



Milton Keynes Bus Service Improvement Plan

October 2021



Excellent, green and inclusive public transport

Executive summary.

Milton Keynes is a great place to live, work, learn and relax. With such attractions, its strong growth will continue, but with this may bring the detrimental impacts of more traffic and pressures on the infrastructure and environment. To maintain the momentum of growth and offset these impacts, Milton Keynes needs excellent public transport.

Towards the end of 2020, Milton Keynes Council established a partnership with all bus operators to consider ways of transforming bus travel and achieving recovery following the pandemic. The publication of the National Bus Strategy in March 2021 provided further impetus and support to develop the public transport offer for the people of Milton Keynes. This Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) sets out how this will be achieved.

This document sets out the ambitions of Milton Keynes Council, bus operators and other partners to deliver an excellent, green and inclusive public transport system across the Milton Keynes area, for urban and rural users. It gives context to the challenges and opportunities the partnership is seeking to address, to ensure that public transport achieves its full potential in Milton Keynes for the growth of the area and the extensive planned development and renaissance of the City, delivering the groundwork for the 2050 Strategy, mass rapid transit and the new University.

Milton Keynes is a unique place and needs its own bold solutions. Earlier in 2021, MK Connect was launched across the entire area, offering demand responsive transport where bus services don't exist. This is the first step in building up public transport usage and will establish demands for new conventional bus services. The Bus Service Improvement Plan will facilitate further substantial service developments and accelerate programmes of infrastructure replacement and improvement.



BSIP Vision

The vision for Milton Keynes is that it will have an excellent, green and inclusive public transport system used by all.

BSIP Goals

The main goal is to significantly increase the relevance of public transport in the lives of the people of Milton Keynes, reducing the dominance of the car, supporting growth, creating inclusivity of movement and helping to improve health and wellbeing for all.

The aim is to see the public transport system in Milton Keynes acknowledged for excellence – used out of choice by all. Success will be driven by innovation and determination to achieve the best quality of service and lowest environmental impact.

BSIP Objectives

The vision will be achieved by addressing a number of objectives:

- Based on a service hierarchy, provide an attractive, coordinated public transport network, offering high quality services and infrastructure, supporting the potential for the development of rapid transit services.
- Enhance bus service frequencies and operating times on key routes and across the borough to significantly increase patronage.
- Provide measures to support bus reliability and improve journey times.
- Offer integrated ticketing that makes bus travel easier and fares that offer good value.
- Protect and improve passenger infrastructure and facilitate multi-modal interchange.
- Ensure that planning policies fully support public transport delivery and prioritise more sustainable transport modes.
- Work with bus operators to help achieve the Council's 'carbon neutral by 2030 ambition' by improving fleet, introducing alternatively fuelled vehicles and trialling innovative technologies.

The Bus Service Improvement Plan sets out ambitious proposals to transform bus travel in Milton Keynes. Not only does it seek to restore bus use to pre-pandemic levels during 2022/23, it sets out a significant investment programme in service enhancements and infrastructure that will create a reimagined experience of bus travel. By offering a world class service, the people of Milton Keynes will have confidence and satisfaction in the public transport service, which will translate to significant patronage growth. The funding sought from the DfT for this transformation programme is summarised as follows.

	2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
	Revenue £	Capital £	Revenue £	Capital £	Revenue £	Capital £
Network planning	5,820,000	6,000,000	9,560,000	9,450,000	9,450,000	24,000,000
Bus priority	25,000	850,000	90,000	2,200,000	-	3,700,000
Easier ticketing / fares support	1,460,000	-	1,950,000	350,000	2,050,000	390,000
Bus infrastructure	175,000	1,870,000	300,000	11,600,000	200,000	13,050,000
Information and brand	615,000	550,000	175,000	20,000	35,000	-
Policy, planning and growth	-	-	100,000	-	-	-
Vehicles and zero emission				4,650,000		
Enhanced Partnership delivery	85,000	-	65,000	-	65,000	-
Other	10,000	-	10,000	-	10,000	-
Totals	8,190,000	9,270,000	12,250,000	28,270,000	11,810,000	41,140,000

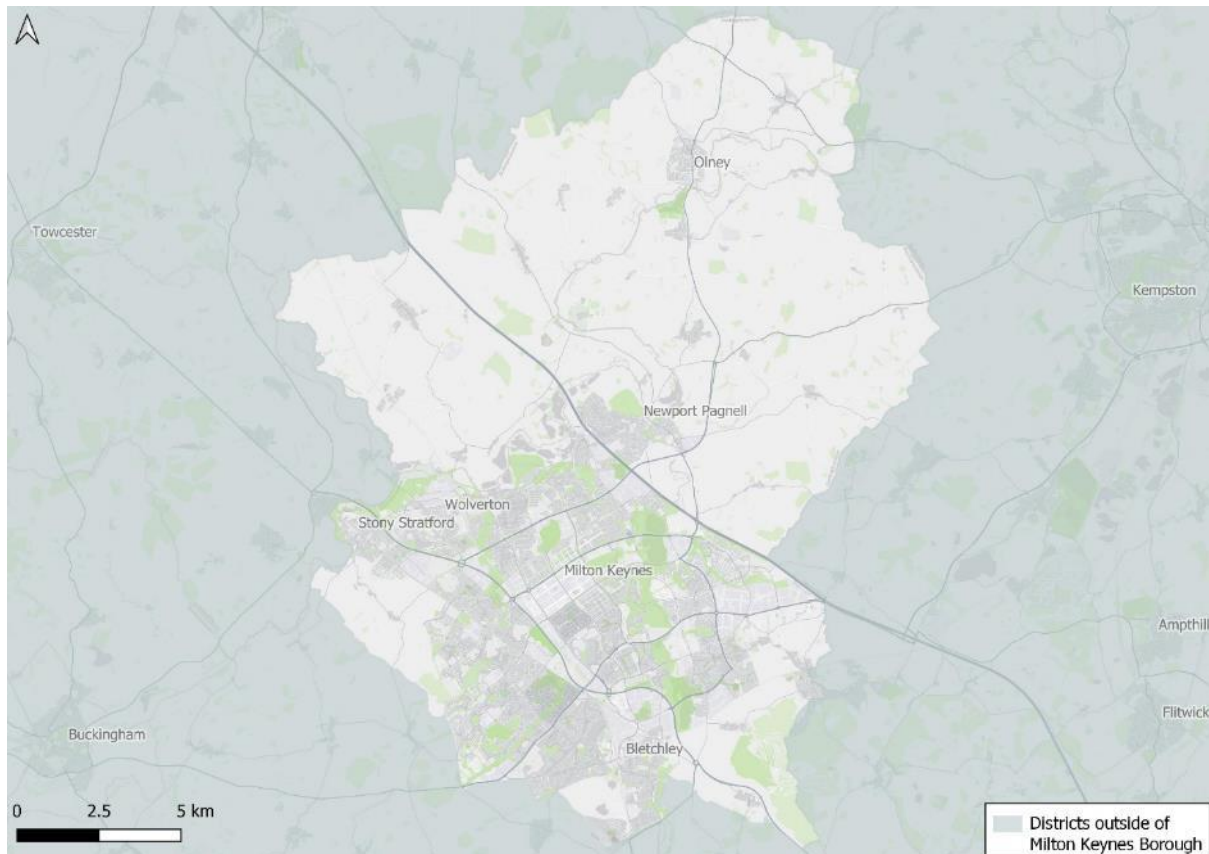
With full implementation of these proposals, it is intended to achieve the following targets:

- 20% increase in patronage on 2019/20 levels
- 95% reliability
- Passenger satisfaction with bus services overall of 89%

1: Overview

Introduction

This Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) covers the Milton Keynes Council area, which includes the growing city of Milton Keynes, along with its rural hinterland, with a population of 265,000.



The Plan has been prepared in response to the **National Bus Strategy: Bus Back Better**, which has an ambitious vision for significant improvements to bus services to return usage to pre-pandemic levels and then to build patronage further. It wants to see services that are:

- **More frequent**, with turn-up-and-go services on major routes and feeder or demand-responsive services to lower-density places.
- **Faster and more reliable**, with bus priority wherever necessary and where there is room.
- **Cheaper**, with more low, flat fares in towns and cities, lower point-to-point fares elsewhere, and more daily price capping everywhere.
- **More comprehensive**, with overprovision on a few corridors reduced to boost provision elsewhere and better services in the evenings and weekends, not necessarily with conventional buses.
- **Easier to understand**, with simpler routes, common numbering, co-ordinated timetable change dates, good publicity, and comprehensive information online.
- **Easier to use**, with common tickets, passes and daily capping across all operators, simpler fares, contactless payment and protection of bus stations.
- **Better integrated** with other modes and each other, including more bus-rail interchange and integration and inter-bus transfers.

To be eligible for Government funding announced as part of the National Bus Strategy, local authorities are required to produce a BSIP and develop an Enhanced Partnership to facilitate the delivery of proposed improvements in collaboration with bus operators.

This Milton Keynes BSIP considers all bus services operating wholly within the Council's area, including the extensive provision of demand responsive services, together with those that radiate out and link with neighbouring areas.

The Plan, which is adopted as the revised bus strategy within the Local Transport Plan, commences in October 2021 and will continue with no fixed end date, being a 'live' document subject to annual review and updating. Delivery of the Plan will be facilitated by an Enhanced Partnership (EP), which again will be on-going, subject to its own formal arrangements for review or revocation.

Background

Milton Keynes is a vibrant and dynamic place – a great place for business, living and leisure. It is known for its uniqueness and innovation.

Milton Keynes is growing faster than other places. It has a younger age profile, with 27.4% of its population under 19 (compared with 23.7% for England as a whole). 13.1% of the population are 65+ (compared with 17.9% for England). 26% of the population is made up of black and minority ethnic groups.

Its growth and development mean that significant opportunities exist across Milton Keynes. The dispersed pattern of development and network of grid roads means that many people choose to use a car. Milton Keynes is an especially challenging place to plan and provide public transport, meaning that bold and different ways of doing this are needed.

Recognising the detrimental effect of rising traffic levels and the need to ensure good access to opportunities for all, Milton Keynes Council (MKC) is committed to developing an effective public transport system. This will support further growth, protect the environment and enhance the health and wellbeing of residents. Indeed, this process has commenced with the introduction of Borough-wide demand responsive transport (MK Connect) and plans for a mass rapid transit (MRT) system.

The Mobility Strategy 2018-2036 (or most recent Local Transport Plan, LTP4) seeks to ensure a transport system that will:

- Support growth and provide mobility for all
- Provide an effective network
- Maximise travel choice
- Protect transport users and the environment

The Strategy includes plans to improve public transport in various ways, including the development of a partnership between the Council and bus operators, in order to reduce journey times by public transport and achieve greater satisfaction with bus services. The overall intention being to increase patronage on the bus network and to help reduce the mode share of the private car.

Supportive policies for public transport are promoted through Plan:MK, the Local Plan for Milton Keynes adopted in 2019. One highlights the possibility **that some areas will be designating for higher densities, with a different relationship to grid roads and public transport corridors.**

In December 2020, the desire for public transport enhancement was further supported by the MK Strategy for 2050, which planned for long term growth to a population of 500,000. One of its seven big ambitions is **to make it easier for everyone to travel on foot, by bike and with better public transport.** Central to this is the development of a road-based (rubber-tyred) mass rapid transit (MRT) system, with a network of services operational by 2050. The Strategy highlights the use of an Enhanced Partnership to help facilitate the delivery of MRT.

The greater focus on more sustainable travel options supports the MK Sustainability Strategy (2019), which commits to achieving a carbon neutral position by 2030.

Development of the bus network

With its commitment to improve public transport, MKC instigated a number of workstreams in 2020, including:

- **Review of supported bus services** – this led to the replacement of a number of daytime, evening and Sunday services by demand responsive MK Connect in April 2021.
- **Development of an Advanced Quality Partnership Scheme (AQPS)** to work towards service improvements across the city, including bus priority measures, passenger infrastructure improvements and better buses. A partnership group consisting of Council officers and all bus operators was formed and started meeting monthly to develop the Scheme.

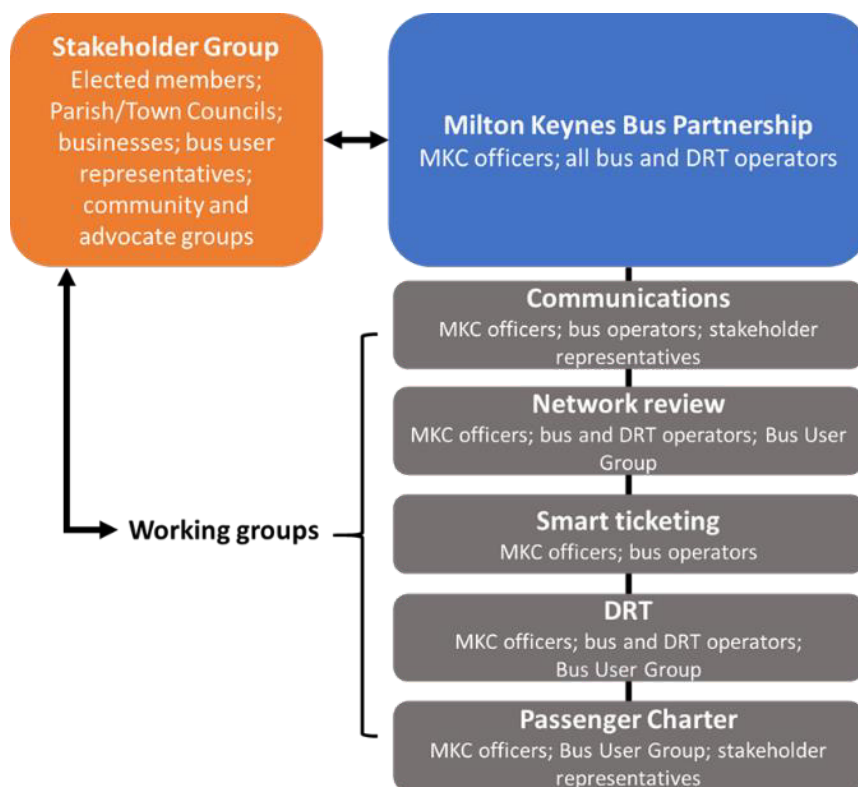
Work had already been undertaken to consider the potential of MRT, particularly linked to the expansion of the city. This identified opportunities for such provision, whilst noting the need to ensure suitably strong demand through land use densification and good, easy access to services. A further study is being undertaken, which will seek to establish the first routes and provide the business case.

Development of BSIP and Enhanced Partnership

With the launch of the National Bus Strategy in March 2021, the authority was in a strong position to respond immediately and transfer the focus of its **Bus Partnership** towards the development of an Enhanced Partnership (EP). The Council published its notice of intent to develop an EP on 23 March 2021. The Partnership has continued to meet monthly, under its already established terms of reference, to both work towards the establishment of an EP and to oversee the development of the BSIP. The signatories to an Enhanced Partnership are members of the Partnership.

*Ross Burton, NBS Project Lead,
Stagecoach East:*

“Milton Keynes has fully consulted bus operators throughout this whole process ensuring that their views are heard. Stagecoach East fully supports the Milton Keynes BSIP and all of the measures contained within it.”



Given the significant ambition to achieve public transport improvements, steps have been taken to draw in the support and resources of many interested parties. These are channelled through a **Stakeholder Group**, and the Partnership is supported by a number of working groups.

The **Stakeholder Group** meets monthly to be informed of developments and to help shape the way forward and determine priorities. The working groups meet as required to pursue their individual areas of interest. The Communications Group has a particularly wide remit, considering the stakeholder involvement, communications and messaging around the development of the BSIP and EP, as well as issues concerning the general promotion and marketing of the bus network. It is looking to address the gap between perceptions and reality of the current bus network.

Simpson & Ashland Parish Councillor representative on the Stakeholder Group:

"I am pleased to be a member of the Stakeholder Group and contribute to the 'our' Milton Keynes BSIP. It is an ambitious plan which deserves to lead planning for a comprehensive and much-needed 21st century approach to public transport across

Representative of employer, Magna Park:

"Being part of the Stakeholder Group has enabled us to understand what the growth of Milton Keynes is set to look like and how as an employer we will play our part in this and understand how we can promote the use of the bus network in terms of sustainability and the environment. Being part of this group has also provided us with the opportunity to highlight current and future challenges and ways of working that by creating a better public transport network will help support both people and businesses with these challenges."

Neil Sainsbury, Head of Placemaking, Milton Keynes Council, and member of the MK Bus Partnership:

“It’s really encouraging how the process of preparing the BSIP has recognised the important role of the relationship between transport and land use planning and how the growth of the city and the location of development can help drive improvements in the quality of public transport provision across Milton Keynes.”

Castlethorpe Parish Councillor representative on the Stakeholder Group:

“It’s wonderful to see this exciting new step towards hitting Milton Keynes’ and the UK’s target of cutting CO₂ emissions. Plus, it will give us the public transport system we really need.”

The **Network Review Group** is considering how the overall network should develop in the future. It has established the hierarchy of services and collated details of potential bus priority measures. It is examining ways that the network can be supplemented with new links for deprived communities and dedicated services direct to main areas of employment.

The **Smart Ticketing Group** has been in place for some time, being responsible for the MK Move multi-operator ticketing scheme already in place. It is leading on further fares and ticketing initiatives.

The **DRT Group** oversees the performance of the MK Connect service. It will support ongoing work to consider how DRT may adapt to network changes and to ensure opportunities for the network are taken.

The **Passenger Charter Group** is a small task and finish group with the aim of refreshing the existing charter to set out what people can expect from the bus network in Milton Keynes. The Group will review the charter annually.

In addition to the formal organisational framework, MKC officers have engaged with neighbouring authorities, ensuring that all are aware of one another’s plans. There has been agreement that each cross-boundary service will be assigned a lead authority, in order to avoid conflicting requirements on those services. Additionally, MKC, along with several neighbouring authorities, have been engaged in the work of a Regional Bus Study led by England’s Economic Heartland. This is looking at the future role and development of longer-distance bus services that help to connect corridors beyond local authority boundaries.

Ambition for the bus

The Milton Keynes Bus Partnership has considerable ambition to transform the bus offer for Milton Keynes' residents and visitors. The following vision, goals and objectives have been adopted.

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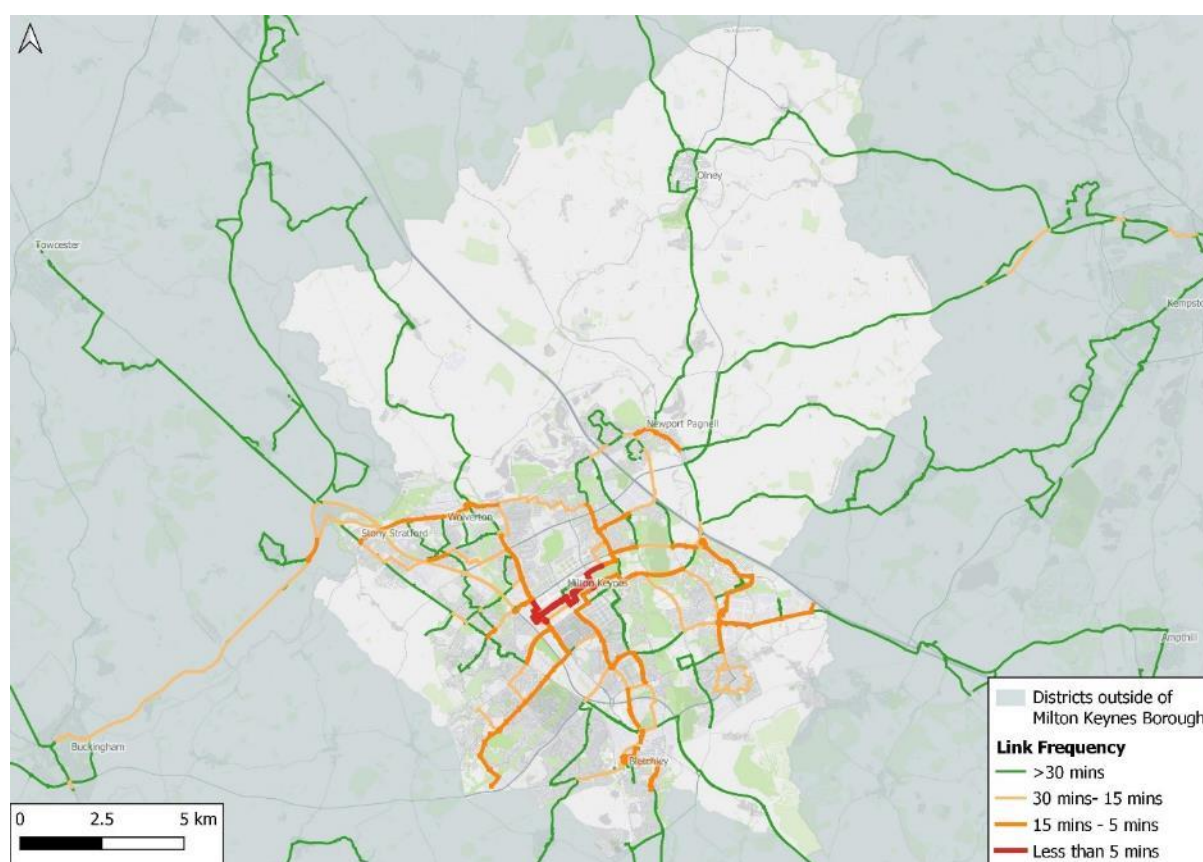
commercial basis and the operator has identified an opportunity to develop Park & Ride further in partnership with MKC.

Service levels

Most bus services operate at intervals of 15 to 60 minutes during the daytime (excluding occasional or peak only services). In some parts of the city, services come together to provide higher combined frequencies as follows:

- Services 1 and 2 to provide 15-minute frequency (Newport Pagnell – CMK)
- Services 5 and 6 to provide 10-minute frequency (Wolverton – CMK – Bletchley)
- Services 3 and 8 to provide 10-minute frequency (Westcote – CMK)

Overall frequencies across the network are illustrated below.



There is a lack of consistency in service levels to different parts of the Borough. Some areas enjoy daytime frequencies of a bus every 10 minutes, whilst others have a bus every 30 minutes or more. Whilst this is dictated by what operators consider viable, based on levels of demand, the lower frequency services are an unattractive alternative to the car.

In April 2021, most subsidised services, which had frequencies of 30 minutes or longer, ended and borough-wide demand responsive transport (DRT), branded as MK Connect, was introduced. MK Connect is integrated with the commercial network to ensure a reasonable transport offer for the

area, directing users to a local bus where one is available for the journey requested. It provides greater travel choice and flexibility, closing gaps in connectivity, particularly in rural areas.

Usage of MK Connect is growing, with 5,300 passenger journeys per week in September 2021, representing an average of 3.1 passenger journeys per vehicle per hour.

The MK Connect fleet is mixed, consisting of at least 50% electric, and some wheelchair accessible vehicles. Vehicles are under 10 seats and the service runs on a PHV license.

DRT will be the first type of public transport introduced into new development areas, allowing the service to respond to the number of residents and their travel patterns, rather than running costly fixed bus service during the early phases of development, when demand will be low. MKC will continue to ensure that suitable infrastructure is provided in new developments to support fixed route commercial bus services once patronage outgrows DRT.

It is anticipated that MK Connect will not only support the recovery of public transport use post-pandemic, but in giving flexibility and access to areas unserved by bus services will widen the reach of public transport and encourage modal shift away from the car. It is critical part of the overall strategy to increase public transport use.

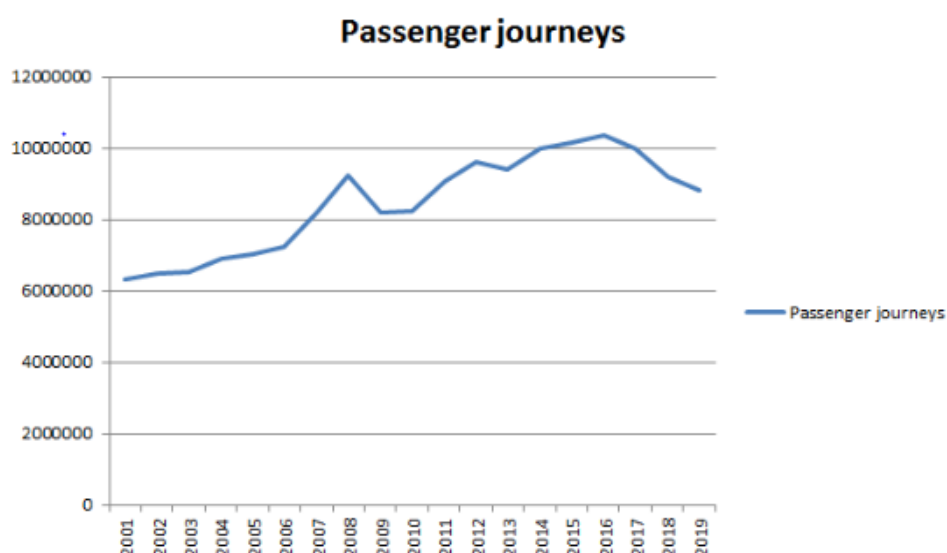
The Council has committed funding over the next five years to develop MK Connect, ensuring full coverage of the east and west expansion areas.

Patronage levels and trends

Bus patronage grew significantly from 2001 and between 2009/10 and 2015/16 grew by a further 25%. This may have been partly due to the growth of the city's population and new employment opportunities created by the opening of distribution hubs. However, given that usage per head of population also rose by over 13% during the same latter period, it suggests that there was generally increased usage.

Since then, patronage has declined, with a fall of 1.3 million journeys between 2015/16 and 2018/19. Indeed, total passenger journeys in 2019 were lower than in 2010. Along with the recent decline in overall use there has been a fall in the average number of passenger journeys per head. The general decline in recent years has been similar to that in many parts of the country, reflecting rising car usage, moves to greater use of online services and shopping and continued erosion of bus services. Unlike some local authorities, MKC continued to support a substantial number of bus services through this period, including evening and Sunday provision, until their replacement by MK Connect in 2021.





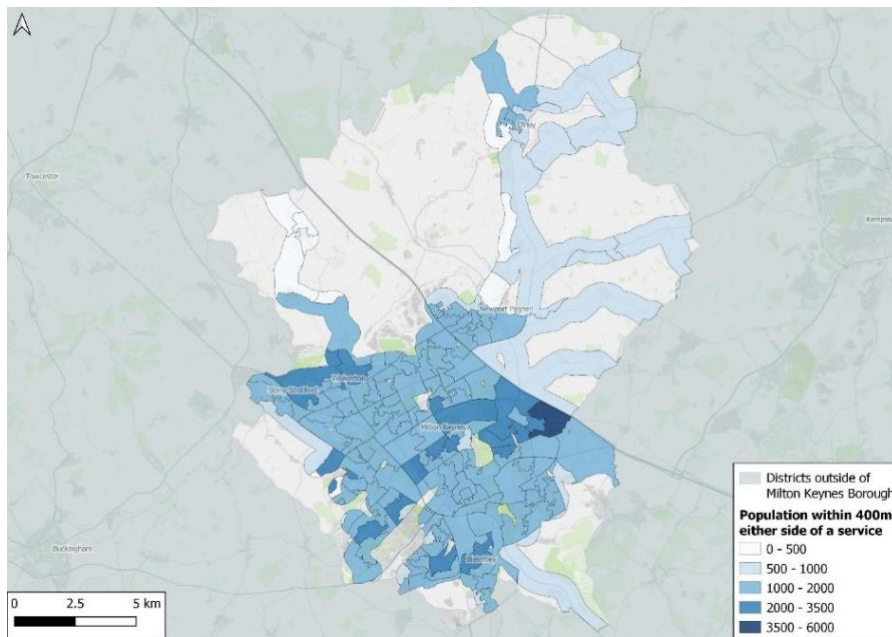
In 2018/19, there were 32 passenger journeys per head of population. Whilst this is significantly higher than more rural authorities (which it should be given that much of its area is urban), it is below the average for the South East (38) and well behind levels of use seen in traditional urban areas, such as Leicester (75) and Nottingham (147). Equally, it is lower than other expanding urban areas, such as Peterborough (47) and Swindon (54). This reflects the high car ownership and use in Milton Keynes and the difficulties for bus to perform well where population densities are lower than traditional centres.

Density of bus service

Over two thirds of the population are within 400m of bus services that provide at least a half-hourly service. 39% of the total population is served by the two key North-South and East-West corridors. This level of potential demand provides good justification for targeting these routes for improvement.

Service type	% of population within 400m
Key North-South/East-West corridors	39%
Half hourly or better bus services	69%
All regular services	79%

The map below highlights those areas with the highest density of population within easy reach of bus services, such as Westcroft, Wolverton and Bletchley. Again, these support the case for development of the two key corridors, with the potential for patronage growth.



Bus modal share and how this has changed

Residents have above average levels of car ownership in Milton Keynes at 81%, compared with 74% for the rest of England (2011 Census), with above average car use for the journey to work at 62%, against 54% for England.

Bus accounted for just 5.5% of journeys to work in 2011, which is beneath the average for England (7.2%) and significantly lower than traditional cities, such as Nottingham (10.5%).

Milton Keynes attracts workers from all surrounding areas (Northampton, Bedford, Luton/Dunstable and Aylesbury Vale). Most of these journeys are undertaken by car.

Ambition

To make public transport truly attractive in Milton Keynes, a major step change is needed that is not necessarily just seen as a bus. Therefore, the ambition is:

- Introduce mass rapid transit (MRT), likely rubber tyre based, tied to substantial development plans over the next 30 years.
- The Enhanced Partnership will deliver shorter term enhancements across the existing bus network to increase patronage and reliance on public transport to support and justify ultimate provision of MRT.
- Innovative zero emission vehicles to be introduced on the key east-west and north-south quality corridors, linking substantial employment areas like Magna Park and borough towns such as Wolverton and Bletchley.
- Comprehensive network of frequent fixed bus routes developed across the entire area. It is anticipated this will take up to five years, with ongoing development and densification, for patronage to grow to support long-term commercial viability of the enhanced service levels long term.
- Hours of operation extended to support the developing city and potential for a greater night-time economy, and to meet the needs of workers on flexible shift times at major employment sites such as Magna Park. This will also be in line with the development of the new university, which is likely to occur between 2023 and 2025.
- High frequency network will provide the basis for easy interchange and will be supported by widespread flexible and semi-flexible DRT feeder services, increasing the catchment and usage of the main network.
- Explore the potential for autonomous vehicles, with a trial using infrastructure provided in Central Milton Keynes.

Fares and ticketing

Average fares/km

Within the city there is a relatively coarse fare structure, with three main adult single fare bands (£2.10; £2.60; £3.40). Depending on distance, the average fare per km ranges from £0.69 to £1.69. For the most typical journeys within the city, such as trips to the city centre from Wolverton, Newport Pagnell, Kingston, Bletchley and Westcroft, the average cost is between £0.97 and £1.13 per km.

Ticketing and co-ordination arrangements

Operators each provide a range of ticket options, including area-wide day, week, 4-week and annual season tickets. Flexible ticket bundles are also available, such as Uno's five 1-day bundle for use on non-consecutive days and Arriva's 12-day bundle to use within a 30-days.

Arriva offers a Milton Keynes day ticket of £4.80, or £8.50 for 2 people travelling together. A special short hop fare of £1 applies between Milton Keynes railway station and Central Milton Keynes.

For families (2 adults and up to 3 children), Arriva offers a day ticket at £9, with a lower cost of £6 on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

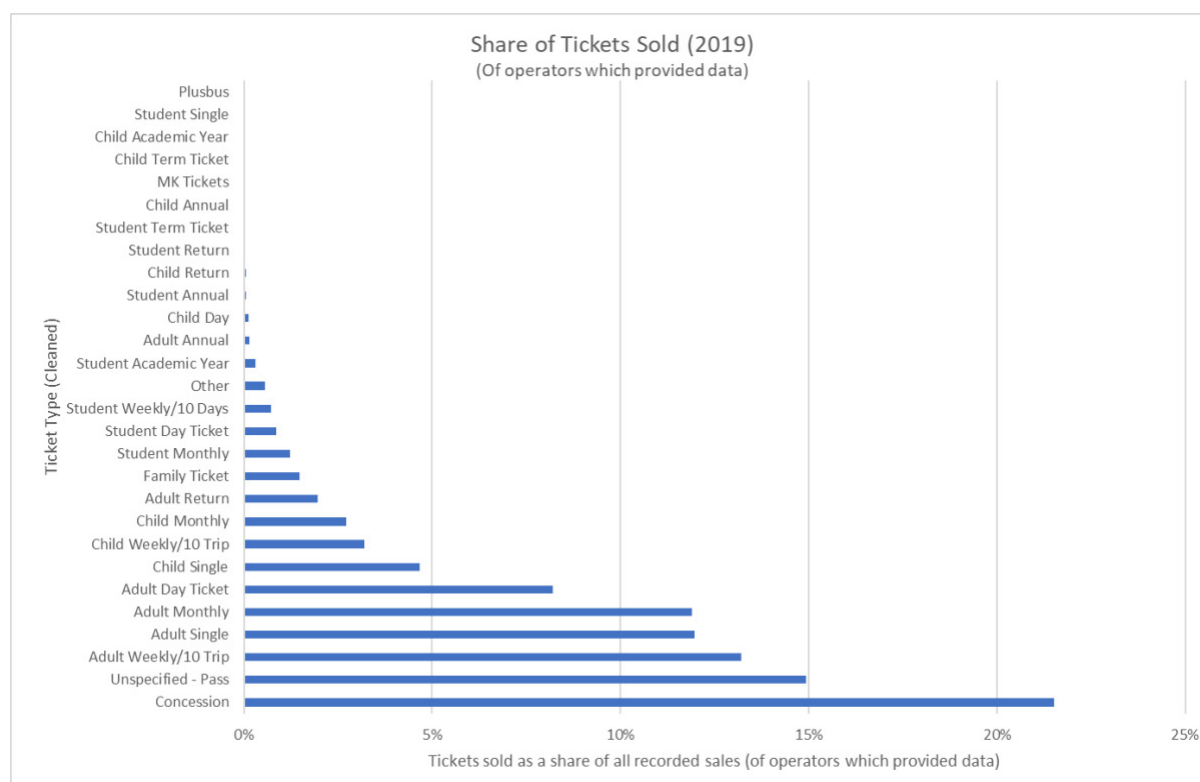
Virtually all operators participate in a multi-operator ticketing agreement, MK Move. This offers both an electronic pay-as-you-go purse and multi-operator period tickets (one day; one week; and 4-weekly). The day ticket costs £5.20. Some operators also offer their own commercial add-ons to this to extend journey opportunities beyond the Milton Keynes boundary. Membership of the scheme is expected to become a requirement for key and core routes under the EP.

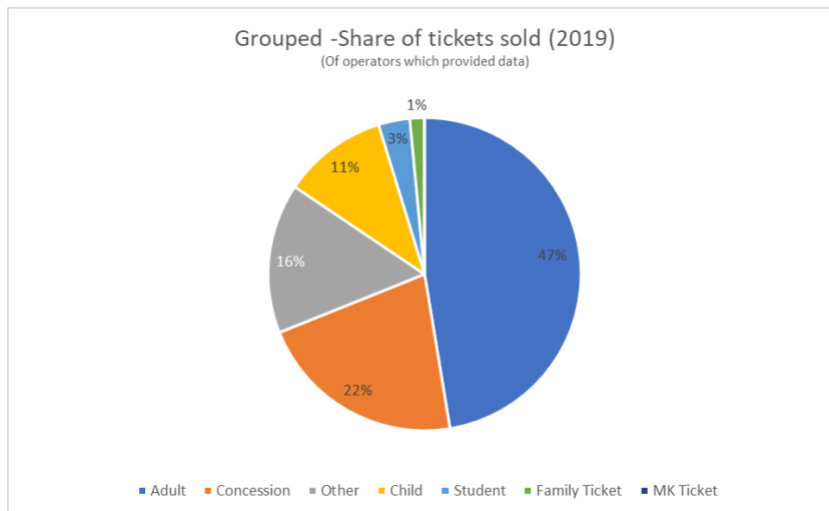
The 'All in 1' card for under 19s, allows travel for £1 single, with further options for one and four week versions of the ticket. This operates as a concessionary travel scheme, funded by MKC. Work is underway to make the card smart and to offer return tickets.

For those making journeys by bus and rail, Bletchley and Milton Keynes PlusBus is available at a cost of £3 per day, offering unlimited bus travel within the urban area. Again, virtually all operators participate in this.

MK Connect costs £3.50 per journey at peak times and £2.50 at other times. Concessionary travel passes and All in 1 cards can be used on the service.

The most prevalent ticket type is older and disabled people's concession passes. This is followed by the range of adult single, day and period tickets. When grouped together, adult tickets form the highest proportion of all tickets sold. The unspecified passes account for a range of return or period tickets that have been visually accepted by drivers but not identified on the ticket machines.





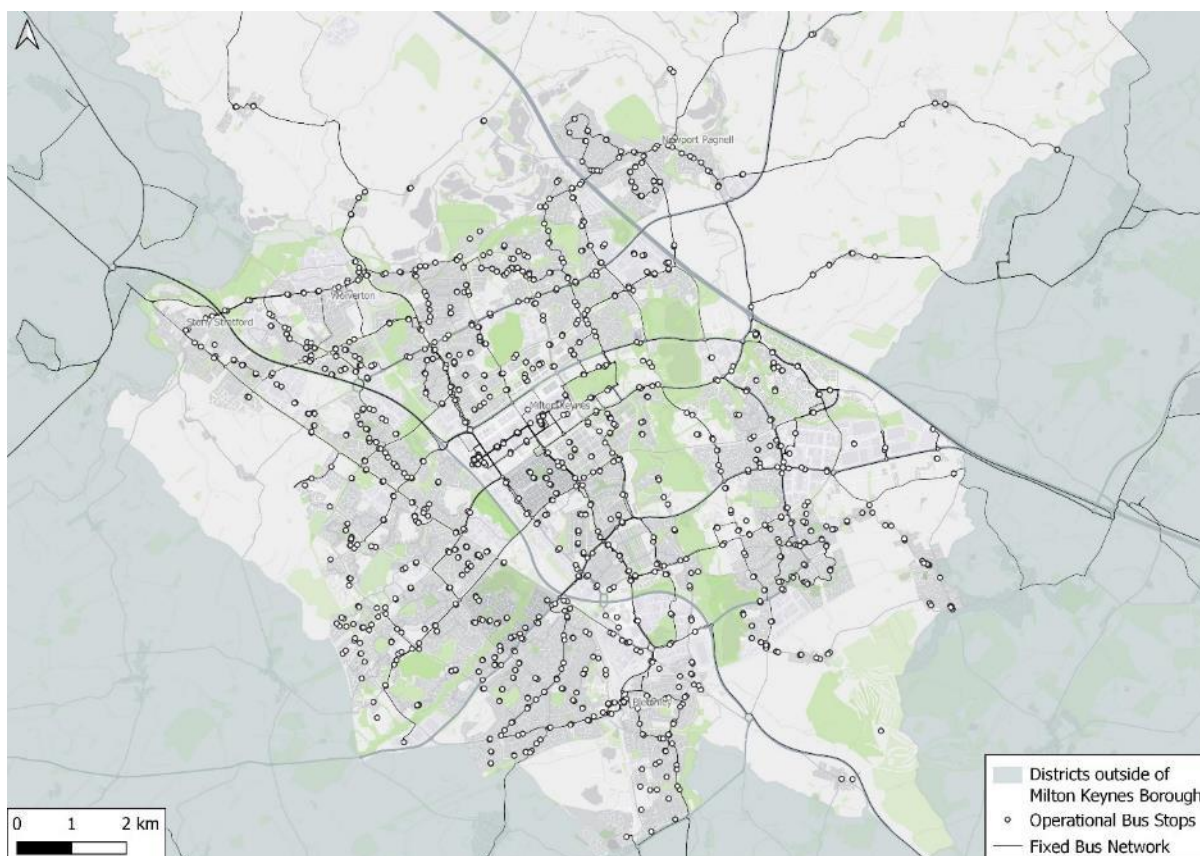
Ambition

- The Ticketing Group has already started work on expanding the ticketing scheme to bring the existing youth concession onto the MK Move smartcard.
- Multi-modal ticketing options to include DRT, and other sustainable modes such as e-bike, e-scooter and the car club as well as local rail. Work has begun on how this would work with DRT.
- An account-based ticketing solution is also being explored to provide a more complete integrated solution that allows for discounts to be applied to drive changes in parking and driving habits and to enable the possibility of capping moving forward.
- Simple, cost effective ticketing for all user groups that decreases reliance on the user identifying their best value option.
- Explore options to use on-bus facial recognition, to replace physical means of payment for travel.

Infrastructure

Bus stops

There are about 1,000 bus stops and 500 shelters across Milton Keynes. The authority has generally bought its bus shelters and been responsible for their maintenance, repair and cleaning through direct contracts.

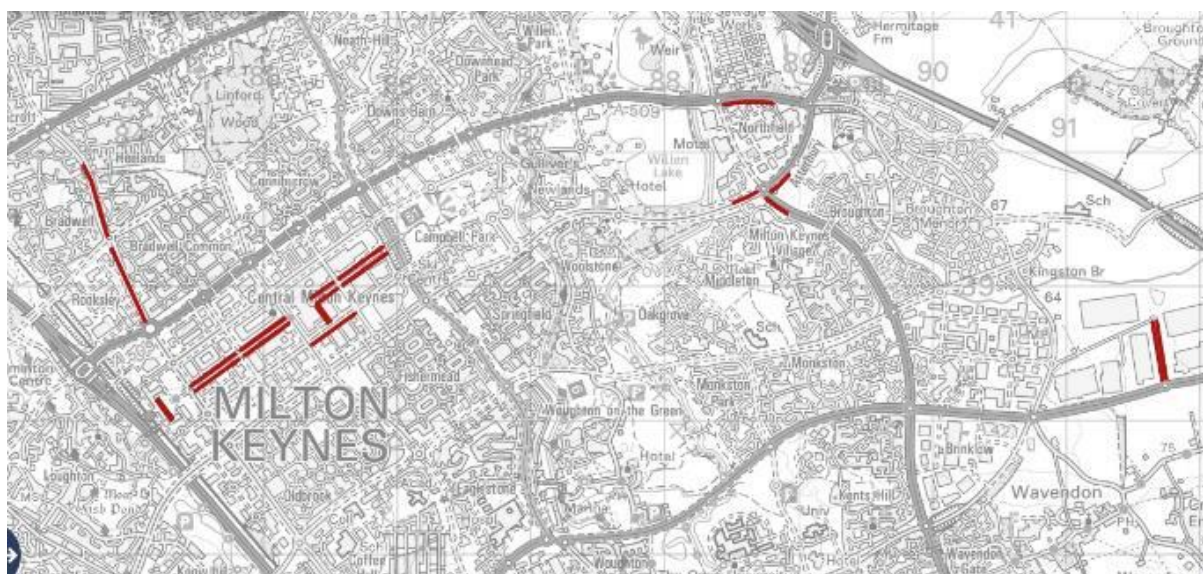


The stop and shelter infrastructure in Milton Keynes was designed to ‘blend in’ with the surroundings. As such, there can be difficulties with people locating bus stops and accessing information at appropriate locations. Therefore, in future more prominence needs to be given to such infrastructure.

Many bus stops are located close to shared pedestrian and cycle routes (Redways), but not always obvious and sometimes obscured by planting alongside.

Highway infrastructure

Over 5km of peak time bus lanes exist within Milton Keynes, largely concentrated in and around the central area.

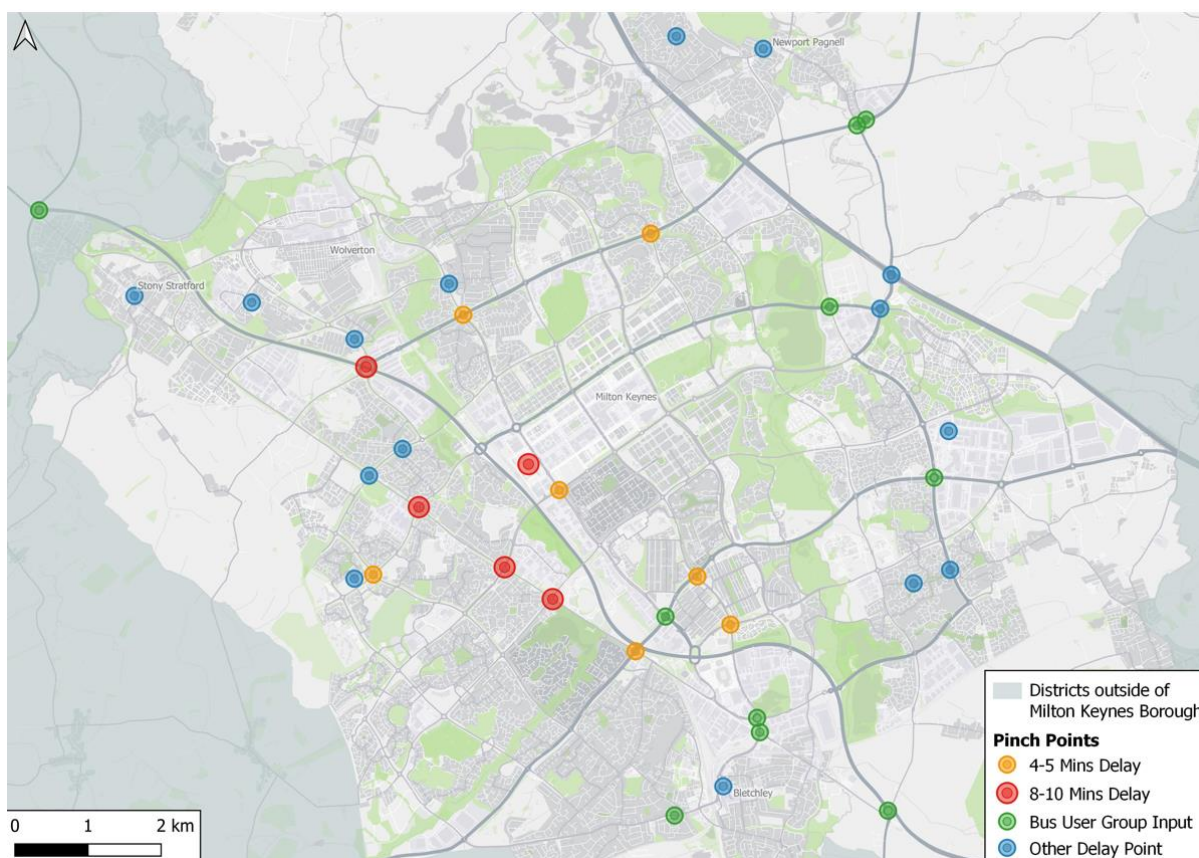


As of August 2021, there are 9 signalised junctions in Central Milton Keynes that will be capable of giving some priority to approaching buses. Further roll out to more signals is planned.

Congestion and traffic levels

Whilst the grid road system provides significant capacity and alternative routing for vehicles, levels of traffic have been steadily growing and various junctions see congestion. Between 2009 and 2015, annual average traffic flow increased by 6% and average journey times in the morning peak increased by 12%.

The following map shows the 'pinch points' (locations where congestion is delaying bus services) collated from information provided by bus operators, MKC officers and MK Bus User Group. These were generally identified pre-pandemic, so will need reassessing to reflect post-recovery conditions.



The grid roads have fast moving traffic along them, which makes it difficult for buses to turn out onto them or pull away from bus stops and laybys. This causes further variability in bus journey times.

Milton Keynes Bus User Group suggests that bus patronage may have declined in 2016/17 because people lost confidence in services due to perceived punctuality and reliability issues. Equally, the real time information system was viewed as being unreliable at that time. Pre-pandemic there were times when buses suffered from congestion on the approach to Station Square, outside Milton Keynes Station, which is served by virtually all bus services. Delays were caused by cars and taxis dropping off and picking up at the station.

With lower train use during the pandemic, the amount of traffic around the station has been significantly reduced. As such, there have been no delays to bus services and reliability has been very good. Furthermore, the real time information system has since been replaced and is performing much better than the previous one.

User perceptions of reliability have been poorer than that suggested by the real time information system. Such perceptions are influenced by various factors, including past experience and frequency of service. Actual reliability has been improved – it was 16% better for the period July – September 2021 than the same period in 2019.

In terms of reliability, Milton Keynes has performed better or in line with South East England as shown here.

% of non-frequent bus services running on time (table BUS0902, DfT)				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Milton Keynes	90.0%	89.0%	88.0%	81.0%
South East	82.8%	82.8%	81.9%	81.8%

Ambition for infrastructure

- Replacement of all existing shelters within the next 5 years
- Shelter provision at some stops that currently have no shelter
- High quality shelters with seating and incorporating information display panels and lighting, with some very high specification shelters with features such as wireless charging.
- Introduction of platform style stops on key/rapid transit routes.
- Signposting of bus stops from footpaths and neighbourhoods, accompanied by improved physical access, lighting and trimming of vegetation.
- Emphasis on environmentally sound solutions including greens roofs, alternate power, recyclable materials.
- Interchanges and hubs that support multi-modal travel choices.
- Introduction of additional bus priority measures, including dedicated road space, bus gates, and signals with bus priority.
- Deliver a pilot rapid transit route.

To deliver the ambitious goals of the Future 2050 Plan, it will be necessary to look at more significant bus priority measures, such as junction priority through layout changes, moving buses off road or road widening in some areas.

Various studies are taking place as follows:

- Possible MRT routes and the measures needed to deliver them including outline business case.
- Assessment of pinchpoints to consider what action can be taken and the order of priority they should be dealt with, development of a business case to address key junctions on the V4 road.
- Survey of routes and identification of interruptions to flow of buses.

Bus market

Market profile

7 bus operators provide public services across the area. Arriva operates the majority of services and carries about 85% of passengers. The two key north-south and east-west service corridors account for about 50% of overall passengers. There are several cross-boundary services offering links with

surrounding places, along with a number of infrequent services that focus on Milton Keynes as a destination.

Arriva operates most of the Milton Keynes city network commercially, along with other services such as to Aylesbury and a supported service to Northampton. Stagecoach operates interurban services, such as the X5 to Oxford and Bedford and 99 to Luton. Uno, a bus company owned by University of Hertfordshire, provides services on the Milton Keynes to Bedford corridor, centred on Cranfield University. Other operators provide less frequent commercial or supported services.

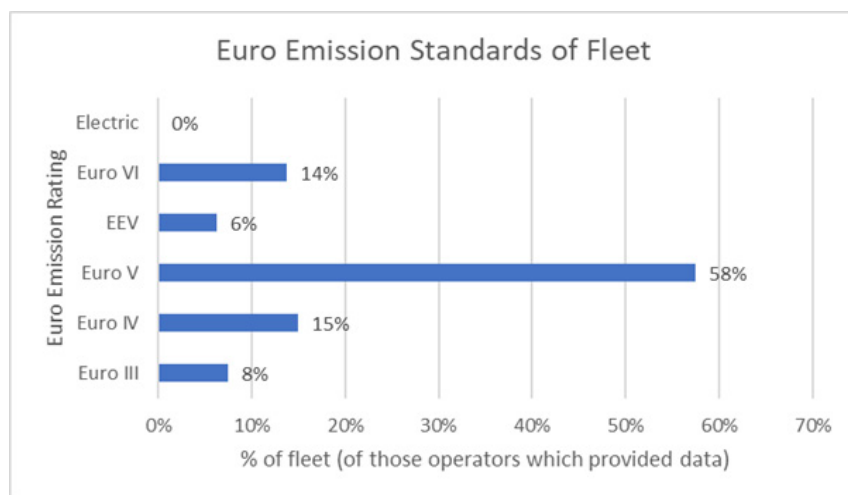
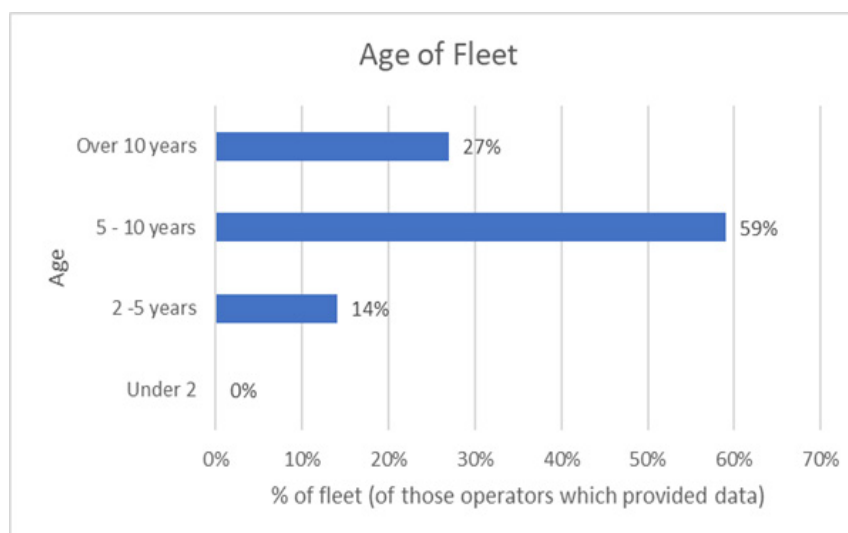
A number of community transport providers run shopper services from neighbouring areas into Central Milton Keynes.

Vehicle fleet

Currently, 86% of the bus fleet is over 5 years old, with a quarter of vehicles more than 10 years old. Clearly, the Euro Emission Rating for the fleet reflects the age of vehicles. 81% of vehicles have Euro V or poorer emission standards.

As well as seeking to convert the bus fleet to electric, such as through the bid to the ZEBRA scheme currently under consideration, MKC has an ambition for the taxi and private hire vehicle fleets to move to electric.

Bus fleet characteristics



Ambition for vehicles

- Reduce average age of the fleet
- Increase use of alternative fuels and zero emission vehicles
- Support more integration of the taxi fleet
- Support electric vehicles for car club and taxi and private hire vehicle fleets
- Provide an innovative and accessible transport fleet that has a positive visual impact
- Explore the potential for autonomous vehicles, with a potential trial in Central Milton Keynes.

Information and promotion

Provision of information

Recognising the importance of good information, MKC introduced a dedicated website [Milton Keynes - Get Around MK](#) in 2021. This provides a single point for all travel information, including details of all public transport services, timetables and fares. Development of this site is ongoing.

Operators also provide service and timetable information, with details of day and season tickets on their own websites.

MKC provides and maintains bus information panels at all bus stops. This information has always been of a reasonable quality and kept up to date. However, with an intention to improve on this, a review of what and how it is presented is being undertaken. New timetable cases are being procured and information at city centre stops has been moved so that it is all inside shelters.

There are just over 100 real time LED signs and 12 larger multi-line LED signs. The Council is also trialling 15 battery powered and 2 solar e-ink displays. The battery displays include an audio announcement facility and there are other screens for which best use is being explored.

Availability of information

Timetable information is available via the websites of operators and MKC, along with the **GetAroundMK** website. Fares information is also available on operators websites. Day and season tickets are widely promoted, although only some operators show single fares.

MKC ceased producing a printed bus timetable booklet before the pandemic. However, a one-off version has recently been produced and widely distributed to encourage bus use in the pandemic recovery period. This includes information about MK Connect and promotes walking and cycling alongside bus travel.

Ambition for information and promotion

- The **GetAroundMK** brand and website to be widely recognised and trusted, locally and more widely, as a true one stop shop for residents and visitors seeking information on travel options, linked to the app and the journey planning capability being developed for both. This will be developed to include ticket pricing options, seamless purchasing and potentially even a 'green' evaluation of travel choices.
- As part of the development of an Enhanced Partnership Scheme, establish a group to oversee the production and provision of all public transport information and marketing. This will be jointly funded by MKC and operators.
- Expand on the pilot of battery powered displays with audio announcements as part of bus stop information enhancements.
- Deliver a strong brand identity for MKC in conjunction with operators' identities.
- Development of a travel contact centre is being explored as part of a shared facility with all GetAroundMK operators, including e-bikes and scooters.

A shared network management back-office between MKC and Arriva is also being proposed, to help manage disruption to the network and achieve an integrated response to help maintain reliability.

Support for bus network

Council team

MKC has a dedicated Passenger Transport Team of 8 staff, which is responsible for managing all aspects of supported bus provision and DRT, provision and maintenance of bus stop infrastructure and information provision. Located within the Council's Environment and Property Directorate, the team reports to the Strategic Lead for Passenger Transport, who in turn reports to the Director of Environment and Property, who is also responsible for highways. Additionally, there is the Transport Policy and Planning Team within the Planning Directorate that work closely with Passenger Transport and report to the Strategic Lead for Transport Policy and Planning.

Contact between LTA and operators

The Passenger Transport Team has ongoing informal contact with all operators, along with regular meetings with Arriva, the main operator in the area. Regular contract meetings are also held with operators providing supported services and demand responsive transport.

Arriva has a monthly meeting booked with the Director and Portfolio Lead responsible for transport to support strategic discussion.

The partnership group provides at minimum a quarterly forum for operators to discuss matters with the Council, and runs more frequently when needed, monthly at present to develop the BSIP and the Enhanced Partnership.

Current funding for bus services (2021-2022)

MKC provides significant investment in the public transport network. **£1.9m** per year is spent on direct support for bus services that would not be provided commercially, including MK Connect.

£3m per year is spent on reimbursing operators for concessionary travel for older and disabled people and young people. This includes a discretionary element of free pre-0930 travel for disabled people.

A capital budget of **£0.5m** exists to provide infrastructure, with **£0.26m** per year allocated for future years.

Revenue expenditure of **£0.2m** is available to maintain bus stops, shelters and the real time information system. A further allocation of **£0.5m** is supporting development work, including BSIP preparation, surveys and business cases.

£8.2m remains in the strategic tariff pot to support capital interventions and a further **£13m** is anticipated from the Milton Keynes East development between 2024 and 2044, which will support capital funding items, including extension of MRT into the area.

What do people think?

Transport Focus' Bus Passenger Survey (2019) highlighted relatively low levels of satisfaction with bus services in Milton Keynes, compared with elsewhere. Overall satisfaction was just 76%, significantly lower than any other area surveyed (with Nottingham – best in class- at 95%) and much lower than the next nearest at 85%. This was a drop of 8% on the previous

year. Indeed, satisfaction levels for all aspects of bus travel were between 7 and 10% lower than previously. Factors most affecting the satisfaction score were, in descending order, waiting time and

Milton Keynes



punctuality, bus driver, value for money and on-bus environment and comfort. Satisfaction with value for money was just 52%, punctuality 53% and journey time 73%. Of different groups of passengers, free bus holders were more satisfied than others (85%).

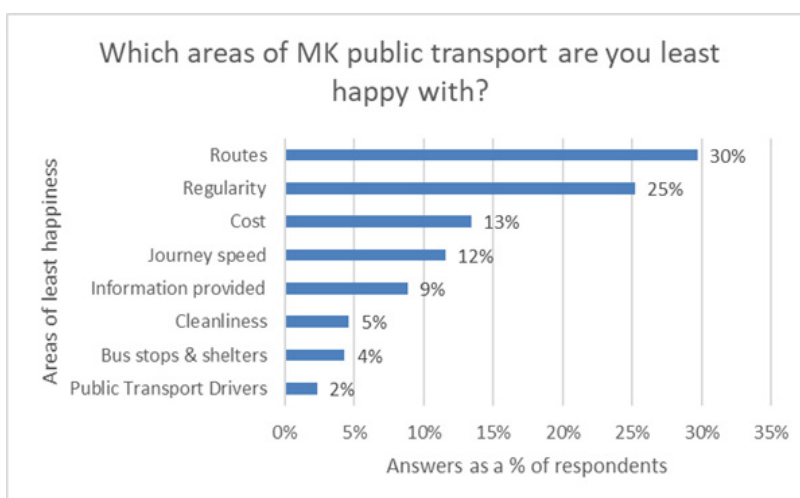
Key results

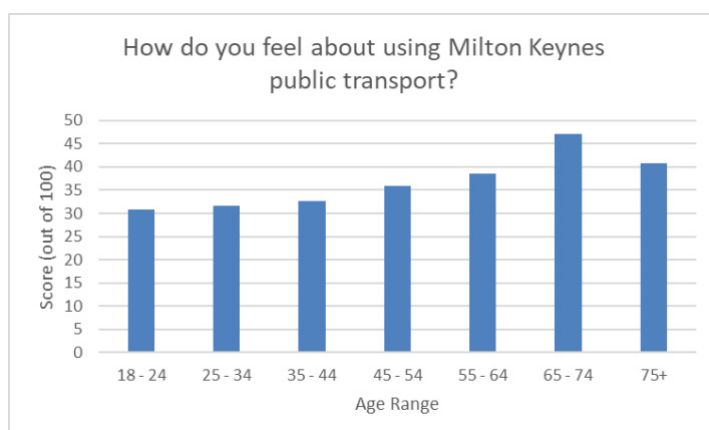
Satisfaction (%)	2016 all satisfied	2017 all satisfied	2018 all satisfied	2019 all satisfied	2019 very satisfied	2019 fairly satisfied	2019 neither /nor	2019 all dissatisfied	2019 base size
Overall journey satisfaction									
All passengers	84	83	83	76	33	43	15	10	437
Fare-paying passengers	81	81	81	72	27	45	19	10	230
Free pass holders	91	89	88	85	50	35	4	11	203
Aged 16 to 34	81	76	79	76	27	49	18	6	100
Aged 35 to 59	81	84	86	70	32	37	12	18	108
Passengers commuting	82	75	77	69	24	44	20	11	170
Passengers not commuting	87	90	88	87	47	41	5	8	250
Passengers saying they have a disability	83	82	84	75	35	39	11	14	148
Value for money									
All fare-paying passengers	60	62	66	52	24	28	20	27	220
Aged 16 to 34	57	64	63	50	25	25	23	27	92
Aged 35 to 59	62	61	72	56	23	33	17	27	88
Passengers commuting	61	57	64	50	22	28	20	30	150
Passengers not commuting	58	71	69	-	-	-	-	-	-
Punctuality and time waiting for bus									
Punctuality of the bus	66	68	65	53	22	30	17	30	398
The length of time waited	65	65	64	57	23	35	11	31	431
On-bus journey time									
Time the journey on the bus took	83	84	86	73	37	37	16	11	440

In 2019, MKC undertook its own local survey amongst over 400 bus passengers, for whom 56% said that bus was their main mode of travel. Again, this gave a poor view of services. Two thirds of respondents rated bus reliability, service frequency and evening and Sunday provision as poor or very poor. There was greater satisfaction with fares and passenger information, with only 50% scoring them as poor. However, two thirds of respondents were satisfied with travel times and feeling safe whilst travelling.

In June 2021, a flyer was posted to all 110,000 households, highlighting the new Get Around MK website and inviting people to have their say on public transport in Milton Keynes, both in respect of current provision and what sorts of improvements should be made. A total of 1806 responses were received from people across the Borough and of all age groups. 57% of responses were from non-bus users.

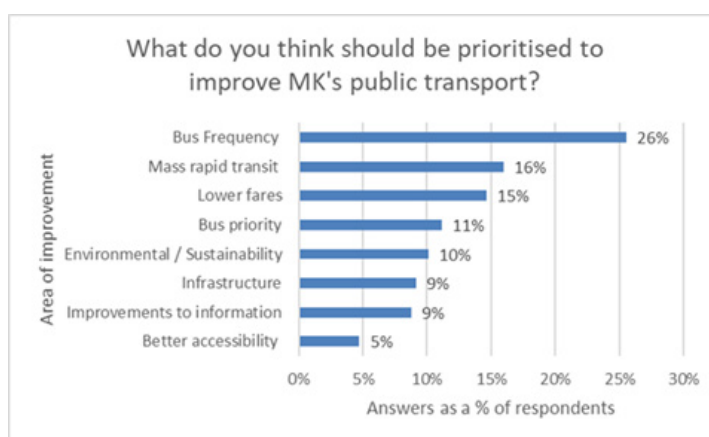
People were least happy with bus routes and the regularity of services. The priority for improvement was the provision of more frequent services, followed by better interchange and bus stops.





Older age groups showed higher levels of satisfaction than younger ones, probably reflecting the benefit of free concessionary travel.

With regard to the top priority for improvement, respondents highlighted more frequent services (26%), followed by mass rapid transit (16%), lower fares (15%), bus priority (11%) and bus priority (11%).



The MK Bus User Group has on-going engagement with MKC, with opportunities to comment and make suggestions on services. Furthermore, the Group is involved in the Partnership working groups.

As part of being more transparent and actively engaging with users, data is now provided on the MKC website regarding performance levels. This dashboard will continue to be refined and developed.

Stakeholder engagement

A Stakeholder Group was established earlier this year specifically to inform the development of the BSIP. This brings together many different interested parties, including cross party councillor representation, urban and rural parishes, businesses, residents, the bus user group, disability and accessibility groups, along with other council departments and transport providers who will not be signatories to the EP, such as rail operators and e-bike providers.

The Group meets monthly to consider any issues relating to public transport provision and the development of the BSIP. Individual organisations have provided feedback on the content of the document and commented throughout its drafting.

Business representatives have highlighted the importance of ensuring that major employment areas are well served by bus services, pointing to the importance of frequency and journey time to employees, along with cost. Furthermore, the need to ensure that times of operation fit with shifts and flexible working arrangements. Employers would welcome more information, in order that they can promote public transport use to their staff or potential employees when recruiting.

Opportunities for other stakeholder engagement have been taken, such as a presentation to the Parish and Town Councils Forum, with discussion on issues relating to the BSIP. Officers have also met regularly with their counterparts in neighbouring authorities.

The Stakeholder group will continue to meet quarterly throughout the life of the EP, meeting more regularly when necessary.

Ambition for engagement

- Improve ongoing relationships and communications with the public
- Be more transparent to combat misinformation and perception issues locally through information campaigns and publishing of appropriate data to provide people with an accurate picture of what is happening on the network.
- Improve contact points, so messaging is accurate and consistent, and users aren't passed between different parties with queries.
- Deliver material improvements to the service and publicise those well, ensuring there is a wider understanding and knowledge of what is available and how to access it.
- Continue to develop online and app-based information in addition to improving the quality and awareness of paper based/roadside information.

Barriers and opportunities

Land use patterns

Reliability has historically been poor, at times dropping below 80%. Given the dominance of the car in Milton Keynes, and the relative ease of motoring with relatively uncongested and fast grid roads and plentiful parking, it is easy to see why the bus seems unattractive and not the mode of choice.

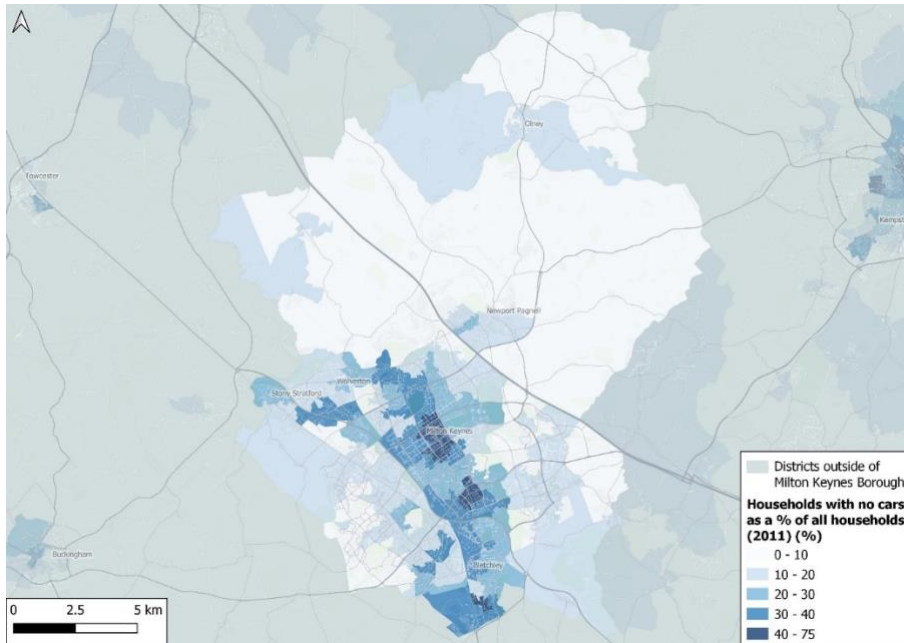
The greatest challenges for the bus is its ability to compete with the convenience offered by a private vehicle. Dispersed rural communities, low density neighbourhoods in the city and the complexity of urban estate networks make it difficult to provide fast and effective bus services, therefore reinforcing car ownership and use. Furthermore, bus operators tailor their services to existing levels of use, rather than taking a risk of enhancing service levels to try and attract users.

Bus use is low for the journey to work, at just 5.5% of all commuting trips¹. 50% of bus users indicate that they have no other transport choice.² This suggests a lack of options and bus use by necessity, not through choice. For the 19% of households in the Borough who do not have access to a private vehicle, the availability of low-cost transport options to access education, training and employment opportunities is critical to ensure these residents are able to participate in the economic growth of the city.

The map below shows the distribution of households with no vehicle, as a percentage of all households, across the borough. Car ownership is lowest in Central Milton Keynes, Netherfield, and areas of Water Eaton. In these areas at least 40% of households do not own a vehicle. Car ownership is highest in outer boroughs of Milton Keynes, and in rural areas. Lower levels of car ownership also correlate with the corridor with the best level of bus service (routes 5 and 6), which will form the basis of one of the Key Route Quality Corridors.

¹ ONS, 2011 Census <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census/2011censusdata>

² Transport Focus, Bus Passenger Survey – Autumn 2016, 2017 <https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/research/buspassenger-survey/> 11 Domestic Road Frei

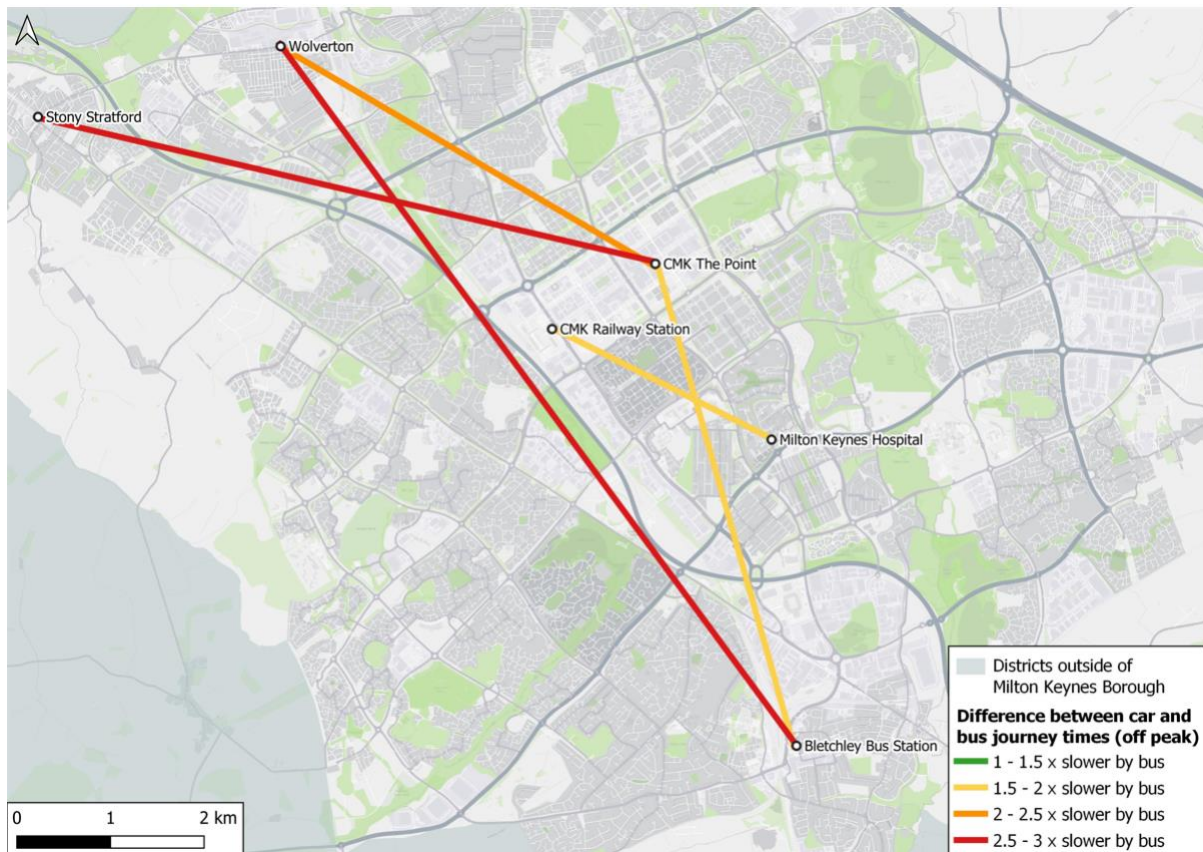


All homes located in the city can access Central Milton Keynes by car within 20 minutes. However, only 23% of the population can do this by alternative travel mode.³ For such reasons, there are significant mobility inequalities for those residents who do not own or have access to a car.

Comparisons of journey times by bus and car on the key north-south bus corridor highlight some of the differences. Bus times are significantly slower than car, with some journeys taking almost three times as long. This links to the findings of the residents' survey, where 12% of respondents suggested they were least happy with bus journeys times.

Origin	Destination	Journey time (mins)				Off-peak journey time ratio bus/car
		Bus 08:30	Car 08:30	Bus 13:00	Car 13:00	
CMK The Point	Wolverton	33	12	33	14	2.36
Wolverton	CMK The Point	37	12	32	14	2.29
CMK The Point	Bletchley Bus Station	27	14	27	14	1.93
Bletchley Bus Station	CMK The Point	24	16	24	14	1.71
CMK The Point	Stony Stratford	35	14	35	14	2.50
Stony Stratford	CMK The Point	41	14	37	14	2.64
CMK Railway Station	Milton Keynes Hospital	20	9	20	9	2.22
Milton Keynes Hospital	CMK Railway Station	26	14	26	14	1.86
Wolverton	Bletchley	64	18	59	20	2.95
Bletchley	Wolverton	57	20	57	20	2.85

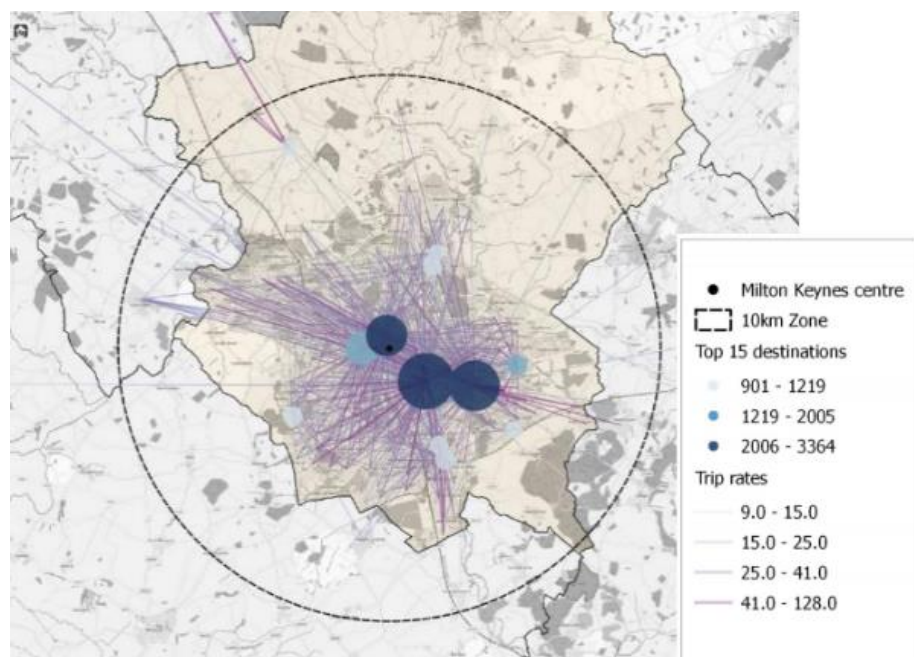
³ See Mobility and MRT Study, para 2.14 **David Lock report**



Unlike traditional towns and cities, Milton Keynes was established as a “poly-centric” post-war New Town. The 1967 Master Plan for Milton Keynes called for a great grid of roads to maximise choice of routes and ease of access, thereby reducing journey times and the risk of congestion. Activities were purposefully dispersed: employment areas were distributed throughout the city, and local centres built in almost every grid square. This creates challenging travel demands for bus services, which tend to work best where there are significant aligned demands.

The dispersed nature of travel demand is highlighted by the map of journey to work journeys.

The lessons from the past are being addressed and the intention of new development policies will be to encourage the establishment of housing and business areas that better facilitate



Source data: Census 2011

efficient bus operation.

Car parking

Central Milton Keynes has a large supply of over 20,000 car parking spaces. Some spaces have premium rate charges of £2 per hour, but the majority are available at a standard rate of 50p per hour. This makes parking costs significantly less than a number of other town and city centres, as shown below:

Comparison of car parking charges		
City	2 hours daytime parking	All day parking 8hours
Milton Keynes	£1.00	£4.00
Bedford	£1.20 - £2.20	£4.00 - £8.00
Luton	£1.30 - £1.90	£8.00
Peterborough	£2.50 - £3.50	£5.00 - £10.50
Cambridge	£4.80	£8.20 - £17.50
Oxford	£4.00	£18.00
Source – Local authority websites		

The large amount of car parking in CMK is reflected in comparisons of parking spaces per job:

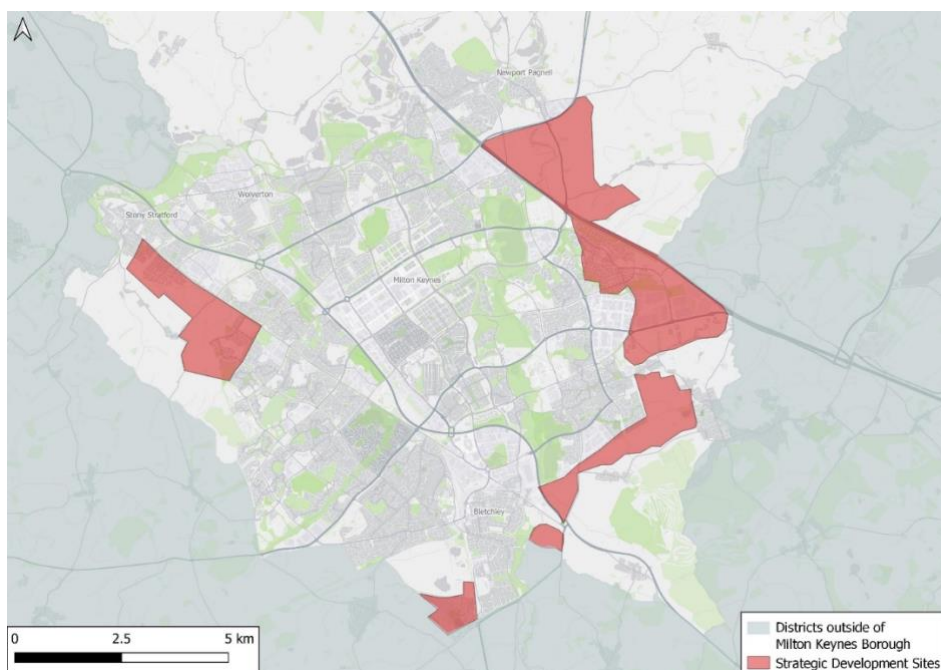
Location	Parking spaces per job
Milton Keynes	0.13
Peterborough	0.07
Luton	0.05
Northampton	0.03
Cambridge	0.03
Oxford	0.02

A car share permit scheme operates for workers in Central Milton Keynes who share their vehicle with at least one other person for journeys to work. This costs £130 per person per year. There are 350 reserved spaces for car sharers.

Areas of opportunity and unserved markets

Given the anticipated growth of both housing and employment in Milton Keynes there will be significant opportunities for the public transport network.

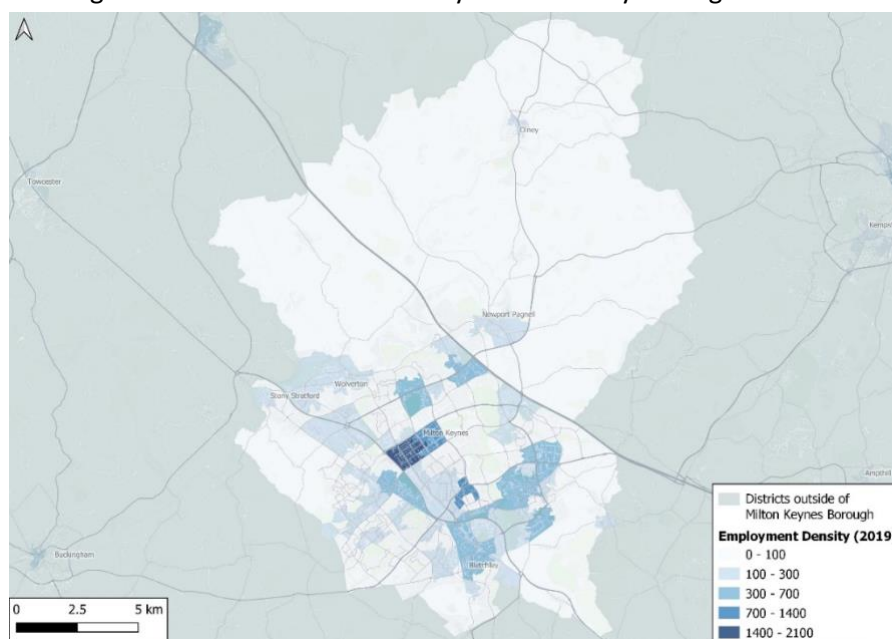
Over 25,000 new houses are expected to be constructed within the city by 2031. Strategic Development Sites (shown below) have been allocated within the local plan as sites where large numbers of housing and other mixed-use development can be placed. These new communities pose a significant opportunity for the public transport network, with the possibility to provide many thousands of new passengers if the network is designed to service these new communities.



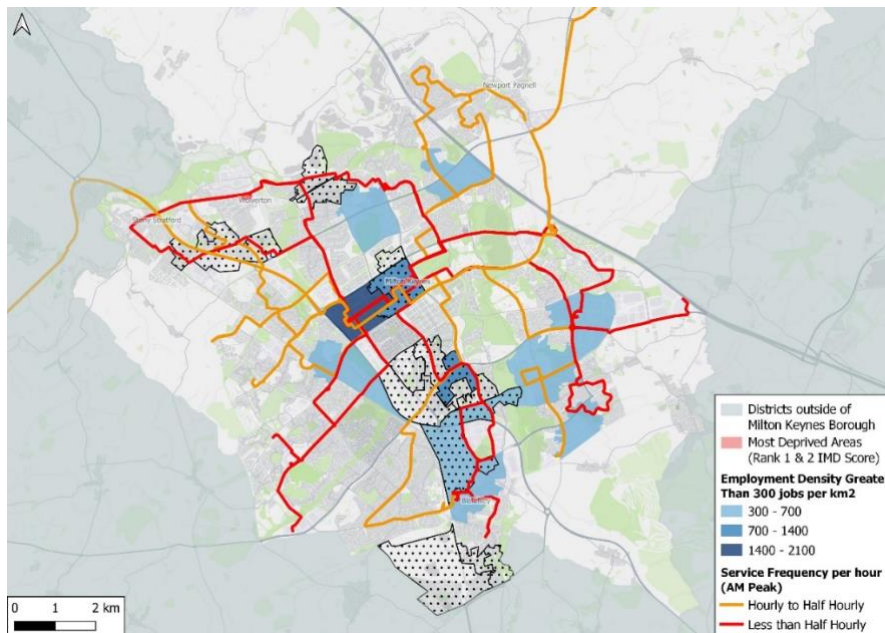
Although some of the Strategic Development Sites are expected to be mixed-use, the density of employment is likely to remain highest within Central Milton Keynes. Currently the highest

employment density is in the LSOA encompassing Milton Keynes Railway Station where there are 2100 jobs per km².

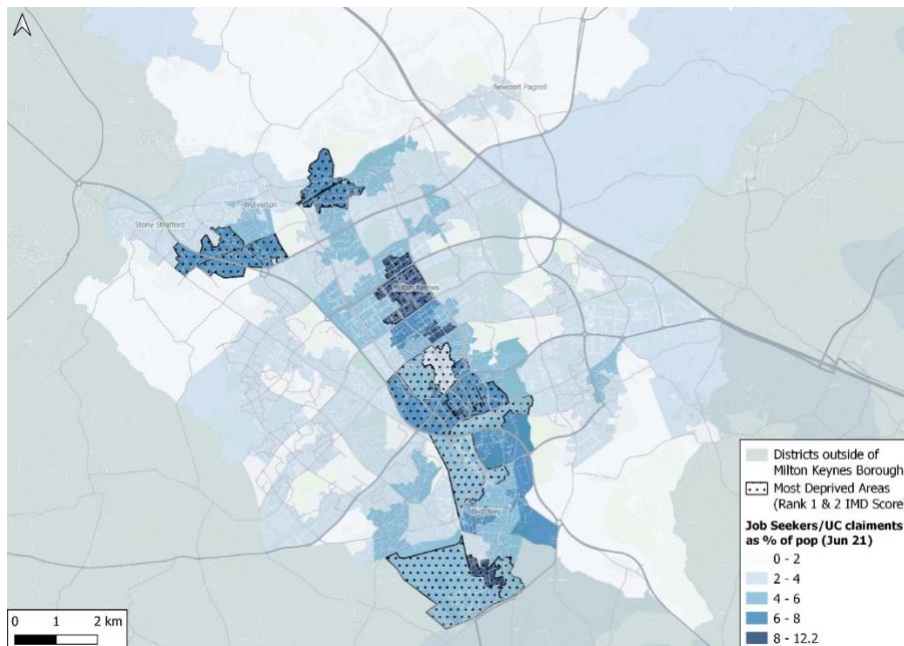
Employment density is also greater than 700 jobs per km² in the LSOA encompassing 'the centre' shopping centre and Milton Keynes Hospital.



An opportunity to enhance connectivity to employment would be to link areas with the highest score of deprivation (rank 1 and 2) to areas of highest employment (over 300 jobs per km²). The map below shows the current rank 1 and 2 LSOAs in the index of multiple deprivation (dotted black), LSOAs with employment above 300 jobs per km² and the existing fixed bus network.



These areas have some of the lowest car ownership levels in the borough, and also higher levels of job seekers allowance/universal credit claimants (see map below). This offers an opportunity to increase patronage and reduce deprivation in these areas.



Risks

Whilst the National Bus Strategy asks local authorities and bus operators to be ambitious for the development of bus services, there are risks that may impact the ability to achieve the aspirations. In particular, the rate of patronage recovery post-pandemic. If patronage has not recovered by 2022/23, the bus network in Milton Keynes may have a £1m p.a. revenue shortfall, which may result in services being cutback by operators. This could undermine a number of the initiatives included in the BSIP, particularly around network development and service enhancement, but also around the justification for investment in bus priority measures.

There is much uncertainty about the long-term impact of the pandemic on travel behaviour. Surveys indicate that 36% of bus users are travelling less by bus and only 14% are travelling more. Whilst 46% of bus users expect their use of bus to return to pre-pandemic levels, 41% of bus users do not know.

It is possible that some of the negative impacts of the pandemic could be countered by policy changes (both nationally and locally) introduced in response to the climate emergency, whereby emphasis is given to modal shift to sustainable travel. However, the likelihood and extent of this is yet unknown.

The current shortage of bus drivers is an issue across the country. It is unknown how long this problem is likely to go on for and when enough newly qualified drivers will be available. Furthermore, the difficulties in recruiting drivers will result in higher wage costs, which will increase the cost of bus operations. These two factors could impact on both the ability to deliver bus service enhancements and the cost of introducing them.

Summary of issues affecting bus use

The following SWOC analysis summarises the issues affecting bus use in Milton Keynes:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MK Futures 2050 work and evidence on the need to deliver MRT and address transport inequality • Significant commercial bus network that forms a basis on which to build • Cross-city bus services provide direct access to more destinations • Good bus/rail interchange opportunities at Milton Keynes station • Easy bus/bus interchange in CMK • Multi-operator ticketing • All in 1 card available for young people • Road space to provide bus priority • Good provision of infrastructure – 6 stations, Coachway, Bus hubs at the MKC and The Point. • Real time information and GetAroundMK website • Strong draw of Central Milton Keynes creating demand • Space for flexible development of MK and continuous growth • Support for technology and innovation • MK Connect service supplementing conventional bus network • Limited amount of traffic congestion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High car use and dependency • Low density neighbourhoods • High supply of available and low-cost car parking • Low level of current bus use • Unattractive frequencies on some services and lack of evening and Sunday services • Poor waiting environments • Poor satisfaction with services • Interchange opportunities constrained by low frequencies • Lack of priority for buses over other traffic • Grid road bus stops difficult to use • Poor bus facilities at major hubs (Hospital; Kingston; Westcroft; Wolverton)
Opportunities	Challenges

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong policy support and aspiration for public transport • Growth in population and local economy • Funding via s106, s278 and Tariff income and other external sources • Bus Service Improvement Plan and Enhanced Partnership • Potential interchange / transfer network • Car parking management • Densification of land use • Regeneration of older estates • Inclusion of modern disabled access into all new developments to make MK a fully accessible city • Aim for carbon neutral by 2030 • East-West Rail line will serve Bletchley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patronage fails to recover to pre-pandemic levels • Continued growth in car traffic • Economic climate post-pandemic • Continued poor satisfaction leads to further underlying decline in bus use • Continued dispersed development patterns and low-density housing • DRT and taxi services undermine bus services • Shortage of bus drivers continues • Failure to use opportunities to create a fully accessible and inclusive society • Insufficient commitment and resources to achieve necessary step change in bus services • Lack of will to introduce policies that deter car use or reallocate road space for bus priority
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Some of the challenges noted will be addressed in the coming few years. There will be the opportunity to encourage more dense levels of development along main public transport corridors and around interchange points. Furthermore, there is a commitment to review the parking strategy and consider options such as workplace parking levies.

3: Targets and achievement

Targets have been set to measure progress towards improving all aspects of the Milton Keynes bus network.

Target description	2018/19 (actual)	2019/20 (actual)	2024/25 (target)
Overall journey satisfaction (all bus passengers)	83%	76%	89%
Value for money (all fare-paying passengers)	66%	52%	75%
On-bus journey time (all bus passengers)	86%	73%	88%
Total passenger journeys on local bus services and DRT	8.7m	8.4m	10.1m
Of the above, the total of which are ENCTS journeys	2.0m	1.8m	2.2m
Total passenger journeys on key N-S/E-W route services (3, 5, 6, 8)	4.01m	3.78m	4.35m
Total passenger journeys per head of population	32.2	n/a	39.0
Average passengers per vehicle hour on DRT	n/a	n/a	4.5
End to end journey time bus/car ratio (key route 5)	2.95	n/a	2.15
Proportion of buses running on time (no more than 1 min early or 5 mins later than scheduled)	81%	n/a	95%
Proportion of population within 400m of a service 15 mins or better	n/a	23%	60%
% of local bus fleet Euro VI or better	n/a	14%	70%
% of local bus fleet Zero emission	0%	0%	30%
% of bus stops upgraded	n/a	n/a	60%

4: Delivering improvements

Introduction

There is much ambition and support to transform bus service provision across Milton Keynes. Achieving the long-term aim of MRT will only happen if bold steps are taken in the short to medium term to significantly improve the appeal and image of bus travel. Public priorities are for greater availability of bus services, in terms of routes and times of operation, along with more frequent services. Bus operators wish to see priority measures provided and pinchpoints and issues that hinder efficient bus operation addressed, as this will achieve more effective and viable operation, which will in turn allow investment in the network.

Therefore, transformation will rely on improvements across all aspects of provision – services themselves, supporting infrastructure, vehicles, information and marketing. Overall, bus travel in Milton Keynes can be revolutionised and the bus can play an ever-greater role in the day-to-day life and functioning of the area and its residents and visitors.

Delivery through an Enhanced Partnership

The BSIP will form the basis of an EP Plan that will be agreed and put in place by April 2022. This will be accompanied by at least one EP Scheme that will facilitate the delivery of some early improvements. Through the EP, in exchange for the provision of support for the measures set out below, operators will be asked to commit to particular actions.

Post-COVID challenges

A number of initiatives have been used to try and encourage recovery of patronage:

- Arriva offered evening travel after 19:00 for £1 until the end of August 2021.
- Arriva promoted the availability of a short hop £1 fare for travel between the station and Central Milton Keynes.
- MKC produced a comprehensive travel guide to highlight all available bus services.

Operators report a steady recovery in patronage, at the end of August 2021 standing at 61% of pre-pandemic levels. However, this does vary by route and the types of journeys made. It is anticipated that by the end of March 2022, the gap will have been closed further, particularly as more concession holders feel more confident to travel again. However, given the importance of service sector employment and commuting to London, it is likely that travel to work journeys will remain suppressed by continued working from home.

As Bus Recovery Grant ends in March 2022, it will be necessary to continue to support any remaining shortfall, to avoid any service reductions that would otherwise undermine any ambitions put forward through the BSIP. Therefore, part of any monies secured through the BSIP will be used to continue meeting any shortfall in 2022/23 and remodelling parts of the network accordingly.

Existing projects

A number of projects are underway, or programmed for 2021/22, in order to prepare for more significant delivery of ambitions set out in this Plan as funding becomes available. These include:

- Feasibility of Glider-style articulated vehicles for key routes (quality corridors)
- Assessment of potential bus priority measures on key routes (quality corridors)

- Consideration of future bus routing options in Central Milton Keynes, in association with plans for redevelopment and public realm enhancements
- Assessment of improved passenger waiting infrastructure and access on key routes (quality corridors)
- Bus stop and shelter improvements, including trial 'green' shelters
- Development of GetAroundMK brand
- Consideration of centralised information provision and centre

Priorities

During the period of developing the BSIP, many stakeholders and interested parties were able to be involved through the various groups feeding into the Bus Partnership. As such, many potential schemes and measures were put forward for inclusion. These were collated and grouped into packages and subjected to an appraisal process by a panel drawn from MKC officers, bus operators, the bus user group and business representatives.

All proposed schemes were appraised in 2 stages:

- Firstly, against the 7 BSIP objectives (70%)
- Secondly, against the impact on passenger experience (30%)

The highest overall scoring schemes tended to be those focused on improved waiting infrastructure, tackling delay pinchpoints and provision of bus priority. There was also support for the development of the MRT concept. In terms of bus service development, there was clear support for increasing frequencies of services, particularly in respect of the user experience.

There was support for two policy developments. In particular, the promotion of higher density development along existing and proposed public transport corridors. In addition, the exploration of the potential of workplace parking levy scored well in terms of meeting the BSIP objectives.

These priorities have been taken into account in the development of the workstreams below and the funding priorities put forward to the DfT.

BSIP proposals

The ambitious plans to transform and develop the bus network will be taken forward in 7 workstreams. These are summarised below, highlighting the individual projects and schemes that will contribute to their delivery, with an indication of how they meet the aspirations of the National Bus Strategy and Transport Focus' top 10 priorities for bus passengers.

Workstream 1 - Network design

A bus network hierarchy has been established by the Bus Partnership. This provides a framework for the consistent development of the network and sets aspirational minimum standards of service.

Milton Keynes Bus Network Hierarchy			
Service category	Description	Monday – Saturday frequency	Sunday frequency
Key services	Strongest corridors and busiest services, with greatest potential for development, growth	20 mins (05:30 – 07:00) 10 mins (07:00 – 19:00) 20 mins (19:00 – 23:30)	30 mins (07:00 – 09:00) 20 mins (09:00 – 17:00) 30 mins (17:00 – 22:00)

	and ultimate conversion to MRT		
Core services	Other main urban services	30 mins (06:30 – 08:00) 15 mins (08:00 – 18:30) 30 mins (18:30 – 23:00)	30 mins (07:00 – 09:00) 20 mins (09:00 – 17:00) 30 mins (17:00 – 22:00)
	Other main interurban services	60 mins (06:30 – 08:00) 30 mins (08:00 – 18:30) 60 mins (18:30 – 23:00)	60 mins (07:00 – 09:00) 60 mins (09:00 – 17:00) 60 mins (17:00 – 22:00)
Supporting services	Other services, including DRT	As required to meet demand or specific purpose 06:00 – 23:00	As required to meet demand or specific purpose 09:00 – 18:00

Four existing services (3, 5, 6 and 8) are designated as key services and will form the main north-south and east-west routes at the heart of the network. These will see most investment to upgrade and develop them to very high-quality standards in terms of level of service, priority measures and supporting infrastructure. Routes will be made more direct, to speed up journey times, with other services diverted to cover areas no longer served.

Other core services will see investment to achieve consistent and improved levels of service. They will also benefit from some of the priority measures and will benefit from the programme of bus stop improvements.

Additional supporting services will be developed in response to particular needs and demands. These will include orbital links to key destinations and employment shuttles providing direct links between residential areas and larger employment sites, such as Magna Park. These services will also link into the key services at interchange hubs. Several potential services are already being considered, based on public and business requests, usage data from MK Connect and discussions around new development sites. These services will be introduced as a 'kickstart' initiative under an Enhanced Partnership Scheme, and some may also benefit from developer funding contributions. An agreed amount of funding will be provided to introduce the service and support it for an initial period, on the basis that the operator commits to maintaining and developing the service for a certain period commercially.

Having established the MK Connect DRT service across the area earlier in 2021, it will be developed further to support the key and core network services. Consideration will also be given to other potential service enhancements. Options for development will include:

- Semi-scheduled feeder services connecting with core interurban and key urban services, with through ticketing
- Semi-scheduled services for specific purposes, such as employment shuttles).
- Improved service offer in rural areas to a 30-minute response, rather than the current 60 minutes

Network planning

Ambition

- Review bus network and enhance levels of service in line with the agreed hierarchy, providing consistency.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve key services, including more direct routes, to provide the foundations for ultimate MRT provision.• Gaps in services filled with new experimental or DRT services, such as direct shuttles between residential areas and main employment sites.• DRT provided to all new development sites, until patterns of usage and demand build to warrant conventional bus services.		
How this workstream meets ambitions and priorities	National Bus Strategy ambitions	Transport Focus top 10 priorities	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ More frequent✓ Faster and more reliable✓ More comprehensive✓ Easier to understand✓ Better integrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1st Buses running more often2nd Buses going to more places7th Faster journey times	
Action to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operators and Bus User Group have identified pinchpoints for consideration.• Comprehensive DRT service introduced in April 2021.		
Projects and schemes			
Project	Proposal	Timescale	Outcomes
Bus network review	Examine network to identify necessary interventions to enhance the network to meet the standards set out in the hierarchy and highlight missing links. Enhance service levels to meet hierarchy. Also develop future network plan taking account of future growth/development.	2022/23 – 2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More frequent buses• More availability of buses, including evenings/Sundays
New bus services	Filling missing links between deprived areas and major employment areas. Launch and operate experimental bus routes to understand demand in areas that are currently not served.	2022/23 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Buses to more places
DRT: Stage 2	Enhance and expand MK Connect, including availability/response levels.	2022/23 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More responsive service• Faster journey times for passengers
Park & Ride	Feasibility of new strategic park and ride sites to north and east of the city in conjunction with neighbouring authorities. Park and Ride is a key part of making mass rapid transit work for an area. Work needs to be undertaken to determine locations and operational model. This should be part of any work undertaken on MRT.	2022/23 – 2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased catchment/demand for bus network• Less traffic within the city

Bus priority measures and addressing pinchpoints and congestion hotspots

Working with operators, it is intended to develop key east-west and north-south quality corridors (and ultimately bus rapid transit), supported by an Enhanced Partnership Scheme, in order to deliver high quality, high frequency services. These routes will support flagship infrastructure for stops and interchange points, newer vehicles (with the likelihood of being the first to move to electric) and will demonstrate the ability for transformed services to deliver significant patronage growth. Continued improvement will be sought through further route changes to offer more efficient operation and faster, more direct journeys. It is likely this will include revised routing in Central Milton Keynes.

Underpinning these developments will be the introduction of priority measures. Initially, these will be smaller scale measures to address particular hotspots, but with the ultimate aim of significant elements of bus priority along the length of the routes. Currently, a study to identify and assess potential short and longer term measures is being undertaken.

An early action of the Milton Keynes Bus Partnership was to identify and collate details of hotspots that cause delays to buses. A comprehensive list was produced, ranging from junctions that cause problems to individual streets where parking issues create issues and disrupt buses.

An Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) system is being rolled out across the city, with the aim of improving general traffic flow. The system will provide the means to support bus priority and ultimately to oversee the enforcement of bus priority measures. As part of the project, traffic signals in Central Milton Keynes have been upgraded to allow dynamic control. The intention is to develop this further to allow bus priority through those signalised junctions, which has the potential to save several minutes for buses travelling through several of these junctions.

Bus priority			
Ambition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify and introduce bus priority measures to enable buses to travel unhindered through congested junctions, starting with key routes.Provide bus priority at traffic signals to speed up bus journeys through the city centre.		
How this workstream meets ambitions and priorities	National Bus Strategy ambitions	Transport Focus top 10 priorities	
	✓ Faster and more reliable	3 rd – More buses on time at the stop 5 th – More bus journeys on time 7 th – Faster journey times	
Action to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Study of key bus routes being undertaken to identify areas of delay and places of opportunity for bus priority measures.		
Projects and schemes			
Description	Proposal	Timescale	Outcomes
Bus priority measures	Develop proposals for bus priority measures on key routes (design and implement)	2022/23 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Faster journey timesBetter reliability
Red routes	Examine opportunities for red routes and camera enforcement and pilot one route	2023/24 – 2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Faster journey timesBetter reliability
Enforcement	TROs and measures to enforce bus lanes and priority	2023/24 – 2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Faster journey timesBetter reliability
Urban traffic control management	Back-office system upgrade to enable traffic signal priority	2022/23 – 2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Faster journey timesBetter reliability

Fares and ticketing

In recent years, there has been much progress on fares and ticketing in Milton Keynes. The MK Move ticket offers multi-operator bus travel and the All in 1 card offers discounted travel for young people. Therefore, the intention is to continue building on what has been achieved so far, in particular:

- Repositioning MK Move as the main day and season ticket offer, by aligning its cost to that of single operator products.
- Introducing tap-on/tap-off readers on all buses and at railway stations to enable automatic fare capping and multi-modal travel by smartcard, app or paper ticket (by QR code scanning).

As part of helping bus services recover post-pandemic, funding is sought for some specific free or discounted travel promotions. These will be targeted at particular groups, such as leisure and recreational travel by groups and families during school holidays.

The development of facial recognition technology provides interesting opportunities for bus travel. It is intended to explore whether this could be installed on buses and used effectively for payment, replacing any need for physical payment methods.

Easier ticketing and fares support

Ambition	A unified ticket product range covering all services across Milton Keynes, including DRT. Upgrade smart ticketing offer and expand to include rail and other modes (e-bikes and e-scooters). A mix of payment methods to make public transport easy to use. Targeted discounted or free travel promotions.		
How this workstream meets ambitions and priorities	National Bus Strategy ambitions	Transport Focus top 10 priorities	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Cheaper✓ Easier to use✓ Better integrated	4 th – Better value for money	
Action to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multi-operator MK Move ticket already available• All in 1 ticket in place to provide discounted travel for young people		
Projects and schemes			
Description	Proposal	Timescale	Outcomes
Ticketing integration	Review ticketing and information integration options and opportunities	2021/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easier multi-modal travel
Smart Ticketing – improve and expand existing scheme	Improve and expand existing smart ticketing offer including delivering multi-modal integration solutions	2022/23 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bus easier to understand and use
Travel by bus promotions	Provide targeted discounts and free travel promotions to encourage bus use	2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cheaper travel
Free travel for low-income groups	Individuals coming off Income Support will be provided with an MK Move card pre-loaded with 20 bus journeys	2022/23 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cheaper travel
Payment by facial recognition	Investigate the potential use of facial recognition technology on boarding and alighting buses as a means of payment and, if feasible, trial it before rolling out across Milton Keynes	2022/23 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bus easier to use

Infrastructure and integration

Good infrastructure is vital to supporting improved bus services, assisting with effective operation of services, facilitating interchange and providing attractive and safe environments for bus users. Overall, it can help provide a positive image of public transport, encouraging usage.

About 20 years ago, the main bus station in Central Milton Keynes was abandoned and buses have called at stops in Station Square. Future redevelopment and public realm ambitions mean that there may be an opportunity to reinstate the bus station, which is close to the railway station. This will form the hub for future public transport interchange. This will be investigated as part of a review of bus routing through Central Milton Keynes, a study for which will be undertaken in November 2021.

The main **infrastructure projects** being pursued are as follows:

- **Bus stop and shelter improvement programme** – this will include replacement of old shelters, replacement of hail and ride with fixed stops, introduction of standardised and branded bus stop flags and information panels, hardstanding at some rural stops. Initially, the programme will focus on the key service routes. Where appropriate, shelters to a very high specification will be installed.
- **Roll out more ‘green shelters’**, building on the recent trial.
- **Access improvement programme** for stops located on grid roads, including improved signage, lighting, visibility and access.
- Explore the feasibility of **reducing speed limits on grid roads** in the vicinity of junctions or laybys where buses need to join the carriageway, making this easier and reducing delay, will be explored.
- **Mobility hubs and interchanges** – firstly identify potential hubs on the key route network, considering necessary facilities, then develop a programme to provide pilot hubs.
- Explore opportunities for and feasibility of **improved bus access/egress at important patronage generators**, such as the hospital, with the intention of providing direct and priority access into those locations.
- **Access improvement programme for stops on grid roads** – signage, lighting, environment, linkage- repeated from above.
- **Remove planting and upgrade lighting** around bus shelters to improve visibility and surveillance.

It is recognised that new development presents an opportunity to improve the provision of high-quality infrastructure for public transport. However, no guidance is currently set out to developers on this particular matter. Therefore, new guidance for future developments is being developed by MKC that incorporates requirements for good permeability of bus services, as well as accommodating their efficient routing and provision of appropriate passenger infrastructure.

Bus infrastructure			
Ambition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop bus network to support the case for ultimate provision of MRT system.• Introduce hubs and interchange points to increase the catchment for key services and facilitate and encourage interchange between services, increasing the range of available journey opportunities.• Improve bus stops and waiting facilities, along with the access routes to them.		
How this workstream meets ambitions and priorities	National Bus Strategy ambitions	Transport Focus top 10 priorities	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Faster and more reliable✓ Easier to use✓ Better integrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">3rd - More buses on time at the stop5th – More bus journeys on time6th – Effort to tackle anti-social behaviour	
Action to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduced ‘green’ shelters (either with vegetation roof or solar)		
Projects and schemes			
Description	Proposal	Timescale	Outcome
MK MRT	Concept development and design	2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visualisation of routes/concepts
	Delivery of system	2026 - 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visualisation of routes/concepts
Pinchpoints programme	Collation of identified pinchpoints that hinder bus operation; assessment of these and potential measures to address the	2022/23 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Faster journey times• More efficient operation of buses

	problems; develop proposals, prioritise and implement measures.		
Introduction of Mobility Hubs	Identify and introduce mobility hubs at 6 locations.	2022/23 – 2026/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More destinations available • Increased catchment for bus services
Coachway Park & Ride	Develop the Coachway into a full Park & Ride and interchange facility.	2022/23 – 2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More destinations available • Less traffic on roads within city
Bus access at hospital	Review arrangements around the entrance to the hospital to allow bus access. Examine the issues and develop potential concept designs to address these and to facilitate discussion with the hospital to determine future action.	2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed way ahead to enable better bus access for the benefit of patients, visitors and staff
Bus stops	Examine walk routes and access to all bus stops along the key bus corridors, identifying potential improvements. Implement improvements.	2022/23 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased visibility of bus services • Bus users feel safe
	Bus stop review and enhancement programme.	2022/23 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus network easier to understand/use • Better information
	Bus shelter upgrade and replacement programme, with focus on eco-infrastructure and materials.	2022/23 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better user experience
	Bus shelter maintenance, cleaning and repairs – proactive response	2022/23 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better user experience
Reduce speed limit on grid roads	Investigate the feasibility of reducing the speed limit on certain grid road sections to assess the extent to which it might make it easier for buses to emerge from side roads and bus stop laybys or to turn right into or out of estates. Undertake a trial to measure the impact.	2022/23 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faster journey times • Better reliability • Improved air quality
Specific priority measures in CMK	If a separate funding bid for autonomous vehicles is successful, specific infrastructure will be required in Central Milton Keynes	2023/24 – 2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faster journeys times • Better reliability

Information and brand

Good information in a range of formats and an overarching local brand are important in promoting use and improving the image of the bus network.

It is the intention to centralise the provision of comprehensive information across Milton Keynes. This will be led by MKC, which is already responsible for much provision, including information displays at bus stops and real time information. There are discussions with operators about establishing a jointly funded pot for the provision and maintenance of information and marketing campaigns and promotions.

Further actions envisaged are:

- Roll out of **GetAroundMK** branding for all marketing/information/ticketing, with incorporation on vehicles dedicated to operating within Milton Keynes only, such as the key service network.
- Development of a travel contact and travel management centre.

Information and brand			
Ambition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Comprehensive, co-ordinated information about services and fares available from a single source and on a range of media.Wide-ranging engagement with users and stakeholder interests, involving them in the development of services.		
How this workstream meets ambitions and priorities	National Bus Strategy ambitions	Transport Focus top 10 priorities	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Easier to understand✓ Easier to use✓ Better integrated	8 th – More stops with next bus displays 9 th – Better quality information at stops	
Action to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none">GetAroundMK brand establishedReal time passenger information system in place covering main stops		
Projects and schemes			
Description	Proposal	Timescale	Outcome
Promoting bus use	Targeted incentives and stimulus package to encourage bus use	2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased awareness and use of bus network
Information and communications	Centralised provision of comprehensive information, co-ordinated by MKC, jointly managed/funded with all operators	2022/23 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bus network easier to understand and use
Minimising disruption from roadworks	Introduce better system of roadworks co-ordination and liaison with bus operators regarding roadworks and road closures.	2021/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Better reliability
MK App	Development of app to provide information and ticketing and ultimately to integrate with mobility as a service (MaaS)	2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bus network easier to understand and use
Public transport map	Improved network map and guide to using public transport across MK	2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bus network easier to understand and use
Real time passenger information	Upgrade and expand existing real time information system, expanding coverage to 100 more locations.	2022/23 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bus network easier to understand and useMore confidence in using the bus
Timetable and service changes	Establish a process to better manage timetable and bus route changes, including cross boundary services.	2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">More stable networkEasier to understand
Engagement	Establish and maintain regular engagement with users, with dialogue on all aspects of user experience and service developments. Targeted engagement with groups, such as young people.	2022/23 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Services better meet the needs of users
Data	Establishment of data hub and development of data interpretation dashboard	2021/22 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Greater transparency and understanding

Planning policy

Policy, planning and growth			
Ambition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Public transport is built into wider considerations of land use development.		
How this workstream meets ambitions and priorities	National Bus Strategy ambitions	Transport Focus top 10 priorities	
	✓ Better integrated	7 th – Faster journey times 9 th – Better value for money	
Action to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Revenue from CMK parking is used to help fund public transport services.		
Projects and schemes			
Description	Proposal	Timescale	Outcome

New development	Update guidance for new development facilitates appropriate infrastructure and routing is available for bus service provision. Better coordination between transport and planning/MKDP.	2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More direct journeys
	Encourage higher density development along key public transport corridors.	2022/23 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased demand for public transport
Workplace parking levy	Feasibility study to explore potential for a workplace parking levy to deter car use and provide funding stream for public transport improvements.	2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces differential between car and bus • Provides funding stream for public transport

Vehicles

As part of MKC's ambition to be carbon neutral, it wants all buses to be zero emission by 2030. A current bid to DfT for ZEBRA funding would see 60 zero emission buses introduced, which would represent significant progress towards this target.

New vehicles will first be allocated to the main key network services (N-S/E-W spines), again to help with focused improvements on these routes to spearhead patronage growth, as part of the demonstration of what real transformation can achieve.

A bid to another funding source for the provision of autonomous vehicles on a service in Central Milton Keynes is currently being developed. If successful, it will be necessary to create suitable priority measures to assist its operation. These are included within the infrastructure section.

Vehicles and zero emissions			
Ambition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Achieve full zero emission provision of road-based public transport by 2030		
How this workstream meets ambitions and priorities	National Bus Strategy ambitions	Transport Focus top 10 priorities	
	✓ Decarbonisation	N/A	
Action to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bid submitted for ZEBRA fund to introduce 60 electric buses.		
Projects and schemes			
Description	Proposal	Timescale	Outcome
Electric Bus	The consortium that bid for electric bus town has continued to work on alternatives to delivering an electric fleet locally. An additional £120m will be available to bid for and MKC has the potential to run a private wire to the Arriva depot to support this.	2022/23 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reduction in carbon emissionsImproved air qualityImproved image of bus travel
Alternative Fuels - Biomethane & Hydrogen	Other zero emission options will be explored - study to explore available waste energy and proposed power infrastructure and waste management options	2022/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reduction in carbon emissionsImproved air quality
Low or zero emission zones	Restrict polluting traffic in certain areas to encourage an uptake of low emission vehicles (buses, taxis, private hire)	2023/24 onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reduction in carbon emissionsImproved air quality

5: Reporting

The BSIP will be reviewed and updated annually in October. Updates will be available at the following link: <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/highways-and-transport-hub/bus-and-taxi/all-electric-bus-town-dft-funding-bid>

There will be continuous monitoring to measure progress towards the BSIP targets and performance reports will be published 6-monthly by MKC on its insights web page: [Public Transport Insights - Milton Keynes Council \(milton-keynes.gov.uk\)](https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/public-transport-insights). This will cover updates on all quantitative targets, except levels of satisfaction that will be measured annually via passenger survey. This page currently publishes transport-related data.

Work is underway to improve ways of engaging with people on public transport schemes and to collate their feedback, as part of MKC's commitment to clear and open communication with service users.

Currently MKC is reporting on the following:

Corporate performance via Scrutiny

Public transport rides - This is the total number of passenger trips on bus and demand responsive transport, including commercial and supported services, within Milton Keynes.

Met Demand – Demand for MK Connect includes all 'requests' on the service that result in a trip being offered, or denied due to availability, including trips directed to bus routes. Met demand shows the % of requests that were able to be offered a trip either on MK Connect or, if appropriate, on the bus. Not all requests lead to a trip, as some people are checking route availability or vehicle times in advance.

Rides within contract parameters – The contract for MK Connect sets out parameters such as pick up wait times, amount of time that can be added to a journey during a ride and what is considered an acceptable bus route to determine whether a trip is offered. If a ride is offered, but for some reason is delayed and does not take place within the parameters, this is logged. Parameters may be adjusted during the life of the contract.

Insights transport dashboard

Various data are shared publicly.

MK Connect service:

- Fare breakdown – All in1, ENCTS and fare payers by date (monthly)
- Number of rides by date
- Demand map by ward
- Headline figures including average ride distance, ride rating, walk distance to vehicle and wait time
- Average walk by month
- Number of bookings made by app and phone
- Number of unique service users by ward
- Number of completed trips and seats unavailable. This differs from met demand as that shows all trips provided an offer either by MK Connect or Bus.

Public transport patronage - actual, 80% (anticipated recovery rate) and pre-COVID figures

Most figures are reported monthly, with ward level information published quarterly.

Several additional items are planned for the dashboard to give a more rounded view of overall public transport performance.

BSIP performance

All measures and targets identified in this document will be reported on twice per year on the insights page, highlighting progress in the delivery against BSIP objectives.

6: Overview table

Name of authority	Milton Keynes Council
Franchising or Enhanced Partnership	Enhanced Partnership
Date of publication	October 2021
Date of next annual update	October 2022
URL of published report	https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/highways-and-transport-hub/bus-and-taxi/all-electric-bus-town-dft-funding-bid

Targets	2018/19	2019/20	Target for 2024/25	Description of how each will be measured (max 50 words)
Journey time	2.95	2.95	2.15	End to end journey time of service 5, shown as ratio of bus to car journey time
Reliability	81%	n/a	95%	Data from operators supplied to DfT for Bus Statistics BUS0902
Passenger numbers	8.7m	8.4m	10.1m	Data from operators supplied to DfT for Bus Statistics BUS0103
Average passenger satisfaction	83%	76%	89%	Transport Focus annual Bus Passenger Survey

Delivery - Does your BSIP detail policies to:	Yes/No	Explanation (max 50 words)
Make improvements to bus services and planning		
More frequent and reliable services		
Review service frequency	Yes	Network review will be undertaken in line with hierarchy. Service enhancements will be funded to meet the hierarchy and provide greater consistency.
Increase bus priority measures	Yes	Review of key N-S/E-W corridors being undertaken to identify necessary measures, including bus lanes and junction priorities. More signals will provide priority to buses. A programme of smaller scale measures will be undertaken to address those pinchpoints highlighted by bus operators.
Increase demand responsive services	Yes	The current borough wide DRT service will be enhanced to improve response times in rural areas, provide an early service for new development sites, and test new links, such as to employment sites.
Consideration of bus rapid transport networks	Yes	There is an aspiration to develop a MRT network. Steps will be taken to build towards this, including enhancements to the key route bus network, then Glider-style buses, then MRT on segregated routes.
Improvements to planning / integration with other modes		

Integrate services with other transport modes	Yes	Mobility hubs offering interchange, including DRT feeders into the main bus network.
Simplify services	Yes	As part of the bus service hierarchy, service routes and timetables will be simplified, along with fares and ticketing.
Review socially necessary services	Yes	These were previously reviewed, prior to DRT being introduced. Supported services, including DRT, will continually be reviewed in line with other BSIP developments.
Invest in Superbus networks	Yes	Elements of such networks will be introduced in the form of high frequency, more direct services, with high specification vehicles, with a long term aim of introducing MRT.
Improvements to fares and ticketing		
Lower fares	Yes	Targeted discount and free travel initiatives will be used to promote bus travel and assist low-income groups in travelling to work.
Simplify fares	Yes	Aim is for MK Move to become the main ticketing product for all bus services. New technologies, such as facial recognition, will be investigated as a means of simplifying payment.
Integrate ticketing between operators and transport modes	Yes	The aim is to extend the existing smart ticketing (MK Move) to embrace rail, DRT and e-bikes/e-scooters.
Make improvements to bus passenger experience		
Higher specification buses		
Invest in improved bus specifications	Yes	All new buses introduced will be to high specification in terms of passenger comfort, accessibility and overall attractiveness.
Invest in accessible and inclusive bus services	Yes	The ambition is for the public transport network to be totally accessible and inclusive, including consideration of access routes to bus stops, waiting environments, features on buses, such as next stop announcements. Measures will be taken to support Milton Keynes' ambition to be a dementia friendly city, including driver training.
Protect personal safety of bus passengers	Yes	Vehicle and infrastructure design will have personal safety at their heart. A programme of passenger waiting infrastructure improvements will not only improve the comfort and safety at stops (such as lighting), but will address pedestrian access routes to/from stops.
Improve buses for tourists	Yes	Service enhancements, centrally co-ordinated information and simplified ticketing will make public transport an easy travel option for visitors.
Invest in decarbonisation	Yes	The aim is for all buses to be zero emission by 2030. A ZEBRA bid has been submitted and the BSIP aims to increase the number of zero emission buses, where service levels are being enhanced and will need additional vehicles to be brought into Milton Keynes.
Improvements to passenger engagement		

Passenger charter	Yes	A charter covering all bus services in Milton Keynes has already been in place for a few years. This is currently being updated to reflect the ambitions of the BSIP and the work of the Bus Partnership and a new version will be published by the end of 2021.
Strengthen network identity	Yes	The GetAroundMK brand will be strengthened and used to promote the network, including on vehicles dedicated to services operating wholly in Milton Keynes.
Improve bus information	Yes	The network will be promoted as a whole and information provision will be co-ordinated from a single source, funded jointly by MKC and operators. Additional real time information displays will be provided, alongside improved information available through a variety of media.
Other		
Other		

7: Appendices

Service number	Route description (i.e. main places served)	Operator	M-S daytime frequency (mins)	M-S evening frequency	Sunday frequency	Notes	Commercial or supported
1	Newport Pagnell - Giffard Park – CMK	Arriva	30	60	60	1 & 2 combine to provide combined 15 mins frequency	Commercial
2/2A	Newport Pagnell - Giffard Park - CMK - Grange Farm	Arriva	30	60	60		Commercial
3/3A	Snelshall West - Westcroft - CMK - Kingston - Magna Park – Amazon	Arriva	20	50-60	60		Commercial
4	Wolverton - CMK - Bletchley	Arriva	30/15	60	60/30		Commercial
5/6	Wolverton - Stony Stratford - Bradville - CMK - Hospital - Bletchley - Newton Leys	Arriva	20	60	30	5 and 6 both operate at a 20-minute frequency at different times. Combined that gives a higher frequency but service 5 doesn't stop at every stop.	Commercial
7	Wolverton - Great Linford – CMK	Arriva	15	30	30		Commercial
8	Walnut Tree - Kingston - CMK - Westcroft	Arriva	20	60	60		Commercial
11	Caldecotte - Open University – CMK	Vale Travel	30	No service after 1838	No Sunday service	Last weekday service at 1838	Commercial
21	Lavendon - Olney - Newport Pagnell – CMK	Red Rose	60	No evening service	No Sunday service		Commercial with some support (lunchtimes and Saturday) by MKC
33/33A	Northampton-Road-Hanslop-CMK	Arriva	90	No services after 1915	No Sunday service	Cross boundary	Supported by MKC
34	CMK - Magna Park Amazon - Ridgmont - Amptill - Flitwick - Amptill Heights	Grant Palmer	60	No service after 1738	No Sunday service		Commercial with some support from CBC
41	Bedford - Lavendon - Olney – Northampton	Stagecoach	60	No service after 1830	3 journeys		Commercial with support from MKC and Bedford Borough Council
50	Newton Longville - Bletchley - CMK	Z&S Transport	3 services a day	No evening service	No Sunday service		Supported by Buckinghamshire Council
83	Silverstone UTC - Wolverton – CMK	Stagecoach	1 journey	No evening service	No Sunday service		Commercial
89	CMK – Deanshanger – Potterspury -CMK	Britannia Bus	2-3 hourly	No evening service	No Sunday service	7 journeys per day	Supported by West Northamptonshire Council
99	CMK - Magna Park Amazon - Luton Airport	Stagecoach	60	60	60		Commercial
100	Aylesbury - Milton Keynes	Red Rose	60	No evening service	No Sunday service	Cross boundary	Commercial
150	Aylesbury Bus Station - MK Central Rail Station	Arriva	60	last service 1900	2 hourly	Cross boundary	Commercial
C1	CMK - Kingston - Cranfield - Kempston - Bedford	Universitybus Ltd t/a Uno	60	60-110	120		Supported by Cranfield University
C10/CX	CMK - Newport Pagnell - Cranfield - Bedford	Uno	60	last service 1830	No Sunday service	CX operates 4 times a day directly from CMK to Cranfield Innovation Centre	Supported by Cranfield University
F70/F77	Luton-Dunstable-Leighton Buzzard-Newton Leys-CMK	Arriva	30	30	120	Cross boundary	Commercial
X5	Oxford-Buckingham-CMK-Coachway-Bedford	Stagecoach	30	30	60	Cross boundary	Commercial
X6	CMK - Roade - Grange Park - Northampton	Stagecoach	60	60	60	Cross boundary. last service 1943	Commercial
X60	Aylesbury - Winslow - Buckingham - CMK	Arriva	60	60	No Sunday service	Cross boundary A 30 minute frequency is operated in the evening peak 1615-1815	Commercial
X91	CMK - Towcester - Silverstone	Stagecoach	120	Last service 1750	No Sunday service		Supported by WNC

Key

Key services
Core services
Supporting services





Milton Keynes Council
Civic Offices
1 Saxon Gate East
Central Milton Keynes
MK9 3EJ

19/10/21

Dear Sirs,

Milton Keynes Council – Bus Service Improvement Plan

In response to *Bus Back Better*, the National Bus Strategy for England, Milton Keynes Council has consulted with us in developing a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

We believe that the BSIP document created in partnership between the Council, ourselves, and other operators creates an exciting opportunity to deliver an integrated and inclusive transport network across Milton Keynes, sustaining the existing level of service and better connecting places, communities and economic assets within the region and beyond.

A focus on public transport will prioritise investment in a sustainable future, supporting a green recovery from Covid-19 and tackling the climate emergency through the decarbonisation of the transport sector.

Arriva fully support Milton Keynes Council's BSIP and the measures contained within it. As a major bus operator we are making every effort to regrow customer demand following the pandemic, and we welcome the future funding from DfT to help support that recovery and build upon it to deliver the BSIP's ambitious targets on patronage growth, reliability, punctuality, journey times and overall passenger satisfaction.

Kind regards

Andrew Godley
Commercial Director

Arriva Midlands
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Thurmaston
Leicester
LE4 8PH

Tel 0116 264 0400
Fax 0116 260 8620

www.arrivabus.co.uk

"Arriva Midlands" is the trading name of the following companies, each of which has its registered office address at 1 Admiral Way, Doxford International Business Park, Sunderland SR3 3XP: Arriva Midlands Limited (02141078), Arriva Midlands North Limited (01556305), Arriva The Shires Limited (02116519) and Centrebus Holdings Limited (06544272).

a company

21ST October 2021

To whom it may concern,

RE: MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL – BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

In response to the National Bus Strategy for England, 'Bus Back Better' Milton Keynes Council (MKC) has developed a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) with full consultation and support of all bus operators within Milton Keynes.

The plan recognises the cross-boundary services and as such, the measures contained within the BSIP have been co-ordinated with the neighbouring authorities. MKC have engaged with key stakeholders and conducted a passenger survey to understand key issues with existing bus services in Milton Keynes and key areas of improvements.

Stagecoach East fully supports Milton Keynes Council's BSIP and the measures contained within it. As a bus operator in Milton Keynes, we are making every effort to recover from the Covid Pandemic, we welcome the funding from DfT to help with the recovery and deliver significant improvements to bus services in Milton Keynes and help deliver our ambitious targets on patronage growth, reliability, punctuality, journey times and overall passenger satisfaction.

Yours sincerely



Ross Burton
Nation Bus Strategy Project Lead
Stagecoach East

Stagecoach East, 100 Cowley Road, Cambridge CB4 0DN
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Milton Keynes Council
Civic Offices
1 Saxon Gate East
Central Milton Keynes
MK9 3EJ

19th October 2021

To whom it may concern

Letter of Support to the Milton Keynes Bus Service Improvement Plan

We are pleased to submit this letter of support accompanying the Milton Keynes Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). Bus operators worked in partnership with Milton Keynes Council in developing the BSIP. We believe that the vision for improving bus services presented in the Milton Keynes BSIP complements the Government's aim to transform bus services as we recover from the covid-19 pandemic and the urgent need to reduce private car use.

Despite being only a minor operator in the area, we are committed towards establishing an Enhanced Partnership with the Council to achieve the vision and ambitions set out in the Milton Keynes BSIP. This will help reduce the reliance on the private car for travel, increase the mode share for bus travel, reduce congestion on the local highway network and counter the adverse impacts on the environment, whilst providing inclusive access to education, employment and leisure opportunities across Milton Keynes and further afield.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Stringer
Commercial Director

Stagecoach Midlands, Main Road, Far Cotton, Northampton, NN4 8ES
stagecoachbus.com

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14 October 2021

To whom it may concern,

Milton Keynes Council – Bus Service Improvement Plan

In response to the National Bus Strategy for England, 'Bus Back Better', MK Council has developed a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) with full consultation and support of all bus operators within Milton Keynes. The plan recognises the cross-boundary services and as such, the measures contained within the BSIP have been co-ordinated with neighbouring authorities. MK Council have engaged with key stakeholders and conducted a passenger survey to understand key issues with existing bus services in MK and key areas of improvements.

Uno fully supports MK Council's BSIP and the measures contained within it. As a bus operator in Milton Keynes, we are making every effort to recover from the Covid Pandemic, we welcome the funding from DfT to help with the recovery and deliver significant improvements to bus services in MK and help deliver our ambitious targets on patronage growth, reliability, punctuality, journey times and over passenger satisfaction.

Yours sincerely,

Ed Cameron CMILT
Commercial Manager

registered office

Universitybus Limited
University of Hertfordshire
College Lane
Hatfield AL10 9AB

registered in England & Wales
02350582

THE UNIVERSITY BUS FOR EVERYONE



**Milton Keynes
Bus Service
Improvement Plan**

October 2021