

# MK Digital Strategy 2018 – 2025

## Foreword

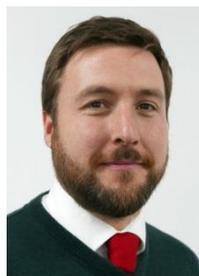
This digital strategy outlines Milton Keynes Council's vision to create a world leading digital city, one which embraces innovation, promotes high quality jobs and provides seamless digital connectivity to its citizens and businesses.

Milton Keynes is a place where nothing has ever stood still, and innovation is embraced. We are ambitious for the future of Milton Keynes and recognise that being a truly digital city will require us to work cooperatively with our customers, businesses and partners.

We recognise that whilst Local Authorities are not in the same position to exploit new technologies as private sector firms, we have an important role to play as an enabler, as we have done through world leading projects like MK Smart, recognised for its pioneering work particularly on transport innovation.

Our three priorities as outlined in this strategy are: digital connectivity, digital services and digital economy. These priorities ensure physical connections to digital services are in place, working as a partner and enabler to create the best possible digital environment for residents and businesses to make the most of digital connections.

Building on our unique heritage through the internationally significant legacy of Bletchley Park, we will be a place synonymous with nurturing digital skills and tech pioneers. Looking to the future, we will ensure that Milton Keynes is ideally placed to exploit the opportunities of continued investment in next generation connectivity, bidding for trials and government funding wherever we can.



Councillor Peter Marland  
Leader, Milton Keynes Council

# MK Digital Strategy

## VISION

Milton Keynes is a world leading, smart, digital city that promotes innovation, quality jobs and provides seamless digital connections.

## A Council which prioritises digital:

### Connectivity

Universal, reliable digital connections can be accessed when and where needed

### Services

Transformative, open and accessible services which share data wherever possible

### Economy

Building a world leading digital city with high levels of innovation and high skilled jobs

## PRIORITIES

## Supported by our digital principles:

### Collaborative

Collaborating to create the best possible digital environment

### Innovative

Maintaining MK's reputation as a test bed for the latest technologies and building on the success of our smart city project

### Inclusive

Taking opportunities to expand inclusion and improve access

## PRINCIPLES

# Digital Connectivity

Digital is recognised as the ‘fourth utility’ and internet connections are essential in our everyday lives. We expect continuous, reliable and seamless digital connections, regardless of the physical infrastructure and network that creates them.

Recognising the financial challenges faced by Local Authorities, and that most of the investment in digital infrastructure in the UK is delivered by the private sector through consumers, Milton Keynes Council is committed to enabling and securing private and public investment in digital infrastructure within the borough.

Where public investment streams can be accessed to support our ambition to build a truly digital city, we will ensure that we are proactive in taking forward comprehensive, credible to secure funding. Our commitment to working with partners to ensure physical connections is evidenced in a number of projects.

In Central Milton Keynes the Amazing MK Business Improvement District is already working to deliver a city centre wide Wi-Fi network to provide connectivity across the city centre.

MKC has assembled a consortium to promote the city as an area for 5G test demonstration capability, with a focus on transport. As a first step the consortium is bidding for government funding through a DCMS competition that will, in alignment with our mobility strategy, help to support the early introduction of mobility as a service.

In the proposed submission version of Plan: MK, the emerging local plan which outlines the city’s growth to 2031, full fibre connections are a policy requirement (CT8) for all new developments, and the Council is working with developers to ensure these connections are delivered.

The council is committed to achieving broadband service growth across the whole borough, ensuring super-fast broadband connections in the rural areas of Milton Keynes.

Through Viva MK, a £3 million investment (entirely funded through government grants from the Department for Transport and private sector investment) has been secured to deploy 2500 sensors throughout MK to help create a wider city intelligent transport system. The sensors capture low resolution images and transmit these images as data streams.

The cost of rolling out super-fast broadband to rural areas is often expensive so we work with neighbouring Central Bedfordshire Council, Bedford Borough Council and Luton Council and the delivery partners BDUK and BT on the Central Superfast Broadband project to ensure most premises can receive a broadband service of over 30Mbps. BT contributes significantly to the costs, with the Council itself contributing £2.7 million.

We are already looking ahead to new wireless connectivity from 4 and 5G technologies. 4G coverage in Milton Keynes already reaches 98% of outdoor and 81% of indoor premises.<sup>i</sup>

Looking ahead to the impact of the development of 5G, defined as “seamless connectivity, ultra-fast and ultra-reliable, transmitting massive amounts of data at super low latency<sup>ii</sup>”. Future transport and mobility services will be reliant on continuous digital connections and transmission networks. Milton Keynes is well placed to be an early mover in this field, given the city’s reputation as a living lab and test bed for innovative transport solutions.

We are committed to delivering the best possible digital environment for our partners/ businesses. In our 2014 Digital Infrastructure Strategy, we committed to providing superfast broadband infrastructures to all small and medium sized businesses by 2018. By the end of 2018 we expect 98.2% coverage across all properties (residential and commercial) in MK and we will continue to push this figure higher.

In 2015, the MKC Connection Voucher Scheme provided vouchers to 489 SMEs enabling them to obtain up to £3000 towards the cost of installing fibre connections. The Council will proactively work with providers and businesses to secure investment in next generation infrastructure for the city.

Significant public and private investment has already been made in Milton Keynes offering gigabit speed internet to over 2,700 businesses in Milton Keynes through a pure fibre network.

# Digital Services

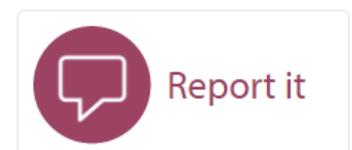
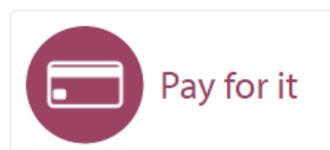
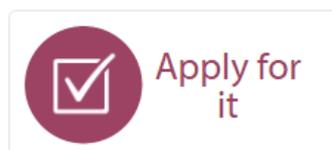
Milton Keynes Council has adopted a digital first approach to its own services and provides an assisted digital approach to those who require extra support, ensuring that our customers who do not have digital connections or are not confident using online systems are not excluded.

We are passionate about empowering our customers through an assisted digital approach, supporting our customers to serve themselves in the future. We are running an ambitious Customer Service Transformation programme to modernise Council services, with recent uptake of digital services demonstrating the demand for online services.

We will build on our current successes to provide the best possible experience for our customers. We recognise that for digital transformation to create truly digital public services, we must also work with partners. Digital is a key strand of our work with health colleagues on the Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Sustainability and Transformation Plan, where Local Authorities and the NHS come together to improve health and care.

MK Council embrace open data, and publishes key intelligence about the city through the MK Insight website, powered by MK Smart. We ensure that this data is open for use by all citizens and potential commercial developers. MKC believes in increasing the amount of non-personal data we make available to our citizens and partners, where data protection laws allow us to do so.

For two consecutive years, 2016 & 17, MKC's website has been awarded the highest possible rating of 4 stars by SOCITIM, an accolade achieved by just 16 councils nationally. We will continue to build on this achievement.



# Digital Inclusion

As well as adopting an assisted digital approach toward providing council services to empower and upskill those using our services, we are also committed to providing free access to the internet through our libraries.

Our Libraries provide an open door to information, including providing online connections for public use. There is unlimited free Wi-Fi access in MK libraries for those with their own devices, as well as computers for public usage in both libraries and the Council's Civic Offices.

The Neighbourhood Employment Programme also offers free IT courses to those participating in its work programmes.

MK Libraries are all part of the Online Centres network, which within MK also includes community centres and voluntary and charitable sector centre such as YMCA, Citizens Advice and Age UK.



# Digital Economy

Milton Keynes already has significant strengths with regards to high skilled jobs.

The city ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in terms of UK cities for its percentage of private sector Knowledge Intensive Business Service jobs, and ranks in the UK top 5 for concentration of high tech and digital SMEs<sup>iii</sup>. Our Economic Development strategy (2017-2027) states our aim for more Milton Keynes residents to gain satisfying jobs.

Although this is a strong foundation, we are not complacent, and will continue to build on our current strengths, working with skills and education providers to help set the digital agenda and attract highly skilled jobs to the city.

We are already investigating ways to build a strong digital economy within a world leading digital city. The Council played a central role in the development of MK Smart, Milton Keynes' multi million pound innovative big data project led by the Open University, and continues to be a key partner.

Invest MK have commissioned a local digital firm to develop an app 3D map of the entire city, a 'multi- purpose place marketing tool'. Owners of inward investment, visitor economy and existing business sites can model their building in 3D and place it within the map.



At the heart of the project is the data hub, the technical infrastructure component which contains huge amounts of city wide data related to city systems on a cloud based system. The data hub is owned by the City and anyone can upload data to it.

Travel data from the city is already being used in practice to create a city wide Motion Map, a comprehensive journey planning app.

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/infrastructure-research/connected-nations-2016/interactive>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.nic.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Connected-Future-Report.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> SME Outlook 2015, Centre for Cities, <http://www.centreforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Small-Business-Outlook-2015.pdf>, Page 54