

Milton Keynes Council Response to AP36 of Action Points arising from Stage One Plan:MK Examination Hearing Discussions (MK/EXAM/015)

Note on Midsummer Boulevard East

AP36 requested: MKC to submit a brief note on CMK Renaissance and Midsummer Boulevard East. We have already responded separately on the CMK Renaissance.

The transformation of Midsummer Boulevard East (MBE) was established through a series of stakeholder workshops held in 2014. Its overall aim is to improve the economic, social and cultural performance of Central Milton Keynes (CMK) and the Primary Shopping Area (PSA) and, in particular, to change MBE to a pedestrian-friendly environment that helps to integrate the PSA and make it a more welcoming destination.

The need to undertake work to improve MBE was highlighted as a specific policy in the CMK Alliance Plan (Ref MK/EXAM/001, p.83), and in the MK Futures 2050 Report (Ref MK/MIS/001, p.48-49) as part of Project 5: Renaissance CMK.

We are awaiting the outcome of a study (due on 29 August) which is looking at the feasibility of transforming MBE. We have committed to seeking spending approval for around £2m on capital funding as a catalyst to transforming a first phase of the boulevard. A START document (an internal funding bid) will be submitted by 31 August for this phase. An initial conceptual / indicative scheme (MK/EXAM/024b) has been prepared for MBE, and this will have stakeholder input.

If the £2m bid is approved and a subsequent scheme is supported following stakeholder engagement, it is likely that public realm works for Phase 1 of MBE – west of Secklow Gate will commence in 2019.

Additionally, we have submitted a £5m bid to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) for spending on MBE from a Cultural Development Fund. We will know by 6 September if we have been successful for the next round of the bidding process and a final decision will be taken in January 2019. Further bid details are set out in the Appendix below.

Appendix: Extract from Milton Keynes Council's bid to DCMS for funding for improvements to Midsummer Boulevard East

Our vision is to transform the Boulevard into a world class cultural destination at the centre of the CaMKox Corridor. We will create a magnificent public square at the centre of Midsummer Boulevard, designed specifically to accommodate cultural programmes. This will include the new biennial *Festival of Creative Urban Living*, where local and global creative, digital and high-tech pioneers will work together to drive forward the creative ecology of MK, including the development of a high tech creative industry hub and a new music venue.

This ambitious place-making scheme will deliver: cultural vibrancy to the heart of Milton Keynes, economic growth through cultural tourism and new investment, increased employment and skills. The city's cultural sector will engage new and diverse audiences, vital for this new town with its ambitious growth agenda. To ensure the sustainability of the cultural programme we will establish an endowment fund with contributions from the public and private sectors.

We recognise that cultural vibrancy, cross-sector connectivity and strong support for creative industries are vital to the city's future success. This is highlighted in SEMLEP's Local Industrial Strategy; the Milton Keynes Economic Development Strategy; the Milton Keynes Creative and Cultural Strategy; the Milton Keynes Digital Strategy; the MK Futures 2050 report and the South East Midlands Strategic Economic Plan.

The Midsummer Boulevard project budget is around £11 million. We have requested a £5 million contribution from the DCMS Cultural Development Fund (£3 million capital, £2 million revenue). Subject to approval, Milton Keynes Council intends to pledge £2 million matched funding, with a further £4 million from Section 106 public and private sector developer contributions.

This project is supported by an unprecedented cross-sector partnership, led by Milton Keynes Council including: Centre:mk, intu, Amazing MK (BID), Milton Keynes Development Partnership, SEMLEP, CMK Town Council, MK Gallery, The Stables, Arts and Heritage Alliance MK, Destination Milton Keynes, The Open University, MK College, MK Community Foundation, Community Action:MK, Your MK and MK Geek.