

Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
Horse Guards Road
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Peter Marland
Leader
Milton Keynes Council

Our Ref:

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Reply To:

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23 November 2017

Dear Chancellor

Autumn Budget 2017 – Helping the Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford Corridor reach its potential

Milton Keynes is Different by Design. We are the most successful purposely planned city in the UK. Since our designation fifty years ago, we have developed into a model of rapid and high quality urban expansion, with a fast-growing economy and increasing specialisms in the high tech, transport and smart city sectors that are so important to the UK's future.

Much of the success of Milton Keynes has been based on the investment made in the timely delivery of high quality infrastructure, a commitment to good quality housing, green space and a focus on employment and jobs, but we cannot stand still if we want to continue our success over the next fifty years and more.

I welcome the backing in your Budget 2017 speech for the National Infrastructure Commission's (NIC) vision for the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford corridor and your commitment to building up to 1 million new homes by 2050. The NIC's report on the corridor suggested that Milton Keynes could once again become a growth location of national significance and grow to at least 500,000 people by 2050.

Milton Keynes has strong aspirations for large-scale growth. This was articulated in the work of the MK Futures 2050 Commission that created a long-term vision for the future development of Milton Keynes that was supported unanimously cross-party by MK Council. I strongly endorse the view in the NIC report that Milton Keynes represents "an immediate opportunity for growth". I believe that with our track record for delivery and existing infrastructure, together with new provisions as envisaged by the NIC, the city and its immediate hinterland could contribute a large and early share of growth, up to 10% of the 1 million new homes, needed in the corridor.

Milton Keynes has been presented with the chance to take future growth in our own hands, and the opportunity to shape that growth around the type of city we want to be, rather than applying a one size fits all planning approach to our unique environment.

But I am very clear that going forward our residents want to see high quality infrastructure; investment in our transport links and capacity; assurances that schools, health services and community amenities will be delivered as growth takes place rather than straining existing facilities; that the council is able to properly and sustainably fund the extra services we will need to provide; that our commitment to high quality green space is respected and continued; and that housing is delivered for the benefit of all in the City, with a mix that everyone can afford. Unless we can show the people of Milton Keynes the benefits of growth, it will be hard to convince them that it should take place at the pace and scale envisaged.

I therefore strongly support the NIC's recommendation that to enable growth we need certainty about infrastructure delivery, timing and how it will be funded and welcome the NIC proposal for a deal with the area that will see powers and resources devolved no later than April 2020.

Your vision for the corridor recognises that in order to enable the corridor to meet its full economic potential there needs to be an integrated approach to the planning and delivery of infrastructure, homes and business growth. Milton Keynes will therefore work actively with the Government and our neighbours on how we can best meet the challenge of delivering significant extra growth across the corridor while meeting the expectations and aspirations of local people. Existing collaborations with neighbouring councils provide a strong foundation for future growth governance but we are flexible and pragmatic and will seek the optimal arrangements to allow Milton Keynes to make an early and major contribution to the region reaching its full potential.

I would be grateful if you could identify a lead official in the Treasury to work with my officers to determine the best next steps to progress our shared ambition.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Marland', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Cllr Peter Marland
Leader, Milton Keynes Council

cc. Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Lord Andrew Adonis