

Plan:MK Topic Paper - Issues Consultation Employment and Economic Growth

September 2014



www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/PlanMK

Plan:MK

Plan:MK Topic Papers - Issues Consultation

Introduction

Plan:MK, a new Local Plan for Milton Keynes, will set out a development strategy for Milton Keynes up to 2031 with a range of detailed policies to guide development over this period.

It will replace the Core Strategy, adopted in 2013 and the existing Local Plan (2005) which together currently form the part of development plan for the Borough.

Once complete, Plan:MK and any Neighbourhood Plans, will be the starting point for planning advice, (other than for Minerals and Waste) and decisions made by the Council. It will set out how much development is expected over the plan period and the location of development sites across the Borough. It will also include detailed policies to ensure that all development is of high quality and respectful to the character of Milton Keynes, and that unplanned development only occurs where it is appropriate.

Plan:MK has to be prepared within the context of national planning policy and within the legislative framework set out by the Government. This Topic Paper is part of the first stage in the process where we are seeking initial view of the public and other interested parties on what should be in Plan:MK.



What is the purpose of the Topic Papers?

This is one of a series of Topic Papers published by the Council at this time. In total there are twelve Topic Papers covering:

- Growth in Housing
- Employment and Economic Development
- Town Centres and Retail
- Transport and Travel
- Rural Issues
- Provision of Physical and Social Infrastructure
- Quality of Place
- Culture, Recreation and Quality of Life
- Open Space and the Natural Environment
- Climate Change and Sustainability
- Duty to Cooperate
- The Way Forward: Preparing a Vision and Development Strategy for Plan:MK

Each of the Topic Papers is available on the Council website at <http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planmk>

The aim of the papers is to engage everyone with a stake in the future growth and development of Milton Keynes in the preparation of Plan:MK. They cover a range of topics, sometimes interlinked, which the Council have identified as being key to the development of the Plan.

Each paper summarises the background to the topic, setting out data and policy context, before highlighting key issues and posing questions for the reader - the responses to which will help the Council in the development of Plan:MK.

The final topic paper, "The Way Forward" draws together issues raised in the preceding papers and considers what they mean for the Vision and Development Strategy.

When we produce the final version of Plan:MK, the Vision and Development Strategy will be at the start of the Plan, setting the scene for the policies that will follow.

These Topic Papers are being published for consultation in accordance with Regulation 18 'Preparation of a local plan' of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.



How to respond

The Council would appreciate any feedback you have on the Topic Papers. In particular, if you can focus on the questions posed it will help with the development of the plan. Feedback can be submitted:

- Online via our consultation portal: <http://miltonkeynes-consult.objective.co.uk>
- Via email: PlanMK@milton-keynes.gov.uk
- In writing: Development Plans, Civic Offices, 1 Saxon Gate East, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ

All comments should be received by **5pm on Wednesday 3rd December 2014.**

How will the feedback be used?

The next stage of the process will be to develop a Preferred Options document, which will set out the Council's initial draft of Plan:MK.

Feedback from this Issues consultation will help to shape the options considered as part of the development of the Preferred Options. These options will evolve through further focused consultation with key stakeholders.

The Council expects to publish the Preferred Options document for consultation in 2015.

The overall aim is to get a final plan prepared by early 2016, at which time it will be submitted to the Government and be subject to independent examination.

Introduction

1 The Borough of Milton Keynes comprises the city of Milton Keynes, designated as a New Town in 1967 and a substantial rural area, which includes the towns of Newport Pagnell, Olney and Woburn Sands together with some smaller villages and settlements. It is located halfway between London and Birmingham and Oxford and Cambridge at the geographical centre of the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership area (SEMLEP). Both the Open University and the University Campus Milton Keynes (UCMK) part of the University of Bedfordshire are located within the city and there are two universities located nearby, Buckingham and Cranfield University.

2 This Topic Paper covers issues relating to employment and the local economy that will need to be addressed in the new Local Plan for the Borough, Plan:MK taking forward the development of the Borough up to 2031. This Topic Paper covers:

- The key characteristics and strengths of the Milton Keynes economy
- The policy background
- Current trends and issues in the Milton Keynes economy and key drivers for change



3 Throughout this Topic Paper the Council asks questions it would like feedback on to progress Plan:MK.

4 Not all jobs occur on employment land; many jobs such as those in retailing; health and education etc take place elsewhere. Although this Topic Paper mentions and refers to these sectors of the economy, it is usually in the context of employment and the number of jobs these sectors provide. Their planning and future provision is covered in other Plan:MK Topic Papers⁽¹⁾.

¹ Throughout this Topic Paper employment land means land allocated for employment use on the adopted policies map as amended and used for the following purposes B1, B2 and B8 use classes as defined in the 1987 Use Classes Order as amended. B1 uses include office, research and development and light industrial uses, B2 uses are for general industry, B8 uses are for storage or distribution, warehousing use.

Key Characteristics and Strengths of the MK Economy

Key Characteristics and Strengths of the MK Economy

5 Among the key characteristics and great strengths of the Milton Keynes economy are its:

6 Good location: The Borough is situated halfway between London and Birmingham a major economic axis of the UK economy, and halfway between Oxford and Cambridge, one of the most important areas for research and development activities and education in the UK.



7 Good communications: Milton Keynes has good transport links to London, the Midlands, the north of England and Scotland. Both the West Coast main Line (one of Europe's busiest railways) and the A5 go through the city and junctions 13 and 14 of the M1 motorway, to the east of the city, serve it. East-West links are currently provided by the A421 and the existing Bletchley to Bedford railway line. The combination of good communications and its location means that a population of around 9.5 million and 23 million people live within a 60 minute and 90 minute drive time of the city. This makes Milton Keynes an attractive location for headquarter offices and for warehousing and distribution activities.

8 Skilled labour force: A plentiful supply of high quality skilled labour is clearly a competitive asset for a city. The Borough's stock of high skilled workers is one of the

key determinants of its economic performance and is positively associated with its economic growth and concentration of knowledge-based industries. The skills levels of the working age population in Milton Keynes as measured by qualifications are increasing. Around 33.3% of the working age population in the Borough in 2012 had NVQ4 (degree level) qualifications and above, by contrast only 7% of the working age population had no formal qualifications⁽²⁾. Improving skills is important firstly because the jobs being created in the Milton Keynes economy increasingly require skills (including vocational and technical skills) so improving the skills and training of the population is crucial to enhancing people's opportunities to participate in the labour market. Secondly because cities with a concentration of high-skilled workers are more likely to retain and attract knowledge-intensive businesses than cities with a weaker skills profile. Among the six key priorities of the Council's Economic Development Strategy 2011-2016 (EDS) highlighted in this paper are to improve the skills and qualifications of the resident population to enable them to access the job opportunities generated by local employers. Additionally, the strategy also aims to improve access to training and job opportunities to those with low skill levels. Just over one quarter of job seekers (28.7%) in the Borough in June 2014 were looking for jobs in 'Elementary occupations', signifying low skill levels.



Key Characteristics and Strengths of the MK Economy

9 Quality of life: Milton Keynes built environment and public realm, as discussed in the Quality of Place and the Culture, Recreation and Quality of Life Topic Papers, all have a bearing on the attractiveness of the city as a place to live and work. In an increasingly globalised world where competitive pressures are increasing and workers and businesses are more mobile than ever before, a high quality of life can not only help to attract people and businesses to the city but also assist in retaining them. Although major macroeconomic variables such as the exchange rate and level of interest rates are beyond the direct influence of the Council, many characteristics of the 'business environment' are within the sphere of influence of the city, however difficult they are to transform. Together these factors shape the attractiveness of the city to investors and thus the prospects for its successful economic performance.



10 Strategic Vision: The development of the city has been characterised by Milton Keynes having a clear long term vision of what it wants to achieve, a strategy to achieve it and close partnership working between all the key stakeholders involved in its delivery. This has all contributed to the success of the city and its growth and development. As one of the fastest growing areas of the UK, if new homes, jobs, shops etc are to be provided in the future a development strategy on where new development will or will not be permitted

has a vital role to play in giving certainty and confidence to decision makers and investors, who the city depends on for investment in new development projects. Growth and change have long characterised Milton Keynes as well as having a 'can do' attitude. The Borough has a reputation for being open for business and as evidenced by the number of business start-ups it has a strong entrepreneurial culture. In the Centre for Cities Outlook publication referred to previously Milton Keynes achievements on delivering new homes, jobs etc were celebrated. Although Milton Keynes must not become complacent, to judge by its achievements in delivering growth when compared to other UK cities, this suggests as far as the basics are concerned (planning, transport, etc) the development strategy that the city has followed has been successful.



11 Diverse economy: The city has one of the highest proportions of private sector employment of any city in the UK with around four private sector jobs to every one public sector job⁽³⁾. It has therefore been better insulated from the effects of reductions in public spending than many other cities because it is dominated by the private sector rather than by the public sector. Increases in private sector employment have offset job losses in the public sector and the overall number of jobs within the Borough has continued to grow, as Table 2 in this paper illustrates. Although Milton Keynes has traditionally

Key Characteristics and Strengths of the MK Economy

had a diverse economy not dependent on one particular sector, there is evidence that the local economy is becoming more specialised. Centre for Cities in their report 'Mid-sized cities: Their role in England's economy (June 2013) p.7 identified the city's sector specialisms in 2011 as firstly, financial and insurance services and secondly, professional, scientific and technical. A comparison of the Milton Keynes economy against the economy in the South East of England using the location quotient (a measure of how specialised a local economy is) for data in 2011 identified Milton Keynes as being a centre for⁽⁴⁾:

- Business administration and support services
- Finance & Insurance,
- Professional, scientific and technical services
- Information and Communications
- Motor Trades
- Wholesale.
- Transport and Storage (including postal)
- Arts, entertainment, recreational and other services

4 For further information on the specialisms of the local economy see Table 3.12 and paragraph 3.7 on pages 28-29 of the Milton Keynes: Local Economic Assessment Refresh, March 2013

Policy Background

National Policy

12 The following extracts from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outline what the Government expects of the planning system, what Local Plans such as Plan:MK should cover and the role of the Council as Local Planning Authority in building a strong competitive economy.

13 Paragraph 7: There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles: The economic role is:

Contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;



14 Paragraph 17 of the NPPF identifies a set of 12 core land-use planning principles that underpin the planning system. Principles most relevant to employment and economic growth include:

- *Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, businesses and industrial units, infrastructure and*

thriving local places that the country needs.

- *Encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has previously been developed (brownfield land)...*
- *Promote mixed use developments...*
- *Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable*

15 With regards to delivering sustainable development and its relationship with the economy, the section on "Building a strong, competitive economy" in the NPPF is relevant.

16 Paragraph 20 advises that 'local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century.'



17 Paragraph 21 says in drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities should:

- *Set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth;*
- *Set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;*
- *Support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are*

*expanding or contracting and, where possible, **identify and plan for new or emerging sectors** likely to locate in their area. Policies should be **flexible** enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow a **rapid response to changes in economic circumstances**;*

- *Plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries;*
- *Identify **priority areas for economic regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement**; and*
- *Facilitate **flexible working practices** such as the integration of residential and commercial uses within the same unit.*

18 Paragraph 22 advises 'Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose'.

19 NPPF paragraph 160 advises local planning authorities to have a clear understanding of business needs within the economic markets operating in and across their area and to address barriers to investment. As mentioned later in this paper, MKC is preparing an Economic Growth and Employment Land Study (EGELS) to help develop this evidence base.



20 As a regional economic centre, the influence of the city extends far beyond its administrative boundaries attracting in-commuters from a wide area. Section 110 of the 2011 Localism Act requires that local planning authorities should co-operate on "strategic matters" and the NPPF paragraphs 178 and 179 acknowledges that public bodies have a duty to co-operate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries. The Duty to Co-operate Topic Paper covers this issue in more detail.

Sub-regional (i.e. cross-boundary and SEMLEP issues)

South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) Strategic Economic Plan

21 The aim of SEMLEP's Strategic Economic Plan is to deliver the necessary infrastructure to enable new homes to be built; provide support to new and existing businesses to enable them to grow; to encourage inward investment; and to ensure that young people improve their skill levels to offer what businesses in the area are seeking.

SEMLEP
South East Midlands
Local Enterprise Partnership



22 The Plan identifies 24 key projects including:

- The dualling of the A421 from Milton Keynes to Junction 13 of the M1
- Superfast Broadband provision for business to supplement existing

- Council and Government funding under the BDUK schemes described later
- Bletchley Fixing the Links project: Creation of a high quality station gateway at Bletchley station that will connect several recent developments and provide a catalyst for further investment in Bletchley.
- Engineering Futures: A skills capital project involving Milton Keynes College and the Open University.
- Smart City Thinking Project

23 In July 2014 SEMLEP announced that as part of a Local Growth Deal of £64.6 million for investment in the SEMLEP area, around £1.5m had been awarded for the Bletchley Fixing the Links project and £22.5m had been awarded to complete dualling of the A421, which will result in an uninterrupted dual carriageway from Milton Keynes to Bedford.

Local Policy

Core Strategy

24 Policy CS 3 (Employment Land Supply), together with Policy CS7 for CMK and Policy CS 15 (Delivering Economic Prosperity) generally set the Plan's framework and strategy for the future economic growth of the Borough. This seeks to continue Milton Keynes' development as a major centre of employment in the region, with a strong focus on knowledge-based jobs that would build on its existing strengths, maximise the potential of CMK and ensure that allocated and proposed new employment sites come forward for development.

25 The Council's Core Strategy identifies CMK as the preferred location for additional office (B1a) and high technology/research and development (B1b) floorspace within the Borough. It seeks to steer developers to CMK by asking them to provide evidence

on planning applications for more than 1000 sq.m of B1a/B1b floorspace, why that development cannot take place within CMK.

Local Plan 2005

26 The Local Plan has eleven 'saved' employment policies which are still in use and described below and planning obligation Policy PO3 is also of note. Policies E12, E13 and E15 are site specific policies for the development of Magna Park on the eastern side of the city, much of this site is now complete or at a very far advanced stage, so these policies may only be needed for a limited period until the site is built out⁽⁵⁾.



- Policy E1: Because of their lower value there are often pressures to redevelop employment sites for more valuable land uses such as housing and retail. This policy protects employment land from proposals to redevelop it or change its use to non-employment uses by refusing planning permission for the proposal except in certain clearly defined circumstances. The policy aims to maintain a dispersed pattern of employment opportunities across the city, providing employment opportunities close to where people live and also provides criteria for assessing proposals for other land uses in employment areas.

⁵ New site specific policies with criteria to assess planning applications against may be needed in Plan:MK for the development of strategic employment sites.

Policy Background

- Policy E5: encourages the re-use of rural buildings for employment purposes
- Policy E6: allows for necessary new employment buildings as part of farm diversification schemes
- Policy E7: This policy aims to ensure that new retail development is directed towards town centres by refusing planning permission for retail development on employment land unless the retail use is ancillary to on-site production or storage, or is for car related retail uses.
- Policy E8: Three sites within the Borough Bleak Hall, Old Wolverton and Stonebridge are allocated for 'bad neighbour uses'. Uses which are visually unattractive such as those involving large areas of open storage. These areas were chosen for this type of development because they were well related to existing main roads and the railway network and well separated from housing and other industry.
- Policy E9: This policy aims to ensure adequate protection of the environment from pollution generated by industrial uses and that industrial uses do not pose a threat to surrounding land uses
- Policy E10: This policy provides guidance on working from home and where planning permission is required for business use within part of a dwelling, it sets out the criteria used to assess the planning application.
- Policy E11: The majority of all businesses within the Borough are micro-businesses employing less than 10 people. In 2013 these businesses accounted for around 81.9% of all businesses within the Borough. (By contrast small businesses employing 10-49 employees accounted for 13.8% of all businesses within the Borough.) The availability of suitable accommodation is important if these businesses are to establish themselves and to grow. This policy seeks to

protect the current and future supply of small business units by refusing planning permission for proposals that involve the loss of small business units (defined as units with a gross internal floorspace not exceeding 300 sq.m) either by a change of use or expansion or redevelopment of small units into larger units.

- Local Plan Policies E12, E13 and E15 deal with Land for Large Footprint Employment, Planning Requirements and Individual sites and buildings.



Question 1

Policies

- How should Milton Keynes Council plan pro-actively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century?
- What planning policies for employment do we need in future to manage the Milton Keynes economy?
- Are there any planning policies for employment that should be retained, even though they may be in a modified form; what policies can be discarded; are any new employment policies needed in future, which might include planning policies for the development of strategic employment sites?

27 Planning obligation policy PO3 (Provision of Small Business Units) is a 'saved' policy designed to increase the stock of small business units within the Borough. Where redevelopment or a change of use of existing industrial or warehousing floorspace occurs and the redevelopment or change of use is not exclusively for the operational needs of the existing occupier; it says that the Council will seek a proportion of small business units as part of the new development. However, this policy has never been used by the Council, which raises questions if it or a similar policy should feature in a future Local Plan.

Question 2

Micro and Small Businesses

How can we promote and encourage the provision of accommodation fit for micro and small businesses?

Milton Keynes Economic Development Strategy 2011-2016

28 The Milton Keynes Economic Development Strategy 2011-2016 (EDS) is one of the enabling strategies to deliver the Core Strategy. The Long Term Economic Vision for Economic Vision for Milton Keynes states that: *'In 2034 Milton Keynes will be a major free standing city with a diverse high value business base offering well paid employment opportunities to all those living within the city.'*



29 The EDS has six key priorities:

1. Diverse and competitive knowledge based economy: Create an environment that will foster business and employment growth within a diverse, more knowledge based and competitive economy by encouraging innovation, enterprise and skills improvement.
2. Economic regeneration: Improve access to training and job opportunities especially for those with no skills or low skills levels.
3. Skills and Learning: Improve the overall skills and qualifications profile of the resident population through education and training provision, to ensure that the skills of the resident population are able to meet the needs of employers, especially in relation to higher skills levels.
4. Business support: Encourage business growth through focused interventions such as support for innovation, assistance for start-ups and ensuring an appropriate range of commercial space is available.
5. Articulating a compelling 'MK Offer': Promote Milton Keynes as a premier location for inward investment and as a visitor destination.
6. Enabling infrastructure: Create, maintain and improve the appropriate infrastructure for growth, especially in relation to transport and digital infrastructure.

Key Messages from the Core Strategy Inspector's Report

30 In her report on the examination of the Core Strategy Mary Travers the Government appointed Planning Inspector concluded that there was sufficient capacity (in terms of employment land) to provide for the continued growth of Milton Keynes as a major centre of employment as well as meeting the needs of its own labour force in the period up to 2026.

31 She highlighted that the city has lots of small employment sites but few big ones. As a consequence *'one of the risks to the success of the Plan is whether the size and quality of the available sites will be enough to support demand for clusters of knowledge-driven and high technology industries. From all the evidence it seems reasonable to expect that CMK, together with the other high quality sites available in the Borough, will be able to play a large part in meeting such needs.'*⁽⁶⁾

32 The Inspector identified that to take advantage of growth opportunities that may arise in the future, some deficiencies in the quantity and quality of employment sites may need to be addressed in the medium to longer term. This should help to ensure that the potential for all forms of economic development, including for Class B8 warehousing and distribution use, is reassessed.

33 Additionally, the Inspector specifically recommended that Central Milton Keynes (CMK) should be enabled to play its full role as the primary focus for knowledge-based employment growth in the Borough arguing the evidence base and national policy now supported a stronger focus on CMK.

34 There is sufficient capacity (in terms of employment land) to provide for the continued growth of Milton Keynes as a major centre of employment and meet the needs of its own labour force in the period up to 2026⁽⁷⁾.



35 A characteristic of the employment land supply of the Borough is that the Borough has lots of small sites but few big ones. The Inspector has highlighted that a risk to future economic growth is if the size, quantity and quality of available employment sites within the Borough are insufficient to meet the needs of business. The Milton Keynes Economic Growth and Employment Land Study (EGELS) mentioned later will assess amongst other things the supply of remaining employment land within the Borough and its 'fitness for purpose', identifying what land should be retained for employment use and what land should be developed for alternative purposes. The study will also assess if additional employment land needs to be allocated to meet the needs of business up to 2031 and the characteristics of those employment sites, size, location, use of the site etc.

36 A clear recommendation of the Inspector in her report on the examination of the Core Strategy was that there should

6 Source: Paragraph 107 Core Strategy Inspector's report

7 Figures in Table 5.3 of the Core Strategy estimated the Borough had capacity in 2013 for between 41,230-69,060 additional jobs on the basis of certain assumptions.

be a greater emphasis on promoting⁽⁸⁾ and encouraging the development of CMK as a regional centre for knowledge-based businesses. In coming to her recommendation the Inspector is likely to have been influenced by the amount of greenfield sites awaiting development within the city centre and that CMK is the most central, accessible and sustainable location for development within the city.

Question 3

Central Milton Keynes

How can we encourage the development of CMK to play its full role as the primary focus for knowledge-based employment growth within the Borough?



The Milton Keynes Economic Growth and Employment Land Study

37 Plan: MK will be informed by the findings of the Milton Keynes Economic Growth and Employment Land Study (EGELS) which Milton Keynes Council is commissioning in partnership with the Milton Keynes Development Partnership (MKDP) to help establish the evidence base for Plan: MK. The final version of the study is expected to be produced in early 2015. Apart from determining how much employment land is needed in the future up to 2031 and the 'fitness for purpose' of the current supply of employment within the Borough. That study also aims⁽⁹⁾:

- To forecast the likely level of jobs growth and demand for employment floorspace resulting from the economic growth of Milton Keynes up to 2031 and the implications for Milton Keynes Council in planning to accommodate that anticipated level of economic growth, covering issues relating to the supply of suitable employment land and the availability of labour.
- To identify options for the Council and a justified and reasoned strategy for Plan: MK to follow. It will also give some indication of what planning policies for employment should feature in Plan: MK.
- To examine the scope for the reuse of vacant office and commercial premises within the Borough.
- To benchmark Milton Keynes against competitor cities on a variety of socio-economic factors.
- To identify any particular needs and requirements for micro businesses (1-9 employees) and small businesses (10-49 employees) which make up the majority of all businesses within the Borough.

8 Development briefs prepared by MKDP will assist in promoting the development of sites in CMK.

9 This list is not exhaustive.

Issues

38 The Borough is one of the fastest growing local authority areas in the UK both in terms of population and jobs. In the 2011 Census the population of the Borough was 248,800, an increase of around 36,100 (17%) from the 2001 mid-year estimate. By 2026, the population of the Borough is expected to be around 300,000. The most recent estimate of the number of jobs in terms of employees in the Borough is around 144,300 in 2012, up 31,300 jobs (27.7%) from that in 1999. Although the most significant location for jobs within the Borough is Central Milton Keynes (CMK) including Campbell Park with around 35,800 jobs (24.4% of all jobs) in 2012, most jobs within the Borough occur outside CMK in other parts of the city.

39 The number of people who are unemployed in the Borough is falling. The unemployment (claimant count) rate in Milton Keynes fell to 2.3% (3,777 people) in June 2014 down from 3.1% (5,194 people) in June 2013, a decrease of 0.8% or 1,417 people. Despite being a very sustainable form of working, the number of people working at or from home in the Borough has fallen significantly from around 9,250 in 2001 to 6690 in 2011, a fall of 27.7% over this period.

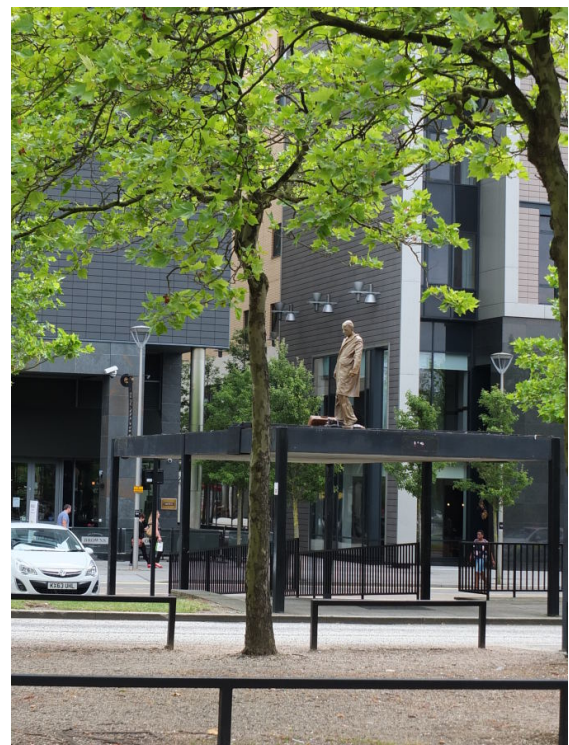
Question 4

Homeworking

How can we encourage the growth of homeworking within the Borough?

40 The growth of jobs in the Borough is a significant factor why people choose to move to the city to live. Milton Keynes is in the enviable position of having more jobs than people of working age living within the Borough to fill them resulting in net in-commuting. Figures from the 2011 Census show a net 16,670 people commuted into Milton Keynes to work (around 44,520 in and 27,850 out). Despite these figures Milton Keynes has a high degree of containment as most people live and work (around 73.7%) within the Borough.

41 Growth in Milton Keynes is employment led rather than housing led as demonstrated firstly by the number of jobs from all sources in most years generally exceeding the number of new dwellings⁽¹⁰⁾. Secondly as the figures on net in-commuting demonstrate Milton Keynes is not a dormitory town where people live but work elsewhere, the Borough has more jobs than people living locally to fill them.



¹⁰ The long run association between the total number of jobs and dwellings in the Borough is around 1.5 jobs per dwelling

42 The independent think tank Centre for Cities publishes reports analysing the health of the largest cities in the UK. In their Cities Factbook 2014, Centre for Cities emphasise Milton Keynes has a dynamic and fast growing economy, which was worth around £8.7 billion (GVA) in 2012, up 6% on the 2011 figure of around £8.2 billion. Centre for Cities also highlight that Milton Keynes has one of the highest rates of employment in England and one of the highest levels of wages. The value of goods and services produced in the Borough at £58,900 per person is the third highest in England after London and the Reading/Bracknell Forest and Wokingham primary urban areas. Milton Keynes also scores well (fourth out of sixty four cities) for the number of business start-ups.

43 The Local Futures business location index produced in partnership with the Municipal Journal identified Milton Keynes as 'the best place in England to do business' beating 325 local authority areas.

Amount of Employment Land in the Borough

44 The Plan for Milton Keynes produced in 1970 (the original Master Plan for the city) allocated around 800 ha of land for employment (excluding CMK). A further 200 ha were identified as 'reserve sites that could be used for employment or other purposes.' The Master Plan assumed that 46,000-67,000 people would be employed on the designated employment areas at a density of 70-81.5 jobs per hectare (ha). Remaining jobs would be in CMK or at schools; health centres, hotels or shops. The total amount of land allocated for employment development was around 1060 hectares excluding CMK, which together with support services (retailing, education, health etc.) was expected to provide for 125,000-130,000 jobs⁽¹¹⁾. As Table 1 'Changes in the number of employees in the

Borough by sector from 2009-2012' shows, the actual number of jobs in 2009 exceeded this with 139,000 jobs.

45 The main location for major office development was Central Milton Keynes. Campus offices were developed at Wavendon and Willen Lake and a Business Park at Caldecotte. Land for industrial and warehousing development was developed throughout the city. Sites such as Brinklow, Tilbrook, Kingston and more recently Magna Park on the eastern side of the city have proved to be attractive locations for warehousing and distribution uses because large level sites can be provided there with good motorway access.

46 The Plan for Milton Keynes also dispersed employment land across the city as a key principle, to give people the opportunity to live close to their place of work, and to spread peak hour traffic flows more evenly. The location of the employment areas was critical to the operation of the grid roads and avoiding traffic congestion, because they are the main generators of peak hour traffic. However, the down side to the city's dispersed employment pattern is that it is much more difficult to provide fast, frequent and viable public transport services than if employment were concentrated in fewer locations.



47 Central Milton Keynes was the exception to the policy of dispersion, planned as the main focus of city activity;

it would serve 250,000 city residents and people in the surrounding area⁽¹²⁾. It was designed to be the main business and commercial centre for the city with leisure, arts and entertainment facilities and shops serving the needs of city residents and a wider catchment area.

48 Core Strategy Table 5.4 identifies that the amount of vacant employment land within the Borough (excluding sites of less than 1 ha and mixed-use development sites in Central Milton Keynes) was estimated at 216.3 ha in April 2013. Most employment sites are small, there are few sites within the Borough of 5 hectares or more and most of these sites are at Magna Park and in the Western Expansion Area (WEA) so the flexibility that the city had previously to accommodate large new development is diminishing.



49 The Milton Keynes Development Partnership was established in 2013 to handle the disposal of land assets that had been purchased by Milton Keynes Council from the Homes and Communities Agency. These land assets include a significant number of vacant employment sites totalling around 74.6 hectares which remain from the original designation and planning of Milton Keynes as a New Town.

50 The bulk of vacant employment land within the Borough is allocated for mixed 'B' use classes usually B1/B2/B8 or B2/B8 uses. Relatively little land is allocated solely for B1 uses. The vast majority of the Borough's vacant employment land (around 99%) is located within the city. There is very little vacant employment land in rural settlements, where because of differences in land values, there are strong development pressures to develop employment land for alternative land uses such as housing.

12 Source: The Plan for Milton Keynes 1970, Volume 1, para 146, p.41.

Table 1 Changes in the number of employees in the Borough by sector from 2009-2012

Industry	2009		2012 (p)		Change	
	Employees		Employees			
	Number	%	Number	%	2009-2012	%
Agriculture, mining and utilities	300	0.2	500	0.3	200	66.7
Manufacturing	9,600	6.9	8,900	6.2	-700	-7.3
Construction	4,500	3.2	3,500	2.4	-1,000	-22.2
Motor trades	4,000	2.9	4,000	2.8	0	0.0
Wholesale	8,800	6.3	9200	6.4	400	4.5
Retail	15,500	11.1	14,900	10.3	-600	-3.9
Transport and storage (inc. postal)	10,500	7.5	11,300	7.8	800	7.6
Accommodation and food services	6,200	4.4	6,900	4.8	700	11.3
Information and communication	10,400	7.4	10,200	7.1	-200	-1.9
Financial and insurance	5,900	4.2	7,700	5.3	1,800	30.5
Property	1,800	1.3	1,800	1.2	0	0.0
Professional, scientific and technical	14,100	10.1	13,000	9	-1,100	-7.8
Business administration and support services	12,000	8.6	13,600	9.4	1,600	13.3
Public administration and defence	4,200	3.0	4,600	3.2	400	9.5
Education	12,900	9.2	13,000	9	100	0.8
Health	12,100	8.6	12,700	8.8	600	5
Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services	7,000	5.0	8,500	5.9	1,500	21.4
Column total	139,900	100	144,300	100	4,400	3.1

Source: NOMIS. Employee data is rounded to the nearest 100 and excludes self-employed and working proprietors.
 (p) Provisional jobs figure for 2012. This number may change when a final jobs figure is released.

Table 2 Changes in the number of employees in the Borough 1999-2012

Year	Number of Employees	Change in the number of employees on the previous year
1999	113,000	-
2000	121,800	8,800
2001	124,900	3,100
2002	130,000	5,100
2003	129,600	-400
2004	130,200	600
2005	134,000	3,800
2006	133,000	-1,000
2007	131,700	-1,300
2008	138,900	7,200
2009	139,900	1,000
2010	143,200	3,300
2011	142,500	-700
2012(p)	144,300	1,800
Growth in jobs 1999-2012(p)		31,300
Annual average growth in jobs 1999-2012(p)		2410

Sources:

2008-2012 Jobs: Office for National Statistics, Business Register and Employment Survey
 ONS Crown Copyright Reserved (from NOMIS) on 13 November 2013) 1999-2007 jobs:
 Office for National Statistics, Annual Business Enquiry

Notes:

Discrepancies exist between ABI and BRES data, and therefore caution should be taken when using and interpreting employee estimates at a local area level. Data may be subject to future revision.

Employee data is rounded to the nearest 100 and excludes self-employed and working proprietors.

(p) = Provisional jobs figure for 2012. This may change when ONS release the final jobs figure.

51 Changes in the number of employees in the Borough by sector from 2009-2012 above illustrates how people in the Borough work in terms of which sector of the local economy and how job numbers have changed in each sector from 2009 to 2012. The number of jobs in the Borough grew by 4,400 jobs (3.1%) from 2009 to 2012 with the largest increases in jobs occurring in the Finance and Insurance sector (1800 jobs), Business administration & support services (1600 jobs) and Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & other services (1500 jobs). There were falls over this period in the numbers of people employed in Professional, Scientific and Technical services, Construction and in Retailing. Milton Keynes is predominantly a service sector economy, manufacturing accounted for only 8,900 jobs (6.2%) and Agriculture, Mining & Utilities for around 500 jobs (0.3%). Retailing employs more people in the Borough than any other sector of the local economy, 14,900 people or 10.3% of the workforce followed by Business administration & support services 13,600 jobs (9.4%), Professional, scientific and technical 13,000 jobs (9%), Education 13,000 jobs (9%) and Health 12,700 jobs (8.8%).



52 Changes in the number of employees in the Borough 1999-2012 illustrates trends in the provision of employee jobs in the Borough from 1999 to 2012, average long term jobs growth over this period is around 2400 jobs per annum but the number of jobs is 'lumpy' and very variable. In some years such as 2000 (when Midsummer Place now into Milton Keynes and Xscape Milton Keynes opened in CMK) the local economy can gain as many as 8,800 jobs and even in years when the UK economy was growing such as 2006 and 2007 before the recession in 2008 it can lose jobs. There is evidence of the level of job creation in the local economy slowing down; from 2009 to 2012 the increase in the number of jobs in the Borough averaged 1800 jobs per annum. However, given the depth of the economic downturn that the UK has experienced since 2008, the fact that the number of jobs within the Borough has continued to grow in most years since then with the exception of 2011 indicates the strength of the local economy.

53 Figures on the amount of employment floorspace being developed within the Borough (from new construction or a change of use) track changes in the local economy. Within the Borough, growth in the amount of employment floorspace is primarily for warehousing followed by office-type floorspace by contrast the amount of floorspace being developed for industrial purposes is generally in decline⁽¹³⁾.

Key Drivers for Change

Mismatch between the supply and demand for commercial property and obsolescence of some commercial floorspace.

54 There is evidence of a mismatch between the type of property being demanded and the supply of buildings available. Figures on local property trends produced by the firm Bidwells highlight that almost 80% of the take up of office floorspace in Milton Keynes within the past two years has been in new or prime grade A office floorspace. With the Pinnacle building in CMK now fully let the Bidwells report highlights that there is a lack of new office accommodation on the market. They expect occupiers to look at design and build options to satisfy their requirements. There is demand for new offices in the city of around 130,060 sq.m (1.4 million sq.ft) which according to Bidwells is the highest level reached in 10 years⁽¹⁴⁾. Colliers International, a real estate company estimate that Grade A office rents within the city are now around £21 per sq.ft this compares to £120 per sq.ft in the West End of London, £60 per sq.ft in the City of London, £34 per sq.ft for Cambridge, £22 per sq.ft for Oxford and £16 per sq.ft for Luton⁽¹⁵⁾.



55 On industrial floorspace Bidwells identify that there was only one grade A building left in Milton Keynes above 9290 sq.m (100,000 sq.ft) highlighting the acute shortage of supply. There are also shortages in the market of buildings of more than 4645 sq.m (50,000 sq.ft).



56 Growing demand for new office premises and shortages in the supply of new property co-exists with a significant amount of office floorspace within the Borough being vacant. The amount of vacant office floorspace within the Borough is estimated by Invest Milton Keynes (IMK) at around 109,870 sq.m (1,182,584 sq.ft) in May 2014 about 17.7% of all office floorspace within the Borough. The amount of vacant industrial and warehousing floorspace is estimated by IMK at around 215,740 sq.m (2,322,165 sq.ft) in May 2014 around 6.6% of all industrial and warehousing floorspace within the Borough.

57 The majority of all vacant office floorspace within the Borough (52.8%) some 57,970 sq.m (623,953 sq.ft) in May 2014 is within CMK. Much of this property dates from the 1970s and 1980s and in some cases properties have been on the market for years and not been occupied.

58 Although some vacant office buildings in CMK have the potential to be reused either for office use (sometimes after refurbishment or conversion to small business accommodation) or for residential

14 Source: Bidwells Space Data Book Spring 2014 p.18

15 Source: Colliers International National Offices Rents Map 2014

use under permitted development rights, for some office buildings, which are obsolete and incapable of conversion, demolition of the building and redevelopment of the site maybe the only practical option. However, redevelopment is only going to occur if it is profitable and feasible to do so. Redevelopment of such sites may be facilitated by adjoining property owners working together and combining sites to make a bigger development block. Where such redevelopment opportunities exist, the Council in its role as Local Planning Authority would be prepared to enter into discussions with developers to assist in bringing such projects forward. The location of the vacant units is important and this will have a bearing on the Development Strategy which needs to address whether a greater concentration of employment uses or having a pattern of dispersal is the most appropriate way forward for Plan:MK.



59 The recent example of the proposed manufacturing development by French bakery firm Brioche Pasquier on the site of the former Alps Electronics building at Wymbush is a good example of a vacant industrial site being reused and recycled generating new investment and job opportunities. Similar opportunities may exist on other employment sites elsewhere within the Borough; if development proposals for these locations do come forward they would help to reduce the need for greenfield site developments elsewhere.

60 As this section is about the mismatch between the supply and demand for premises, an issue for Plan:MK to consider is whether the Council should be more flexible on the type of land uses permitted in employment areas. Many community and religious groups find it hard to find suitable and relatively inexpensive accommodation or plots of land big enough in residential areas of the city to accommodate a building to meet their needs. These places of worship can attract significant numbers of people generating problems with parking and access in residential areas. However, some of the buildings on the older industrial estates within the city in locations such as Kiln Farm and Wolverton Mill have proved to be an attractive location for these groups. Rather than see empty buildings on these estates, the Council where it is satisfied the proposal would do no harm has granted planning permission as an exception to Local Plan policy E1⁽¹⁶⁾.

¹⁶ Any liberalisation of land uses permitted on employment land would not extend to main town centre uses such as retailing. Retailing on employment land would be contrary to Government policy in the NPPF and the Council's own planning policies which are to focus retail development within the Borough's 'town centres'.

Key Drivers for Change



Question 5

D1 uses on employment sites

Should the Council permit more D1 uses such as places of worship in a limited number of industrial estate locations throughout the city? Which buildings/locations might be suitable for this use?

Employment densities

61 Employment density is a measure of the average amount of floorspace in square metres per employee in an occupied building. It is therefore a measure of how much space each person occupies within the workplace. As can be seen from Table 3 'Employment Densities for various land uses' there are major differences in the amount of floorspace per person for different land uses. The amount of floorspace per employee in a large scale and high bay warehouse is 80 sq.m per employee; this is significantly higher than that in an office at 12 sq.m or 8 sq.m for a call centre employee. More recent data from the British Council for Offices quoted in an Economist article of the 5 April 2014, suggests the average office tenant now uses around 11 square metres (sq.m) per worker, 35% less than in 1997. As the amount of

floorspace per worker in offices is declining this has important consequences not only can more workers be accommodated in a given quantity of office floorspace but more workers can be employed in the middle of cities.

Table 3 Employment Densities for various land uses

Use Class and Use Type	Area per full time employee (sq.m.) 2010
B1(a) Call Centre	8 NIA
B1(a) General Office	12 NIA
B1(c) Light Industry (Business Park)	47 NIA
B2 General Industry	36 GIA
B8 Large scale and High Bay Warehousing	80 GEA

NIA - Net Internal Area, GEA - Gross External Area, GIA - Gross Internal Area
Source: Employment Densities Guide, 2nd Edition (2010) produced for the Homes and Communities Agency by Drivers Jonas Deloitte



62 These figures have important implications; warehousing is 'land hungry'; as it generates fewer jobs for the same amount of land as office use. If the objectives of the Council are to utilise employment land as efficiently as possible to maximise job creation and develop the knowledge economy within the sites currently available and there are no more central and suitable sites available within

CMK or other town centres for office type employment, then the objectives may not be met.

Question 6

Warehousing

- Should the Council intervene to promote office type development at the expense of development such as warehousing?
- Alternatively, should the Council not intervene and continue to allocate additional employment land for warehousing purposes, assuming that it is required?



Warehousing & Distribution

63 Warehousing and distribution activity has played a part in the Milton Keynes economy in recent years, in part because of the city's good location and communications and availability of land for the construction of large scale and high bay warehousing. But will it be in the future? In a recent article in the Economist⁽¹⁷⁾ it was reported that some operators such as Marks & Spencer are rationalising premises moving to fewer, bigger distribution centres carefully positioned around the country. Marks & Spencer is moving from 100 small centres to four regional hubs. This is a more efficient way of handling goods and will save the company an estimated £175 million a year.

64 The same Economist article reported that changes in the location of warehousing and what goes on within them is being driven by changes in the way we shop, with more on-line retailing and more frequent shopping in smaller stores. The traditional haulage pattern begins with consumer goods imported through southern ports such as Felixstowe and Southampton in large containers and carried by lorry to the A14 and A34 to large distribution centres in the Midlands and from there by lorry across the country. Small regional warehouses may also serve as stockholding points. The article suggests as customers become more demanding wanting same day delivery and well stocked local stores, warehouses will edge more towards major cities and population centres and the attraction of the Midlands as a warehouse location may diminish.

65 It is too early to tell if the Borough will benefit or be adversely affected by these trends. These are issues for further investigation through the EGELS (see the 'Policy Background' section of this paper).

Implications of the continuing growth and expansion of the city and the ageing of the local population.

66 The Borough experiences net in-commuting. It depends on people commuting from other parts of the UK

Key Drivers for Change

particularly from Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and Aylesbury Vale in Buckinghamshire to supply it with workers. But neighbouring local authorities have their own aspirations to develop their local economies and plans to provide new jobs and housing in the future, which may mean that they will have fewer workers to 'export' to Milton Keynes. Additionally, as the population ages fewer workers are generated for a given amount of housing within the Borough.

67 The Inspector's report on the Core Strategy concluded the Borough already has sufficient capacity (in terms of employment land) to provide for the continued growth of Milton Keynes as a major centre of employment as well as meeting the needs of its own labour force in the period up to 2026. Figures in Table 5.3 of the Core Strategy referred to previously, estimate that the Borough has capacity for between 41,230-69,060 jobs on the basis of certain assumptions.



68 If one assumes the Borough continues to grow in the future at its historic rate of around 1.5 jobs per dwelling, the increase in the number of jobs within the Borough will be greater than any increase in the size of the local labour force. If this assumption is correct in-commuting will increase in future (and in-commuters may commute from even further away) and an increasing proportion of all jobs within the Borough will be filled by people living outside it. However, as a regional centre and as a growth area, the city will be fulfilling its

role of providing a variety of job opportunities both for its population and that of its neighbours, who if they did not access jobs within the Borough may well have to commute to destinations elsewhere to access employment.

69 Increased in-commuting by workers will put increasing pressure on the city's road network. However, this can be mitigated by the development of park and ride sites and by encouraging development in the most sustainable locations where accessing job opportunities by means other than by car is a viable option, for example locations around the railway station in Central Milton Keynes. There may be other more limited opportunities for employment development around other railway stations within the Borough.

70 Through the preparation of the EGELS, work will be done to investigate whether the Borough has sufficient employment land to meet its needs up to 2031. If the study concludes that the Borough has more than sufficient land to meet its needs up to 2031, the Council could consider reallocating some employment land either because it is no longer fit for purpose and/or because it is surplus to requirements. If employment land were to be developed for alternative land uses such as housing (which was occupied by people of working age) this would potentially boost the supply of workers within the city.



71 Alternatively, if the study finds that the Borough has insufficient employment land for our needs up to 2031, it is likely that additional land for development will

need to be allocated. It is also possible that in order to maintain a supply of employment land of the right quantity, quality and type in future and to retain the flexibility to meet unforeseen requirements, that other changes to the portfolio and mix of employment sites within the Borough will be needed.

Question 7

Future Allocations

If additional employment sites are needed within the Borough up to 2031 for whatever reason, where should they be located and how much land is required?

New Projects

72 There are several new and ongoing projects that might affect and provide opportunities for the development of the Milton Keynes economy in the future. These include the rolling out of high speed broadband for the majority of the rural population of the Borough in the summer of 2016 (as described in the Provision of Physical and Social Infrastructure Topic Paper). Recent evidence from the Department for Culture Media and Sport (November 2013) highlights that enhancing the availability and take-up of faster broadband speeds will add about £17 billion to the UK's annual Gross Value Added (GVA) by 2024⁽¹⁸⁾.



73 The dualling of the A421 from the Kingston Roundabout to Junction 13 of the M1 motorway will create a high capacity route from the east of the city to the M1 motorway and improve links to Bedfordshire. Also, East-West rail services from Central Milton Keynes via Bletchley to Oxford and Aylesbury are planned to commence in 2019. The Bletchley Fixing the Links project is expected to improve Bletchley station and be a catalyst for further investment in Bletchley. Although it does not run through the Borough the HS2 project is important to Milton Keynes because it will increase capacity on the West Coast mainline enabling more rail services to operate to and from the city⁽¹⁹⁾.



74 Investment in new infrastructure such as that detailed above (and covered in more detail in the Transport and Travel, and Provision of Physical and Social Infrastructure Topic Papers) is important because in the long run it boosts

¹⁸ Source SEMLEP Strategic Economic Plan para 2.4.47, p.23

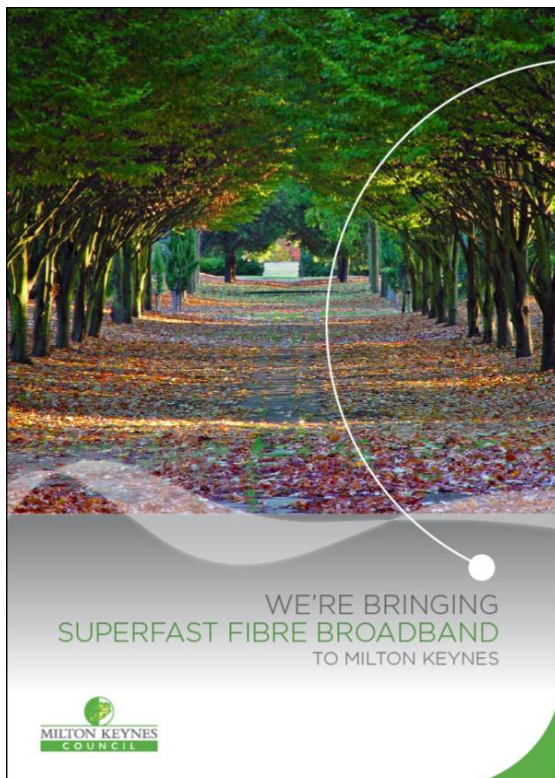
¹⁹ Source: Chartered Institute of Transport and Logistics Public policy and Strategic Rail Policy group report reported in Logistics and Transport Focus Magazine December 2013 p.49.

Key Drivers for Change

productivity by enabling people and goods to get to places faster, communicate more easily and spend less time and money on repairs

Conclusions

75 The Borough of Milton Keynes is one of the fastest growing local authority areas in the UK both in terms of population and jobs. It has a dynamic and vibrant economy with one of the highest rates of employment in England and one of the highest levels of wages. Despite some setbacks in most years the number of jobs within the Borough continues to grow. It is in the enviable position of having more jobs than people of working age living within the Borough to fill them, which results in net in-commuting. Among its strengths are its good location and communications, its skilled labour force, its high quality of life and its diverse economy. Planned infrastructure projects such as the dualling of the A421, the rolling out of superfast broadband and East-West Rail should enhance the attractiveness of Milton Keynes as a business location in the future.



76 As a Local Planning Authority the economic role of the Council is (to paraphrase the NPPF),

To contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

77 This Topic Paper identifies employment and economic issues and questions that the Council would like feedback on to help formulate policies for Plan:MK but there may be other employment or economic growth issues that you feel have not been addressed in this paper, which should be considered in Plan:MK.

Question 8

Other issues

Is there any other employment or economic growth issue not addressed in this Topic Paper that needs to be considered in Plan:MK?

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Glossary

Campus offices: As originally developed by the Milton Keynes Development Corporation a campus office development was a low density high quality office development in an attractive landscaped setting, unlike business parks they were usually occupied by a single company .

Employee: An employee is someone who works for an organisation or is employed by an organisation. This definition excludes the self-employed, government supported trainees and HM Forces. Employees can work full time that is, working for over 30 hours per week or can work part-time, that is, working for 30 or fewer hours per week.

Gross Value Added: A measure of the value of the good and services produced in an area.

Primary Urban Areas (PUA): A measure used by the think tank Centre for Cities, which measures the 'built-up' area of a city, rather than individual local authority districts. The PUA for Milton Keynes is the Borough of Milton Keynes but for other cities such as London and Manchester the PUA extends beyond the city boundary into districts in neighbouring counties around the city.

South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP): SEMLEP is a functional economic area consisting of 11 local authorities with a combined population of 1.7m. The SEMLEP area covers eleven local authority areas the Borough of Milton Keynes, Aylesbury Vale District Council in Buckinghamshire all the unitary authorities in Bedfordshire (Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton), Cherwell District Council in Oxfordshire and five district councils in Northamptonshire, South Northamptonshire District Council, Daventry District Council, Northampton Borough Council, Kettering Borough Council and Corby Borough Council.

Smart City Thinking: A project that Milton Keynes Council is working on with the Open University. It builds on Milton Keynes strength in the Transport and High Performance Engineering sectors with the National Transport Systems Catapult centre based in Milton Keynes and the cluster of engineering companies based around Silverstone, home to the British Formula 1 Grand Prix. Millbrook Proving Ground is currently bidding to be a spoke of the Advanced Propulsion Centre UK, with Cranfield University working with Milton Keynes Council as a proposed hub.

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