

Milton Keynes Mobility
Strategy Road Safety,
Walking & Cycling and
Smarter Travel Position
Paper

Strategic Environmental
Assessment
Screening Opinion

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Quality information

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1. Purpose of this SEA Screening Opinion

- 1.1 This SEA Screening Opinion has been prepared in relation to the Milton Keynes Mobility Strategy Road Safety, Walking & Cycling and Smarter Travel Position Paper.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Screening Opinion is to set out a screening opinion in relation to whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process is required to accompany the development of the Road Safety, Walking & Cycling and Smarter Travel Position Paper. The Screening Opinion has been provided to the statutory consultation bodies for SEA (Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England) for their opinion.
- 1.3 SEA is a systematic process undertaken to evaluate the likely significant environmental effects of plans and programmes. The requirement for SEA in England was introduced in 2004 through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulation 2004 ('The SEA Regulations'), which transposed the European SEA Directive (2001/42/EC).
- 1.4 An SEA is required for some Local Transport Plan documents in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the SEA Regulations. To decide whether a proposed Local Transport Plan document is likely to have significant environmental effects, it should be screened against the criteria set out in Annex 2 of the SEA Directive.
- 1.5 Where it is determined that the Local Transport Plan document is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require SEA), a statement of reasons for this determination should be prepared and published for consultation with the statutory consultation bodies (Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England). Where a Local Transport Plan document is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, an SEA process must be carried out.
- 1.6 This Screening Opinion therefore provides a screening opinion as to whether the Position Paper is likely to lead to significant environment effects, and as such requires an SEA process. In this context it presents the following:
 - Details and context of the Position Paper, including its scope and likely content, its relationship with the Milton Keynes Local Transport Plan and the key environmental constraints in the vicinity of the Milton Keynes (**Chapter 2**)
 - A discussion of the potential significant environmental effects of the Position Paper and their significance (**Chapter 3**); and
 - A summary of the screening opinion (**Chapter 4**).
- 1.7 The statutory environmental bodies for SEA are subsequently invited to provide their comments.

2. Context for the Position Paper

2.1 Key information relating to the Milton Keynes Mobility Strategy Road Safety, Walking & Cycling and Smarter Travel Position Paper is presented in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Key information relating to the Position Paper

Name of responsible authority	Milton Keynes Council
Title of the Plan	Milton Keynes Mobility Strategy Road Safety, Walking & Cycling and Smarter Travel Position Paper.
Area covered by the Plan	The Position Paper covers Milton Keynes Borough. The boundary of the borough is presented in Figure 2.1 below.
Timescale	2020-2031
Purpose, aims and objectives	The Road Safety, Walking & Cycling and Smarter Travel Position Paper accompanies (and provides additional context on) the key Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) documents for Milton Keynes, the Mobility Strategy for Milton Keynes 2018-2036 and the Milton Keynes Transport Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The Position Paper sets out a number of policy provisions relating to road safety, walking and cycling and smarter travel to reinforce the main LTP4 policies.
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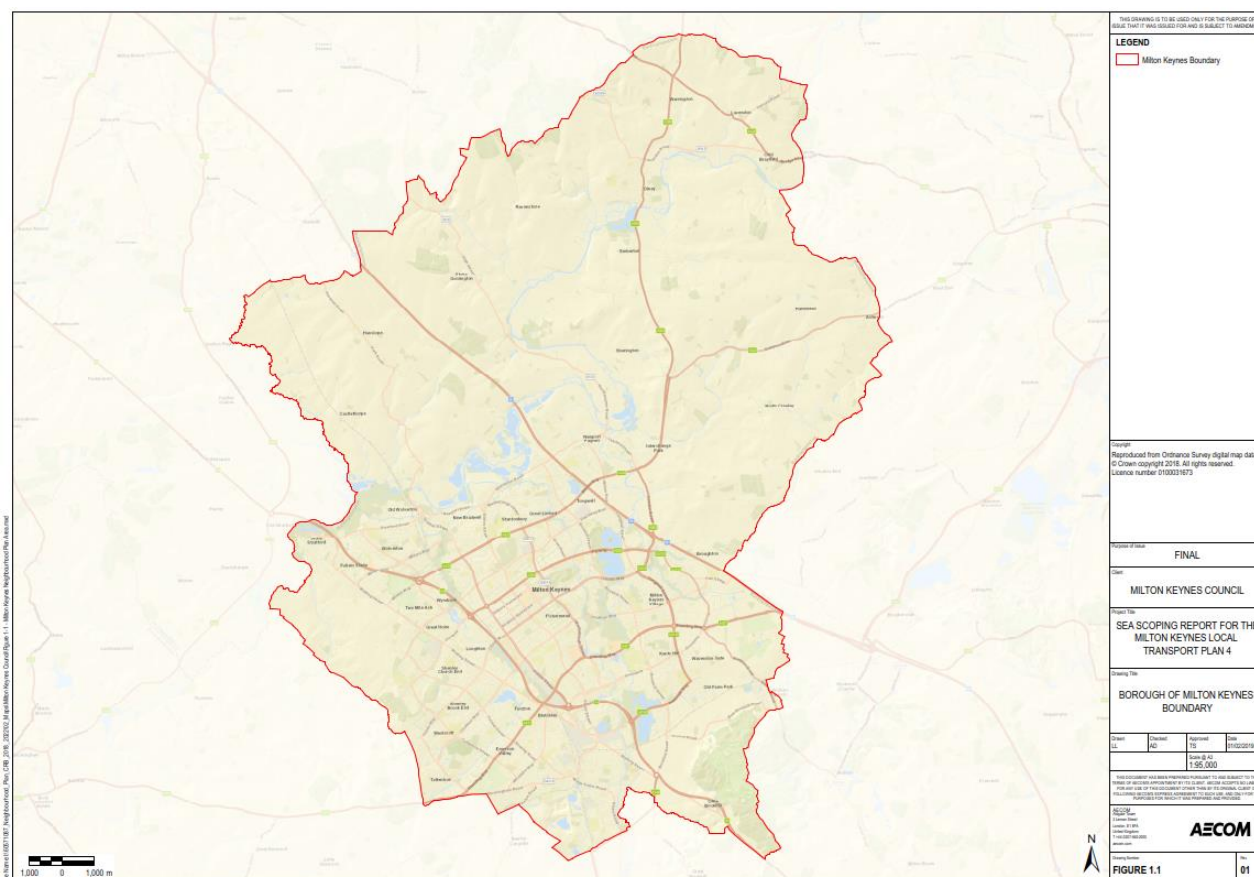


Figure 2.1: Area covered by the Position Paper: Milton Keynes Borough

2.2 Further context for the Position Paper, including the key environmental constraints in the area covered by the Position Paper, is presented in **Table 2.2**.

Table 2.2: Further context relating to the Position Paper

Context for the Position Paper

Under the Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008, local authorities in England are required to produce a Local Transport Plan (LTP). The 2008 Act requires that LTPs contain policies and implementation plans.

In this context, the Milton Keynes Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) replaces the Local Transport Plan 3 which was adopted in 2011. The umbrella document for the LTP4 is the Mobility Strategy for Milton Keynes 2018-2036 (LTP4) Mobility for All. Adopted in 2018, the LTP4 Mobility Strategy set out the strategic framework for the Milton Keynes transport system, along with a series of interventions needed to achieve the growth ambitions outlined in Plan:MK and support the longer-term growth planned by MK Futures 2050. The Mobility Strategy is accompanied by the Transport Infrastructure Delivery Plan (adopted 2019), which highlights the key transport challenges and opportunities in Milton Keynes along with the transport infrastructure that needs to be delivered within the short and medium term. The Transport Infrastructure Delivery Plan underwent a full SEA process.

To accompany these key LTP4 documents, a number of position papers are being prepared to provide additional context on key transport issues. In this respect, the Road Safety, Walking & Cycling and Smarter Travel Position Paper sets out a number of policy provisions relating to road safety, walking and cycling and smarter travel to reinforce the main LTP4 policies.

What are the key components of the Position Paper?

The key aims of the Position Paper are to 1) enhance road safety 2) contribute to walking and cycling becoming the default choice of transport in Milton Keynes for the majority of trips under 3 miles and 3) promote smarter travel.

In terms of the key interventions proposed by Position Paper, most are soft measures which seek to enhance the use of the existing transport network in Milton Keynes. In addition, the interventions propose additional policy provisions relating to the schemes taken forward through the Milton Keynes Transport Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which was adopted late in 2019 and underwent a full SEA process.

Key policy provisions in the Position Paper include: data collection and analysis; campaigns; safety audits; additional support for road safety officers; Safer School Zones; integration of road safety within existing public realm schemes taken forward elsewhere; identification of gaps within the Redway cycle/pedestrian network; the delivery of a Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan for the borough; initiating workplans to identify preferred options for extensions to the Redway network; cycling and walking infrastructure improvements around schools; school travel planning; junction improvements; cycle parking; wayfinding; bikeability; cycle hire schemes; pedestrian connectivity improvements; smarter travel; travel planning; smart ticketing; car club development; website enhancements; car share; and liftshare initiatives.

No major construction schemes are proposed as part of the Position Paper. These types of schemes were instead taken forward through the Milton Keynes Transport Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Whilst many of the proposed measures are soft measures aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the existing transport network for sustainable transport modes, a screening of the proposed schemes has highlighted the following scheme as potentially requiring larger scale construction works:

Junction improvements: This initiative will focus on addressing safety concerns for cyclists and pedestrians at junctions. This will involve the review and delivery of infrastructure improvements around junctions and crossing points to improve safety and accessibility for active travel modes, entailing physical junction improvements within the existing highway boundary.

In light of this, this screening opinion has focussed on this scheme as the intervention with the largest potential to lead to significant environmental effects.

Are there any sensitive receptors within or in close proximity to the area covered by the Position Paper?

A key determinant of whether effects are likely to be significant is the sensitivity of the asset affected. In this context, the more environmentally sensitive a location, the more likely it is that potential environmental effects from a plan will be significant.

The NPPG provides guidance on this topic through providing a list of sites and areas which should be deemed as 'sensitive areas' for the purposes of environmental assessment.¹

These comprise:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- Natura 2000 sites;
- National Parks;
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- World Heritage Sites; and
- Scheduled monuments².

In the context of the NPPG, the following sensitive areas (comprising SSSIs and scheduled monuments) are located within or adjacent to the borough of Milton Keynes:

- Three SSSIs lie within the borough: Oxley Mead SSSI (ancient hay meadow comprising of nationally rare grassland type); Howe Park Wood SSSI (ancient semi-natural woodland); and Yardley Chase SSSI (woodland, pasture and parkland, grassland glades and open pools).

¹ I.e. those sites and areas that should be considered 'sensitive' for the purposes of screening projects for Environmental Impact Assessment.

² [http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/environmental-impact assessment/screening-schedule-2-projects/interpretation-of-project-categories/](http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/environmental-impact%20assessment/screening-schedule-2-projects/interpretation-of-project-categories/)

- Salcey Forest SSSI (159.56ha of ancient woodland), Mill Crook SSSI (5.85ha of hay meadow) and Kings and Bakers Woods and Heaths SSSI (211.63ha of woodland) are all located directly adjacent to the borough.
- 49 scheduled monuments are located in the borough.

In terms of other key environmental assets in the borough (i.e. those which are not defined as 'sensitive areas' by the NPPG), these include:

- 8 Grade I, 48 Grade II* and 1,046 Grade II listed buildings
 - 27 conservation areas
 - The Olney Air Quality Management Area
 - 15 Milton Keynes Wildlife Sites
 - Areas of the best and most versatile agricultural land
-

3. Screening assessment

3.1 Table 3.1 discusses the significance of the potential environmental effects of the Road Safety, Walking & Cycling and Smarter Travel Position Paper, and their likely significance.

Table 3.1: Potential environmental effects of the Position Paper Plan and their significance

SEA Topic	Discussion of potential effects and their significance	Is there the potential for a significant effect (Yes/No)?
Biodiversity, flora and fauna	<p>The borough contains a range of nationally and locally designated sites for biodiversity.</p> <p>Due to their location and scope, none of the measures supported through the Position Paper have the potential to affect the ecological value of the key biodiversity assets in the borough. This is given 1) the measures largely comprise soft measures, which will not have direct physical effects on habitats and species and 2) the physical enhancements that will take place through the proposals will take place on the existing road network. In relation to the latter, the proposals will not lead to the significant loss of biodiversity habitat on the existing transport network.</p> <p>In terms of potential mitigation measures, the umbrella documents for the Position Paper (including the Mobility Strategy and Transport Infrastructure Delivery Plan) have a focus on protecting and enhancing key habitats in the borough and promoting ecological networks. This includes through supporting green infrastructure enhancements, and protecting trees and vegetation. This will help limit effects on biodiversity and support biodiversity improvements.</p> <p>In light of this evidence, effects on biodiversity are <u>unlikely to be significant</u>.</p>	No
Population and human health	<p>The Position Paper sets out a range of policies which have an explicit focus on improving accessibility via active transport modes, road safety and smarter travel. Whilst the benefits which arise for residents have the potential to be wide-ranging, these are <u>not deemed to be significant</u> with regards to the SEA Regulations and their requirements in relation to screening.</p>	No
Soil	<p>In terms of the location of the best and most versatile agricultural land, a detailed classification has been undertaken in limited areas of the borough including Newport Pagnell, Calverton, Loughton, Fenny Stratford, Woburn and Milton Keynes Village. The majority of land in these areas has been classified as 'Grade 3b', however parts of it are classified as 'Grade 2' and 'Grade 3a' which are considered the 'best and most versatile'. A small amount is also classified as 'Grade 4' and 'Other'. Elsewhere in the borough, according to Natural England's provisional agricultural land quality dataset, which is based on a high-level assessment undertaken prior to 1988, most of the borough is underlain by land classified as Grade 3 land. There is no detailed information available as to whether this land is Grade 3a land (i.e. land classified as the best and most versatile) or Grade 3b (which is not).</p> <p>However, given the limited scale of land take likely to be required by the proposals put forward through the Position Paper, the loss of this productive agricultural land is unlikely to be significant overall.</p> <p>As such, the effect on soil resources is <u>deemed to be insignificant</u> with regards to the SEA Regulations and their requirements.</p>	No

SEA Topic	Discussion of potential effects and their significance	Is there the potential for a significant effect (Yes/No)?
Water	<p>The measures proposed through the Position Paper are unlikely to lead to significant changes in the amount of surface water runoff or pollutants from the transport network, and as such are unlikely to lead to significant effects on water quality. The proposals will also not affect the availability of water resources.</p> <p>The effect on water resources is therefore <u>deemed to be insignificant</u>.</p>	No
Air	<p>The measures have the potential to lead to positive effects on air quality through promoting the use of sustainable transport modes and supporting modal shift from the private car.</p> <p>Whilst the benefits which arise have the potential to be wide-ranging, these are <u>not deemed to be significant</u> with regards to the SEA Regulations and their requirements in relation to screening.</p>	No
Climatic factors	<p>In terms of climate change mitigation, the measures have the potential to help limit greenhouse gas emissions from transport through promoting the use of sustainable transport modes and supporting modal shift from the private car.</p> <p>Whilst the benefits which arise have the potential to be wide-ranging, these are not deemed to be significant with regards to the SEA Regulations and their requirements in relation to screening.</p> <p>In terms of flood risk, the proposals are unlikely to lead to significant changes in surface water run-off from the existing transport network. They are also unlikely to lead to, given the limited scale of physical proposals proposed, increases in fluvial flood risk. It is also considered that statutory requirements will ensure that flood risk is addressed through new transport proposals.</p> <p>Effects in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation are therefore <u>unlikely to be significant</u> with regard to the SEA Regulations and their requirements in relation to screening.</p>	No
Material assets	<p>The Position Paper may lead to small but very limited increases in the borough's waste management requirements in the short term from construction activities. However, given the limited scale of physical enhancements to the existing transport network that will take place as a result of the Position Paper, effects are likely to be insignificant.</p> <p>No mineral sites are likely to be affected as a result of the schemes proposed through the Position Paper.</p> <p>Effects are therefore <u>unlikely to be significant</u> in the context of the SEA Regulations and their requirements.</p>	No

SEA Topic	Discussion of potential effects and their significance	Is there the potential for a significant effect (Yes/No)?
Cultural heritage	<p>The borough contains a range of nationally and locally important sites and areas of historic environment value.</p> <p>The measures supported through the Position Paper do not have the potential to lead to significant effects on key heritage assets in Milton Keynes. This is given 1) the proposals largely comprise soft measures, which will not have direct physical effects on heritage assets and 2) the physical enhancements that will take place through the proposals in the Position Paper will be very limited and take place on the existing road network. These proposals are unlikely to significantly impact on the fabric of heritage assets. Whilst the measures proposed by the position paper have the potential to have positive effects on the setting of the historic environment, these are not deemed to be significant with regards to the SEA Regulations and their requirements in relation to screening.</p> <p>In addition, the umbrella documents for the Position Paper (including the Mobility Strategy and Transport Infrastructure Delivery Plan) set out a range of provisions which seek to conserve and enhance the fabric and setting of the historic environment, including through stipulating that new transport infrastructure development does not result in any undue harm to features and areas of historic environment value.</p> <p>Therefore, negative effects are <u>unlikely to be significant</u> in the context of the SEA Regulations.</p>	No
Landscape	<p>No nationally designated areas of landscape value are present in the borough.</p> <p>The proposals put forward through the Position Paper largely comprise soft measures. Proposals likely to involve physical infrastructure enhancements are anticipated to take place on the existing transport network. In addition, the policies of the umbrella documents for the Position Paper (including the Mobility Strategy and Transport Infrastructure Delivery Plan) have a close focus on protecting and enhancing landscape, townscape and villagescape character in the borough and on implementing high quality design.</p> <p>Given that the Position Paper will focus on the existing network, and not deliver significant new transport infrastructure, effects are <u>unlikely to be significant</u> in the context of the SEA Regulations and their requirements in relation to landscape.</p>	No

4. Summary of screening opinion

- 4.1 This screening determination has considered whether the Milton Keynes Mobility Strategy Road Safety, Walking & Cycling and Smarter Travel Position Paper is likely to lead to significant environmental effects in conjunction with the SEA Regulations.
- 4.2 The determination has considered a number of potential environmental effects that may arise as a result of the Position Paper, including as a result of physical infrastructure enhancements. Whilst some limited environmental effects have the potential to take place as a result of the Position Paper, including in relation to the majority of the SEA 'topics', it is considered that these are unlikely to be significant in the context of the SEA Regulations and their requirements.
- 4.3 This is given:
- The significant focus of the Position Paper on initiating 'soft' transport measures, designed to encourage sustainable transport use in Milton Keynes;
 - The measures taken forward through the Position Paper not requiring significant landtake; and
 - Any physical enhancements to transport infrastructure taking place on the existing network.
- 4.4 In addition, the umbrella LTP4 documents for the Position Paper (including the Mobility Strategy and Transport Infrastructure Delivery Plan) set out a range of provisions for limiting potential environmental effects, securing environmental enhancements and for bringing benefits for the quality of life of the borough's residents. The Transport Infrastructure Delivery Plan has also recently undergone a full SEA process, with a view to limiting the adverse effects of key transport infrastructure schemes and maximising the plan's scope for delivering environmental enhancements in the borough. This will further limit the potential for significant environmental effects taking place through the Position Paper.
- 4.5 For these reasons, it is considered that the Position Paper is not subject to the requirements of the SEA Regulations. As such, **an SEA process meeting the requirements of the SEA Regulations is not deemed to be required to accompany the development of the Milton Keynes Mobility Strategy Road Safety, Walking & Cycling and Smarter Travel Position Paper.**

5. Statutory environmental body responses

