Improved partnership working between Milton Keynes Council and residents, local businesses and organisations, operators, the health and education sectors, the emergency services, environmental groups and community representatives, the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership, The Parks Trust, the Homes and Communities Agency, other local authorities, central government and its executive agencies (e.g. Highways Agency and Network Rail).

Key Policies and Interventions not being taken forward

The following interventions have been considered, and based on public consultation with the wider community, are **not** being taken forward:

- Universal **increases in densities for housing developments**.
- Use of **city streets** in future Expansion Areas where planning permission has not already been approved.
- More **stringent demand management interventions** in addition to those described in the Core Strategy in the short term (e.g. road user charging, reductions in CMK parking stock, lower maximum parking standards in residential areas).
- Borough-wide **reductions in grid road speeds**.

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