

# Covid-19

# Strategic Recovery Framework for Milton Keynes

Ambitious for a Green Recovery

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July 2020

Help  
Control  
**COVID-19**

MK



MK  
milton keynes council

# Foreword

The Covid-19 crisis has placed unprecedented demands on everyone and is a time of national crisis. Milton Keynes Council, our partners, businesses and our people rose to the challenge to help each other and reduce the spread of the virus during the emergency.

Sadly we estimate that between 200 - 300 people in Milton Keynes have lost their lives due to the pandemic and every single one of us has been affected in some way. Covid-19 is a collective national event of great significance.

Early in the pandemic the belief was that the effects would be short lived and a quick return to normal would be possible. It swiftly became apparent that was not going to be the case. The world that will emerge from lockdown will be different, socially and economically. It is highly probable the U.K. faces a deep recession.

When we undertook the MK Futures 2050 work, we did so on the basis of understanding that the world and the economy will change. We wanted to ensure that Milton Keynes, as a place, had the framework to adapt and change. If we did then we would continue our success story, if we did not then we risked our future. There is no guarantee or right to be successful. The aim is to retain what makes us special as a place, but adapt for the challenges we face.

While little could prepare us for such a rapid level of disruption, the work we have undertaken on MK Futures 2050 puts us in a better place to tackle the difficulties ahead.

Many of the changes and issues we see today arising from the crisis are accelerated or amplified structural issues that have been underlying trends for some time. Others are new.

While we want a return to normality, we cannot go back to the way things were. After a ten year period of austerity, increasing inequality, unaffordable housing and the impact of climate change mean that the previous decade has seen a fall in the standard of living, rising child poverty and increasing health inequalities.

The crisis presents both a challenge and opportunity.

The burden of recession often falls disproportionately on the poorest and most vulnerable in society. It is reasonable to assume that the impact of the coming recession will not be any different. However, the nature of the Covid-19 crisis means that the impact will also be felt across different sectors and populations that are often less affected by downturns. Evidence suggests the South East and Milton Keynes are at greater risk of disruption than during previous economic shocks.

We now have the opportunity to emerge from the crisis with a clear vision for the future. To focus on how we will shape and guide our city and to renew our founding principles of opportunity, affordability and good health. To restore Milton Keynes as a place of fairness and reward.

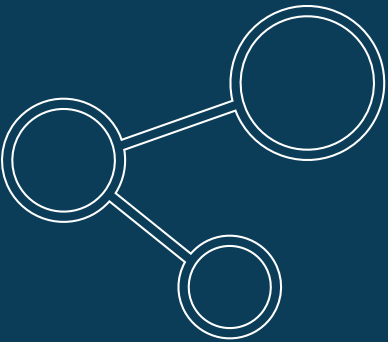
The Covid-19 MK Recovery Framework sets out our bold vision as a council. We are ambitious for a greener recovery.

The Framework details our plans for the actions we will take to control further outbreaks of the virus, manage the potentially devastating impact on our council finances and how we will support those who need our help.

It also sets out our hugely ambitious but deliverable plan to protect and deliver huge levels of investment into Milton Keynes in order to support stronger, greener communities.

It details the short term interventions we will make to support people, jobs and businesses, as well as establishing the principles of how we will encourage a green recovery with a focus on green jobs, more sustainable transport and attracting high levels of investment in infrastructure.

The Framework is supported by the largest ever economic financial package of over £3m from MK Council, and seeks to protect and inspire at least £2bn of specific and identified investment into our city.



We will work with our residents, businesses and partners to ensure that as we recover from a time of national tragedy, we do so with the same spirit of optimism that created the NHS and welfare state in the previous century. Milton Keynes is a unique and dynamic place that is beginning to emerge from a difficult period, however these difficulties will continue for some time to come.

With this approach we can come back stronger and more united to ensure an ambitious, greener, and fairer Milton Keynes in the future.

**Councillor Peter Marland,**  
Leader of Milton Keynes Council

## Introduction

Covid-19 has caused unprecedented disruption to the way we live our lives and is likely to bring the biggest economic, social and cultural shock of our lifetimes. Recovery will require strong, collective action.

This framework brings together commitments and actions to outline how Milton Keynes Council will work as an organisation and with its partners on recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. It acts as a collective strategic framework for a set of more focused plans and to highlight individual areas of priority for the recovery.

**Our main aims for the Framework are to:**

- **Transition to a greener economy that prioritises inclusive growth and reduces poverty and inequality**
- **Support businesses and attract inward investment**
- **Retain high levels of employment and reduce unemployment**
- **Provide practical help and support to those in need**
- **Deliver a financially sustainable Milton Keynes Council**

The Recovery Framework commits £3.41 million to the initial ‘recover’ stage, which will act both to fund MK Council activity and fund other support services with partners.



# Part 1: The situation facing MK

The economic and social impact of Covid-19 crisis is unprecedented. The almost entire closure of many sectors of the economy and service provision will have a long and deep lasting impact. The economic consequences will be significant, with the full extent only partially known and developing. Some sectors will be harder hit than others, and while there will likely be beneficiaries an overall downturn in economic activity is accepted to be unavoidable and profound.

Government and local authority support has maintained employment levels but the withdrawal of government schemes is projected to have an impact on rising unemployment over the short and medium term.

There will also be deep-seated and long-term consequences. The crisis has accelerated an already difficult situation for high-streets and city centre retail along with changes to the workplace such as an increase in homeworking.

The impact of a decade of austerity on local government and other public services means a weakened local ability to intervene and support the economy and communities than in previous recessions. The financial position of MK Council is extremely challenging and beyond the immediate pandemic impacts the consequences for the high spend area of social care cannot be underestimated. The crisis will also impact the council's partners such as the NHS, the DWP and the community sector and possibly limit their capacity to respond.

The social impact of the pandemic will also be acute, with long term impacts of bereavement, social isolation and on people's financial circumstances that will in turn create pressures in service areas such as tackling crime and providing social services for children and adults.

The crisis has not ended for health-related issues. It is highly probable that a second or third wave of Covid-19 will occur. MK Council has a significant role to play with partners in preventing and controlling any outbreak, but the uncertainty over issues such as social distancing and other restrictions make it difficult to plan interventions and target support with precision and clarity at this time.

Milton Keynes faces substantial competition for investment from both the private sector and government. Other parts of the country have regional and governance frameworks much more advanced than our own, such as the Metro Mayors in the West Midlands, North West, and Cambridgeshire and a Growth Board in Oxfordshire which provides them with an established framework resources for investment. Milton Keynes must provide the confidence that it is a welcoming, stable and sustainable place to invest and exploit the opportunity of being central to the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.



## 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Framework is to set out how MK Council will seek to mitigate the full impact of the Covid-19 crisis and secure a successful recovery for the city and its people. The Covid-19 Strategic Recovery Framework will:

- **Provide direction and a policy context for the overall priorities of the council and the use of resources;**
- **Seek to promote economic recovery with a purpose;**
- **Set out how the council will manage resources and service delivery;**
- **Reference upcoming detailed policy and intervention development in specific key areas; and**
- **Highlight specific interventions to maximise support and recovery in both economic and social terms in attracting investment from the private sector and government.**

## 1.2 Key Priorities

Milton Keynes should be a place of opportunity where affordable housing is available to all and people can live long and healthy lives. The Milton Keynes Council Plan 2016-22 and other policy documents, including the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, highlight the overarching priorities through which the council aims to ensure Milton Keynes remains an internationally recognised centre of prosperity, economic innovation and cultural creativity, in a high quality green space and built environment, while preserving what makes us special.

People want a return to normality, but we cannot go back to how things were. The Covid-19 crisis will increase the challenges around making this possible but presents an opportunity to rebuild and reshape the economy and this document provides a clear guide to how the council will use its resources and prioritise its interventions.

We will prioritise interventions that support achievement of key council priorities:





# 1.2 Key Priorities cont.

We will prioritise:



## A Green Economy

While Covid-19 is an epoch event of magnitude the underlying crisis of climate change will continue to shape and underpin medium and long-term policy making for the foreseeable future. The challenge of transitioning to and creating a sustainable, low carbon and circular economy has not gone away and is vital in any future recovery. We will prioritise investment and policy-making towards a green economy and support those industries and businesses that promote sustainable economic activity.



## Tackling child poverty

The prioritisation of resources to tackling child poverty is one of a moral and economic purpose. MK Council is committed to reducing child poverty by 20% and improving the educational attainment prospects for all. Ensuring children grow up to be responsible, healthy and productive, to become people who are able to achieve more, be happier and have more opportunities in life, as well as reducing the need for costly intervention later in life.



## Addressing inequality

While many people in Milton Keynes enjoy a good quality of life, that success is not felt by all. It is never more apparent than the inequalities seen in the impact of Covid-19. Inequality has far reaching societal and personal impacts. We will prioritise our interventions on tackling inequality in all its forms, including health inequalities and promoting fairer, inclusive economic growth.

# 1.3 Linked policy and documents

The Covid-19 Strategic Recovery Framework provides the framework and context for a number of linked documents that will form the basis of our response. They are:

- Milton Keynes Covid-19 Economic Recovery Plan
- Local Outbreak Control Plan
- Milton Keynes Council Management Action Plan
- Milton Keynes Accelerated Infrastructure proposals
- Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Deal bid
- Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) Integrated Care System Recovery Plan

# 1.4 What we've done so far

## Emergency Active Travel Funding

Using Emergency Active Travel Funding to provide safer walking environments in high streets in Stony Stratford, Newport Pagnell, Olney, Woburn Sands, and Bletchley including a commitment to 250 bike racks to promote cycling.

## Help connect the many individual volunteers

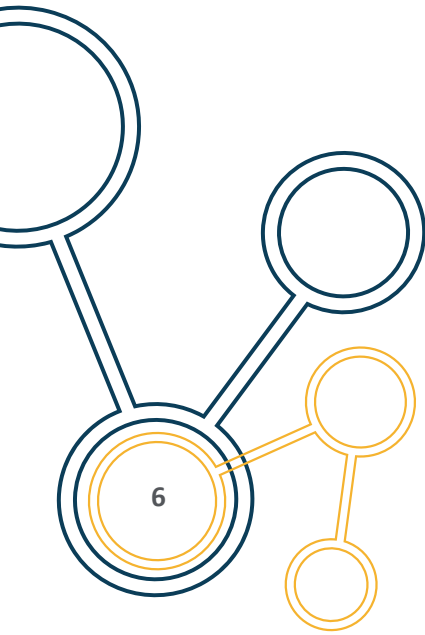
Worked with Community Action MK to create new networks providing vital support in communities.

## Ensured service continuity

Kept going in vital areas such as waste collection, highways maintenance and street cleaning.

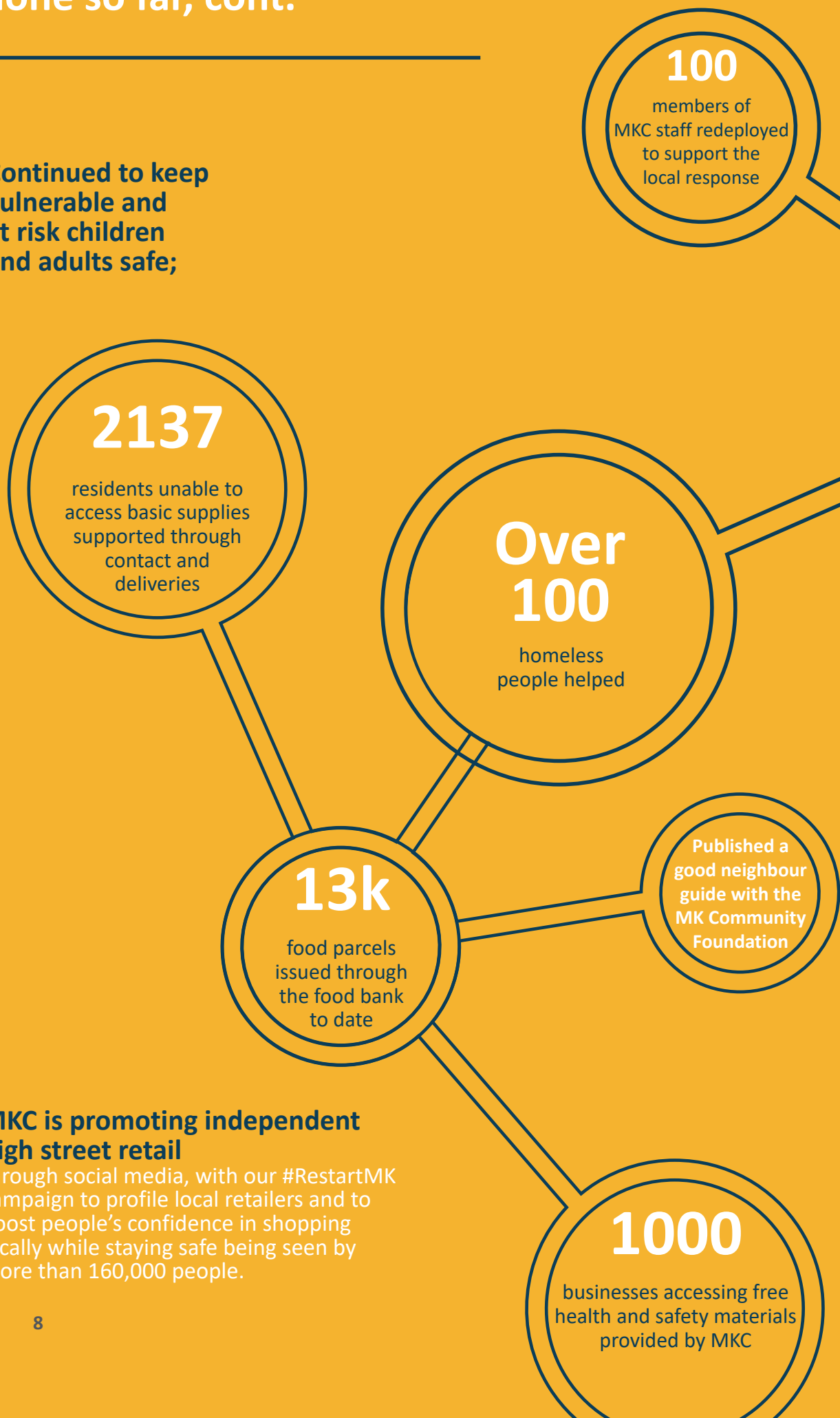
## Covid-19 Emergency Fund

Partnered with the MK Community Foundation to launch a fund to help support community and voluntary sector groups.



# 1.4 What we've done so far, cont.

Continued to keep vulnerable and at risk children and adults safe;



**MKC is promoting independent high street retail** through social media, with our #RestartMK campaign to profile local retailers and to boost people's confidence in shopping locally while staying safe being seen by more than 160,000 people.

## Local Support Service

Created to support residents in a high risk category with no local support. Set up at short notice, **the service made contact with 7300+ residents and delivered 846 food parcels and over 2,000 prescription deliveries.** It is continuing to support residents and is now embedded in our Customer Services team.

42%  
increase on Trading Standards activity

250k  
food items delivered by Foodbank Xtra

£251.7K  
donations to raised through MK Community Foundation appeal, supported by MK Council

## The Council's Commissioning team kept in daily contact with our care homes.

We established a buddy system for care homes located in the same vicinity, to share supplies and support. We appointed a PPE Co-ordinator who works closely with the Emergency Planning Team to provide an emergency response regarding access to, and availability of, PPE.

We offered Information and advice, including the ongoing distribution of guidance from government and Public Health. **In May 2020, for a period of 12 weeks, an extra payment of 10% on top of their standard fee was made to care home providers for older people and people with physical disabilities, totalling £0.327m.**

## Work with Foodbank Xtra

Foodbank Xtra is a Partnership between Milton Keynes Council and the MK Food Bank, created to meet the unprecedented challenges caused by COVID-19. A new, city-wide food service was launched on 23rd March 2020. **Within its first week of operation, Foodbank Xtra provided over 1000 food parcels - equivalent to what MK Foodbank would usually provide in a month.** This partnership will continue into the future, recognising the MK Food Bank's well-established expertise in providing access to food for those in need and Milton Keynes Council's ability to enhance this model by introducing scale and sustainability.

## Payment of support to business

Milton Keynes Council has played its part in providing immediate support to local businesses, **ensuring prompt payment of over £112 million to directly support around 30% of businesses in MK.**

## Re-opening local high streets and Restarting MK.

We have worked with Town and Parish Councils, businesses and ward councillors to re-open high streets safely across the borough. High streets are a vital part of our communities that have been significantly impacted by Covid-19 and the recession. High street and licensed premises guidance has been summarised on [www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/restart-mk](http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/restart-mk) and businesses can also download free resources from that page.

## 1.5 Covid-19 challenges facing MK

Sadly, there were 194 registered deaths in Milton Keynes that referred to Covid-19 on the death certificate up to and including 12 June 2020. A full analysis of all excess deaths will only be possible in several months' time when longer-term effects and additional data, both from death registrations and other sources, can be considered.

Overall, businesses in Milton Keynes saw a large decrease in domestic activity in the second quarter of 2020 compared to the first quarter with 82% of businesses recording a decrease in domestic sales. Approaching a third (30%) of companies expect a decrease in their workforce during the third quarter.

29% (33,900) of employees were furloughed during the pandemic. The number of Universal Credit claimants aged 25-49 in Milton Keynes more than doubled from 2,770 in March 2020 to 6,375 May 2020. The number of young claimants aged 18-24 rose from 685 to 1825 over the same period.

Activity in the city centre has, over the short term, changed considerably. Fewer people have been visiting our city centre during and since lockdown, with the closure of offices, retail and leisure facilities providing fewer reasons for visits to CMK. At June 22nd, visitor numbers had recovered to around 36% of the levels on February 13th. Partners across the city have worked hard to put extensive plans in place to safely reopen, with Centre MK welcoming back significant numbers of shoppers.

Data for Milton Keynes indicates that whilst people are gradually starting to return to our City Centre, the number of people returning to work has remained fairly constant since the beginning of lockdown, suggesting a slower return to offices<sup>1</sup>.

We have been encouraged by development schemes in our city centre being taken forward during the lockdown, with progress being made on the new Santander Headquarters, the completion of a new city centre Premier Inn and work continuing on Hotel LaTour. These schemes show a confidence in the long term recovery of Central Milton Keynes, recognising it will remain a great place to do business and in which to spend time.

The Covid-19 crisis has proved to be a particularly challenging time for public transport, with ridership considerably down. Bus use is currently around 15% of the levels of usage seen in June 19. Bus operators have seen significant falls in income from reduced passenger numbers, making operation of bus services even more challenging than prior to lockdown.

On active travel, we have registered an increase in cycling and walking as the residents of MK have embraced the green environment of our city and our fantastic Redways. Cycling levels in some areas of Milton Keynes were 58% higher in May 2020 compared to May 2019, and we are keen to maintain this momentum beyond the lockdown period.

Our people and businesses have been innovating throughout. Milton Keynes was named in the top 20 most entrepreneurial places during lockdown, based on the number of business registrations<sup>2</sup>. We have seen new Inward Investment decisions being made, such as Volt's decision to locate their new electric cycle manufacturing base in Milton Keynes, creating 30 new jobs locally and demonstrating a confidence in our city.

With the crisis now moving to its next stage, and to ensure we are well placed to respond to the biggest challenge facing our city in a generation, a proper programme of support to the people, businesses and places that make MK so successful is essential. We will undertake significant work on developing a focused Economic Recovery Plan for the city over the coming months, working with partners to understand how to ensure impactful support.

## 1.6 No return to normal

The Covid-19 crisis is far from over, with new infections still occurring in Milton Keynes. Milton Keynes Council has an ongoing duty as a First Responder (under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004) to provide immediate assistance in an emergency.

The Covid-19 pandemic has unleashed changes that were unthinkable at the beginning of this year. Many of the changes that were necessary during the March - June 2020 lockdown were temporary, but others will be far reaching and long-lasting. The crisis has accelerated existing trends such as online shopping and homeworking and has also offered a view of opportunities for long-term, positive change. People have appreciated public places with fewer cars and cleaner air and being able to cycle safely using our network of Redways.

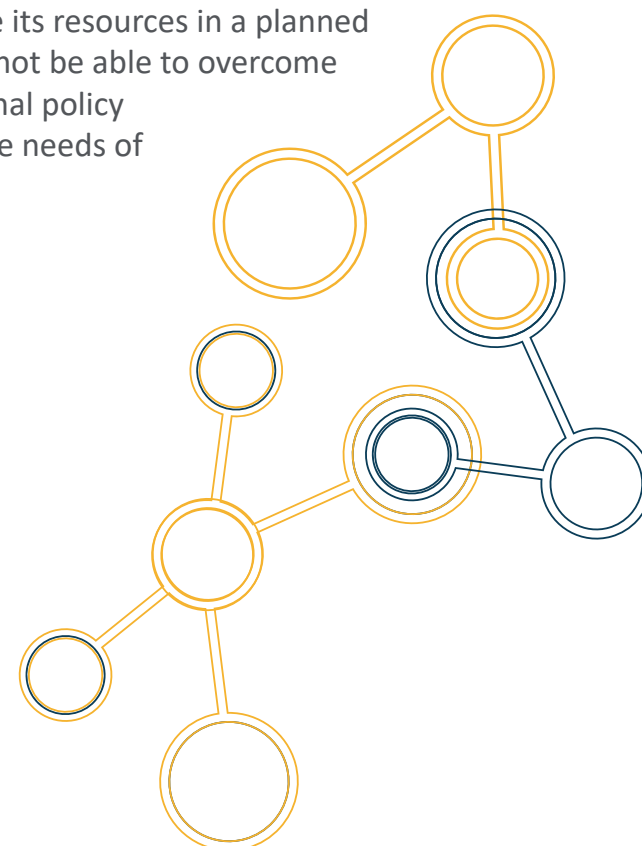


The green spaces and parks of Milton Keynes never seemed more precious and we were all made aware of the value of support and care for each other.

It will be important in planning our interventions to distinguish between:

1. **impacts where the scale of the challenge has grown but the route to recovery will be through existing policies and approaches;**
2. **fundamental structural changes to the way we live and work which will require new policies and approaches, and;**
3. **the scope and ability of the council to make interventions and the overall impact they will have.**

In this context Milton Keynes Council will look to use its resources in a planned way that achieves most impact. We cannot and will not be able to overcome the challenges alone and will dovetail into the national policy environment and work with our partners to meet the needs of our people.



## Part 2: What we will do

### 2.1 Controlling COVID 19

Milton Keynes Council and the NHS have worked with partners to create a Local Outbreak Control Plan for Milton Keynes that has a focus on:

- Preventing the spread of COVID-19
- Working with government to identify, contain and manage local outbreaks
- Engaging with high risk places, settings and communities to keep people safe
- Coordinating capabilities across partner authorities, agencies, and stakeholders

**What we're already doing (and could do more of):**

**Action:** Working with partners to create a Local Outbreak Control Plan to protect the health of the people of Milton Keynes

### 2.2 Milton Keynes Council – fit for the challenge

**Covid-19 impact on MKC budget 2020/21**

Covid-19 will have a significant impact upon the financial health of the Council, and difficult decisions will need to be made in the years ahead about how the Council serves its residents. We are forecasting that Covid-19 will add an additional £40.8 million of costs to our net budget in 2020/21, with the government providing £13 million towards these costs.

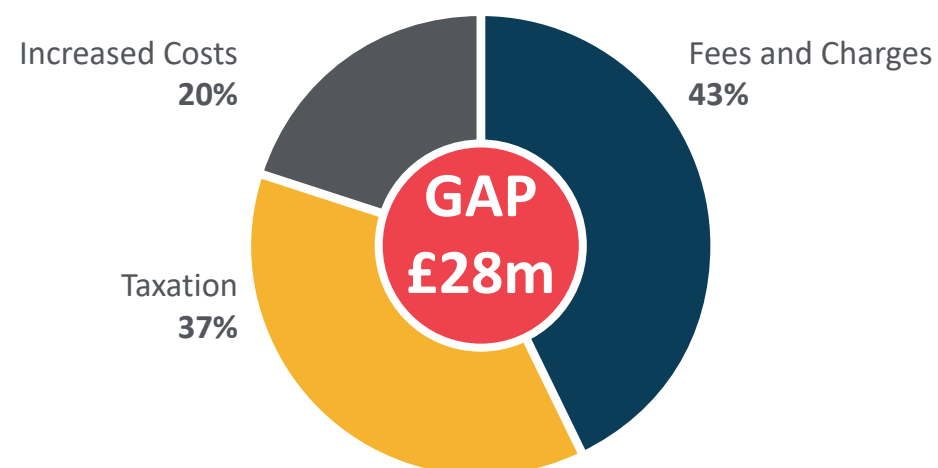
This includes additional spend of £8 million on increased demand and tackling the immediate impact of the crisis, including:

- An additional £4.7 million on Adult Social Care
- An additional £1 million on Homelessness
- A further £1.2 million of costs on Waste Management

The Council has also seen a big reduction to the income generated across all our services. We expect a shortfall of £17.8 million against our budgeted income of £35.5 million in 2020/21.

Revenue from Council Tax is expected to be significantly lower in 2020/21 as more Council Tax Reduction relief is awarded, as fewer new homes are built and as residents become less able to pay council tax bills.

Business Rates will also be significantly reduced due to increased levels of empty properties, lower economic growth and more businesses being unable to pay.



The Council Plan 2016-22 includes two priorities that address the need for the council to be financially fit to lead the recovery process:

1. **Set a balanced budget, which reflects the reality of funding availability, increasing demand and Covid-19 recovery**
2. **Review our structures and budget to ensure appropriate service approaches and controls on expenditure to deliver the priorities of the council**

In the context of this financial situation, council services cannot and will not continue to be delivered in the same way.

The Milton Keynes Council **COVID-19 Management Action Plan** (8 June 2020) sets out a range of change programmes designed to enable the council to continue to operate successfully and effectively in the context of both the disruption caused by COVID-19 and the following financial shock.

#### What we're already doing (and could do more of):

**Action:** Review MKC budget to ensure financial stability and release funds for Covid-19 response

**Action:** Create and deliver Covid-19 Management Action Plan to ensure Milton Keynes Council staff and resources are focused on tackling urgent challenges

## Supporting Local Business and People

### 2.3 Supporting local businesses

Local businesses throughout Milton Keynes stepped-up during the crisis to support their community. The success of our businesses is vital to our city's recovery and to supporting the people of Milton Keynes.

During the Covid-19 emergency period we have maintained our links with business and developed strong relationships with leaders in the business sector. Over the next two months, we'll be working with local business and community representatives to produce the Economic Recovery Plan for Milton Keynes to focus our efforts where they will make the most impact for our people and businesses.

Alongside this Recovery Framework, MKC is publishing its Economic Recovery Plan Statement that initiates on an ambitious plan focused on economic recovery. We will allocate £1.25 million of funding to support the initial phase of recovery and support. More funding will be sought from central government.

#### What we're already doing (and could do more of):

**Action:** Deliver government programmes of financial support to eligible businesses and explore options for a revised scheme of support

**Action:** Continue to provide clear and concise advice to business about changes to government regulations and guidance, ensuring businesses can focus on what they do best

#### What we'll do in future:

**Action:** We have already developed an Economic Recovery Plan position statement and will develop a detailed Covid-19 Economic Recovery Plan by September 2020 to support our businesses, people and places and prioritise a green recovery

**Action:** Work with local partners to understand the needs of and develop a support package for small businesses

**Action:** Work with South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership to provide business recovery and support schemes

**Action:** Providing an accelerated review, consultation and approval process for local cafes, restaurants, pubs and bars to trade outside, supporting their Covid-19 recovery as well as social distancing measures

**Action:** Encourage the development of green jobs in MK's economy

**Action:** Publish review highlighting Milton Keynes as a prime location for jobs and investment in digital, artificial intelligence and robotics





## 2.4 Retaining jobs and tackling unemployment

Supporting the residents of Milton Keynes to have the opportunity to meet their potential and develop the skills they need to access well paid employment is at the heart of the Council Plan. Covid-19 and the consequent economic shock will have profound impacts on our residents and we are ready to adapt our work to support them most effectively.

We will work with partners to ensure the workforce is able to access skills support and training to adapt to the changing dynamics of the workplace. This will include moving quickly to provide support for those who have lost their jobs to retrain or reskill if required. We will allocate £750,000 of funding to the initial phase of recovery and support and more funding will be sought from government.

We've already taken steps to change the way our Neighbourhood Employment Programme works, with employment and welfare support for existing service users being delivered virtually and refocusing delivery to provide greater employment support from our housing, income and homelessness services.

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### What we're already doing (and could do more of):

**Action:** Review the Neighbourhood Employment Programme to ensure it is able to meet the needs of the local community, local economy and wider council objectives

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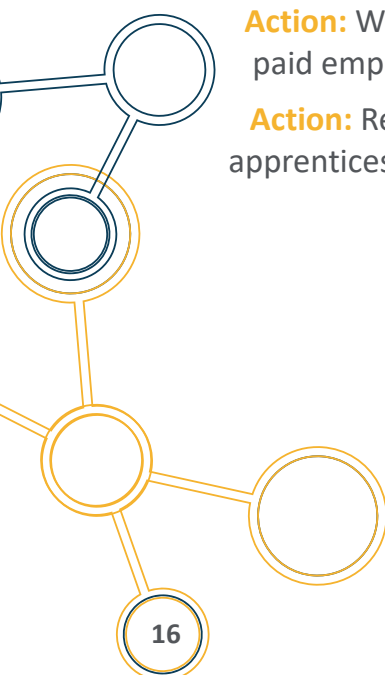
### What we'll do in future:

**Action:** Work with partners to help deliver major long-term projects to create skills for the future MK economy: the new university MK:U, (MK College) Institute of Technology and Learning 2050 programme

**Action:** Work with SEMLEP and Businesses to develop a practical skills programme to retrain and reskill unemployed and under employed people

**Action:** Working with partners, remove the barriers some carers face in accessing paid employment

**Action:** Redouble our efforts to help young people get into employment an apprenticeship, training or education



## 2.5 Supporting women in work

The coronavirus pandemic has amplified inequalities in our society. Analysis highlights that women have been disproportionately affected economically by the crisis. It will be vital to provide support to women in work and in getting back to work if we are to deliver a fair and inclusive recovery for people in Milton Keynes.

The challenges facing working women are:

- **More likely to work in frontline roles, and more likely to be in the lowest paid and most insecure positions;**
- **Far more likely to be in roles not covered by statutory sick pay;**
- **Female parents are one and a half times more likely to have lost their job, been furloughed or had to leave work because of a lack of childcare;**
- **More likely to work in sectors disproportionately affected by disruption such as retail and hospitality;**
- **Young women are disproportionately impacted;**
- **Far more likely to have, or have taken on, an unpaid carer role.**

As the furlough scheme winds down and with a projected loss of 150,000 childcare places nationally, women will continue to be disproportionately affected by this crisis without intervention.

We will allocate £250,000 of funding to the initial phase of recovery and support in this area. More funding will be sought from central government.

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### What we'll do in future:

**Action:** Work with local partners to develop a practical support scheme to help women train or re-skill and find work

**Action:** Work with childcare providers, schools and other organisations to ensure safe, affordable childcare places

**Action:** Work with employers to encourage the offer of flexible and child friendly working

## 2.6 Cultural and Creative sector

The Covid-19 crisis has created a difficult and unprecedented time for the arts and cultural sector which is key to the future development of Milton Keynes. The economic and social health of the city depends on people wanting to come and live, work and visit here. Having enlightening, engaging and fun things to do plays an important role in making a city attractive to investment and promotes social cohesion.

We will extend discretionary business rates relief to cultural and arts organisations with a rateable value of more than £51,000. Several significant organisations make a major contribution to the local economy and cultural offer but have not qualified for the existing national support schemes. This proposal is designed to address the gap in the available schemes.

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### What we're already doing (and could do more of):

**Action:** Continue to support our cultural organisations to make emergency funding bids and put in place reopening plans

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### What we'll do in future:

**Action:** Extend discretionary business rates relief to cultural and arts organisations with a rateable value of more than £51,000

**Action:** Strengthen the importance of culture in making MK a great place to live in the Strategy for 2050



## Health and Wellbeing

### 2.7 Supporting People

To ensure that MK continues to be a place where people can live long, healthy and fulfilling lives, we will develop our health and wellbeing offer to ensure it provides the support necessary to respond to Covid-19. For many, Covid-19 has had a significant impact on their mental and physical health, and some residents have been through the most difficult experiences of their lives. The mental health impact of Covid-19 will fall disproportionately on children and young people. We are already taking steps to deliver services that recognise these difficult circumstances. Our programme of support for young people's mental health has adapted to the crisis, keeping in touch with young people through telephone support, social media and virtual meetings. We will provide a total of £100,000 to provide additional mental health and bereavement support.

To provide immediate support we will be extending our partnership with MK Foodbank until March 2021 through funding of £150,000. We will also look at how the council could work differently to provide more practical support to our residents, drawing on our experience of what has worked during the Covid-19 crisis.

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### What we're already doing (and could do more of):

**Action:** Develop schemes to improve young people's mental health

**Action:** Work to implement the recommendations of the MK Child Poverty Commission

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### What we'll do in future:

**Action:** Provide a programme of bereavement support from July 2020

**Action:** Include in the Strategy for 2050 a commitment to providing green space accessible to all residents for leisure and exercise and a similar commitment for new residents in the new Local Plan

**Action:** Provide support, information and advice to help young people into work

**Action:** Extend the partnership with MK Foodbank to March 2021 to continue providing food to vulnerable people including children in poverty and those in financial difficulty

## 2.8 Tackling BAME health inequalities

The impact of Covid-19 on people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds is stark. Nationally, people within BAME groups are more likely to have been infected with Covid-19 and have had more severe health issues as a result. But this is part of an overall trend of health inequalities, with people from BAME backgrounds having worse health outcomes in general than other population groups. The recovery from Covid-19 requires a focus on establishing the causes of health inequalities in BAME communities and a targeted range of actions to tackle them. We will allocate an initial £100,000 of funding from reprioritised spending and reserves as initial support in this area.

### What we will do:

**Action:** Work with partners to develop an action plan to tackle health inequalities in BAME communities

## 2.9 Support for the social care sector and Milton Keynes Hospital

Our ongoing support for the social care sector will include support with PPE, guaranteed payments to providers during suspension of service and additional support to people having to be cared for at home rather than in community settings. We will work with the NHS to deliver the Care Home Support Plan priorities that include delivery of the Infection Prevention Plan.

The NHS has faced overwhelming challenges and has made heroic efforts to ensure that the people of Milton Keynes have had medical help and support when needed. The council's strong relationship with Milton Keynes University Hospital was critical during the emergency phase. The NHS must now recover and stabilise, while also remain prepared for local outbreaks or a second wave of the virus.

The integration of health and social care has been a long-term ambition, with the council supporting more control of local services and procurement of NHS and social care services.

The council also wants to ensure proper investment and levels of health infrastructure both at acute and primary care level to meet the demands of a growing population and is working with Milton Keynes University Hospital on developing its investment bid for a new Women and Children's Hospital in Milton Keynes.

The BLMK Integrated Care System is now developing a recovery plan for the health sector and Milton Keynes Council aims to play a central role in its development. We will support the BLMK recovery plan through supporting people with Long Term conditions in the community and so reduce the need for hospital

admissions. We will work with the NHS as part of the Integrated Discharge Hub at MKUHFT and as a member of the Milton Keynes Health and Social Care cell. We will support discharges from the Seacole Community Ward.

### What we will do:

**Action:** Ensure the support provided to social care and care homes enables a good level of provision to our older and vulnerable people, including working with the NHS to deliver the Care Home support plan priorities including the delivery of the Infection Prevention Control Fund of £2.1 million to Care Homes

**Action:** Support day services provision to operate as safely as possible

**Action:** Ensure Milton Keynes has a strong and united voice in developing the Integrated Care System Recovery Plan

**Action:** Continue working with Milton Keynes University Hospital on developing its capital investment bid of £240m for a new Women and Children's Hospital in Milton Keynes, including plans for enabling infrastructure

**Action:** Support the role of public health in reducing the need for NHS care



## 2.10 Partnerships and the VCSE sector

The voluntary, charitable and community sector will have a large role to play in the recovery of Milton Keynes. The sector provides help and support to groups that council services do not reach and provide a lifeline to many vulnerable people.

We will work closely with the sector to support people and ensure the long-term sustainability of organisations so they can continue to deliver their greatly valued services at this time of crisis. The Covid-19 crisis has weakened their ability to raise income at a time when demand for the support they provide is increasing. It is likely that some difficult choices will be required in the sector around sustainability and consolidation. We will allocate £100k of funding from reprioritised spending and reserves to the initial phase of recovery and support in this area.

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### What we're already doing (and could do more of):

**Action:** Established Covid-19 Emergency Fund with MK Community Foundation, making a £50k donation to kick start their campaign

**Action:** Supported Community Action MK to co-ordinate new and emerging volunteer networks

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### What we will do:

**Action:** Support the Community Foundation's COVID-19 Recovery Fund, providing £50k to support small community groups in financial distress and £100k to support grant giving to organisations that want to restructure and consolidate their operations; with a specific focus on amalgamations or developed shared roles and services, to make them financially sustainable over the short and medium term

**Action:** Develop an innovative partnership approach to helping people into work through partnering with local voluntary organisations in the employment and training sector to create work and training opportunities

**Action:** Review the support and co-ordination needs for the voluntary and charitable sector, for example volunteer recruitment or information sharing, and consider whether there are gaps which need to be filled for voluntary organisations and volunteering to thrive

## Investment and Renewal

**We will send a clear message that Milton Keynes remains open for business by supporting and developing schemes that deliver on our ambition to make our great city greater and stimulate our economy.**

## 2.11 Digital Infrastructure

Digital connectivity has been critical to people's lives throughout the Covid-19 crisis, whether keeping in touch with loved ones or adapting to working and learning from home. We will ensure access to fast, total broadband coverage across the borough to help achieve our ambition to be the UK's most digitally connected community. This includes collaborating with CityFibre on their £40 million roll-out of a gigabit full fibre network across Milton Keynes.

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### What we're already doing (and could do more of):

**Action:** Collaborate with CityFibre to support all strands of MK communities in accessing a gigabit full fibre network that will see them thrive both socially and economically

**Action:** Work with BT/Openreach on Building Digital UK schemes to provide superfast broadband to fill gaps in coverage across Milton Keynes

**Action:** Accelerate the provision of 5G networks to support innovation in commercial and public services and provide access for residents and businesses to high quality telecommunications services



## 2.12 Strategy for 2050 and new Local Plan

To provide confidence for businesses, investors and employees in the future success of our economy we will continue to develop strategic growth plans for the city, advocating Milton Keynes as a great place to do business. The success of Milton Keynes has not happened by accident; the original Plan for Milton Keynes shaped and ensured delivery of the city we love today. We will ensure we play our part in being ambitious for MK, developing strategic growth plans for our city that demonstrate our vision for the city, and provide a plan to secure delivery of the jobs, homes and infrastructure we need.

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### What we're already doing (and could do more of):

**Action:** Progress a long-term shared vision for the future of the city with MK Futures 2050

**Action:** Cement MK's role as a key player in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, making the case for investment in key infrastructure in MK and the Arc, such as the electrification of East West Rail and the delivery of MK:U. We will work closely with the South East Midlands Local Enterprise partnership on the development of our plans

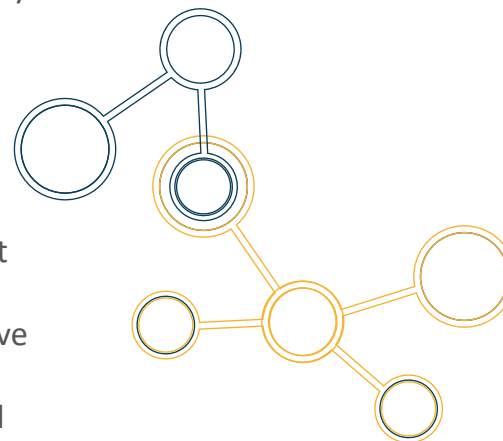
**Action:** Progress the new Local Plan to plan the growth for MK properly, and include appropriate zero carbon and housing mix policies that address the needs of Milton Keynes

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## 2.13 Strengthening our City Centre

Central Milton Keynes is an engine that drives growth across our whole city, and prior to Covid-19 attracted over 30 million visitors a year. The continued success of CMK is vital for our city's economic momentum and for investor confidence. Last year we launched an investment prospectus for CMK, and we will develop this work further through an Investment Framework and our Renaissance:CMK project with Milton Keynes Development Partnership.

Along with the Parks Trust, we recently completed a land deal to safeguard the delivery of the new Santander UK Headquarters, a start of the art campus representing a £150 million investment in the MK economy. The construction of the £22million Hotel LaTour continues at pace in CMK. The £200 million development of Saxon Court by First Base will provide Grade A office space flexible to accommodate small, medium and large businesses as well as a 'living lab' – collaborative space for academics, entrepreneurs and businesses to share ideas and work together. In addition, Saxon Court will also provide co-working and conference spaces, high quality homes plus independent retail and leisure bringing jobs, vibrancy and animation to the area.



### What we're already doing (and could do more of):

**Action:** Support Santander's development of their flagship UK technology hub that represents an investment of over £150m and will be home to over 6,000 employees

**Action:** Support the work of First Base to transform the Saxon Court site into a tech and innovation hub with up to 220,000 sq ft of flexible workspace alongside 215 high quality new homes

**Action:** Use the CMK Investment Framework to promote Milton Keynes as a place to invest, create and relocate sustainable jobs and investment

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### What we'll do in future:

**Action:** Progress CMK Investment Framework to demonstrate the strength of our city centre offer and opportunities, including bringing forward plans to improve Station Square and CMK market

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## 2.14 MK:U, new university

An undergraduate campus university in the heart of Milton Keynes is a long-standing aspiration of the new city. MK:U provides a once in a generation opportunity to deliver a key anchor institution that will transform the lives of our citizens, help to cement the role of our city centre and address the need of our economy for high level STEM skills. It will be a world-leading start-up institution in the mould of the pioneering universities with strong links to business and high skilled jobs.

Since the MK Futures 2050 Commission identified a new model University project as a key intervention to secure a prosperous future we have made significant progress through our MK Futures Programme, working closely with Cranfield University. Milton Keynes Council has invested over £4m in developing the plans for MK:U. A world-leading architect has been appointed to design the overall scheme and through Plan:MK we designated land in Central Milton Keynes to safeguard a location.

We are working with Cranfield University to seek funding from government for delivery of the main University campus. But to accelerate progress immediate starter projects will be implemented to enable teaching in economically critical digital and technology subjects before the completion of the main campus. A linked business innovation hub will also be established in the city centre to encourage entrepreneurs in high-tech start-ups to expand their businesses in Milton Keynes.

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### What we're already doing (and could do more of):

**Action:** Work with Cranfield University to seek funding from Government for the development of £400m MK:U Main build project

**Action:** Progress plans for an early stage pilot of MK:U teaching and to create business innovation hub facilities in a city centre location beginning in spring 2021

## 2.15 Delivery of existing major infrastructure projects

Before the lockdown, significant growth projects were planned for delivery within MK. We will ensure these projects are taken forward to secure significant investment in infrastructure, and to provide confidence in the strength of our city as a place to live and to do business.

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### What we're already doing (and could do more of):

**Action:** Seek to secure proper funding for growth and infrastructure through a 'deal' with Government and /or a partnership with Homes England

**Action:** Securing £95m of government grant to provide essential infrastructure in the MK East development which can then be recycled to support future development in the City

**Action:** Take forwards South East MK Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) by April 2021

**Action:** Conclude commercial negotiations for transfer of the majority of MK Bowl to MK Dons to satisfy their requirement for a permanent training facility

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## 2.16 Accelerating our infrastructure pipeline

The government is proposing to fund more major infrastructure projects that fit with the ethos of Milton Keynes Council and a green recovery. There is an opportunity therefore to develop a pipeline of projects to take advantage of any capital funding that may become available for short-term delivery. We will lobby government for investment that Milton Keynes needs in Infrastructure.

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### What we will do:

**Action:** Develop an Accelerated Infrastructure Pipeline for Milton Keynes with all relevant partners

**Action:** Develop business cases for Milton Keynes Council infrastructure projects, linked to green jobs, sustainable transport and improved service delivery, which can be accelerated in delivery

## 2.17 Building more genuinely affordable council housing

Milton Keynes was built on meeting people's aspirations to live in homes at prices they can afford. Throughout the crisis, we have seen the importance of good quality, secure housing to people's lives. We know that the coming economic crisis will see life become more difficult for some and providing more affordable housing will be even more critical to bettering the lives of our residents. We will press ahead with developing plans for the delivery of 500 Council homes by 2022 that will make a major contribution to increasing the number of affordable homes in the city.

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### What we're already doing (and could do more of):

**Action:** Create a council-owned housing development company to build genuinely affordable housing

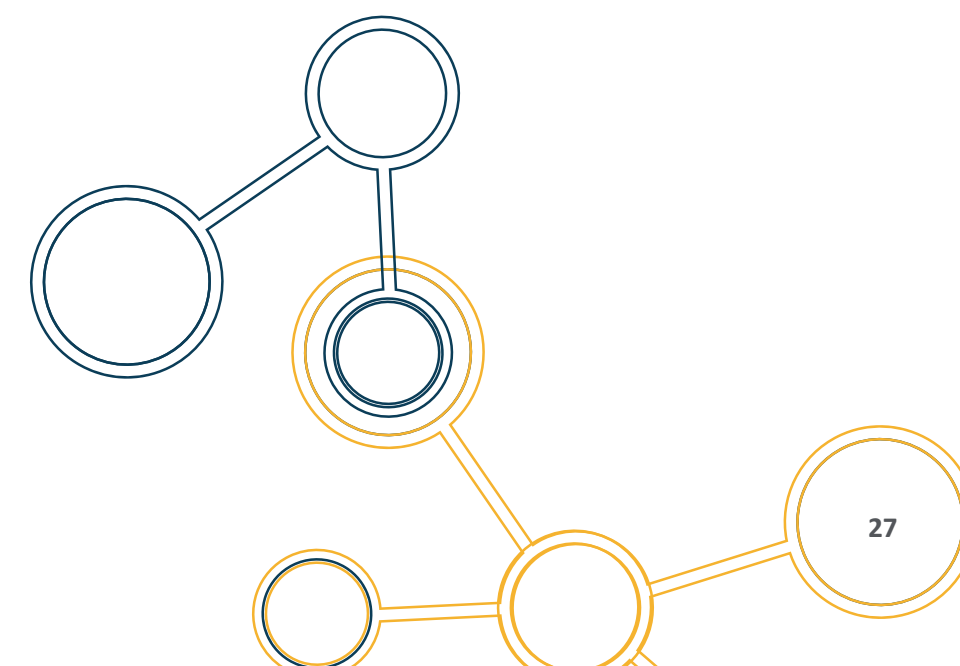
**Action:** Complete the building of 500 new council homes by 2022

**Action:** Build an Eco-village of council-owned and genuinely affordable homes for local families, using land at Tickford Farm to build a high standard housing development

**Action:** Progress plans for the former Cripps Lodge project for 66 homes

**Action:** Progress our work at Buckland Lodge, completing demolition and progressing discussions on the nature of the scheme

**Action:** Use our ambitious council housing programme to support apprenticeships for local people and as far as possible, use local supply chains. We will ensure our investment not only supports local people through the provision of homes, but also supports the local economy





## 2.18 Moving regeneration forward

We are already taking forward ambitious plans for Regeneration. Progress is underway on the Lakes estate, which recently had its planning application validated and is out for consultation. And for Fullers Slade we are making progress to deliver on residents' wishes, working to hire the best professionals to develop a planning application for a decision early in 2021. Working with MKDP, we will continue to support the £25m project to regenerate the Wolverton Agora site.

### What we're already doing (and could do more of):

**Action:** Progress regeneration on the Lakes Estate (Serpentine Court) and Fullers Slade

**Action:** Support the regeneration place making development of the Wolverton Agora shopping centre site

**Action:** Ensure the Economic Recovery Plan and other support is available to regeneration estates

## 2.19 Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Deal

Bletchley has an amazing place in the history of our nation and the development of the modern world, being internationally renowned as the home of the Codebreakers and the birthplace of the first modern computer. Bletchley is set to be transformed by improved connectivity through the delivery of East West Rail, a project which will ultimately see trains running from Bletchley directly to both Oxford (by the mid 2020's) and Cambridge (by the 2030's.) This will place Bletchley at the heart of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, often referred to as 'the UK's Silicon Valley.' There is significant investment taking place in the skills infrastructure of the town through the proposed establishment of South Central Institute of Technology in Bletchley, a new generation technical learning hub, which has already received grant funding of £28million from the Department for Education.

MKC wants to do more to maximise the opportunities for Bletchley's future. In January 2020 we published a Prospectus for Central Bletchley to highlight and generate interest in its renewal opportunities. The government recently announced that Milton Keynes Council could bid for up to £25m (up to £50m in exceptional circumstances) to regenerate town centres. Milton Keynes Council will use this opportunity to develop a Town Deal bid for Bletchley and Fenny Stratford. The Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Board was established in July 2020 for this purpose and will submit a Town Investment Plan to government by the end of October 2020. We will move early to submit a bid to government in August 20 for early project grant funding of £1m to deliver an initial scheme(s) for Bletchley and Fenny Stratford by the end of March 2021.

### What we're already doing (and could do more of):

**Action:** Continue to promote our Prospectus for Bletchley raising the town's profile and our ambitions with stakeholders, operators, potential investors and developers

**Action:** Continue to assist Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council in producing its neighbourhood plan

**Action:** Continue to develop a Supplementary Planning Document for Central Bletchley to provide guidance on the design and development of the Prospectus area

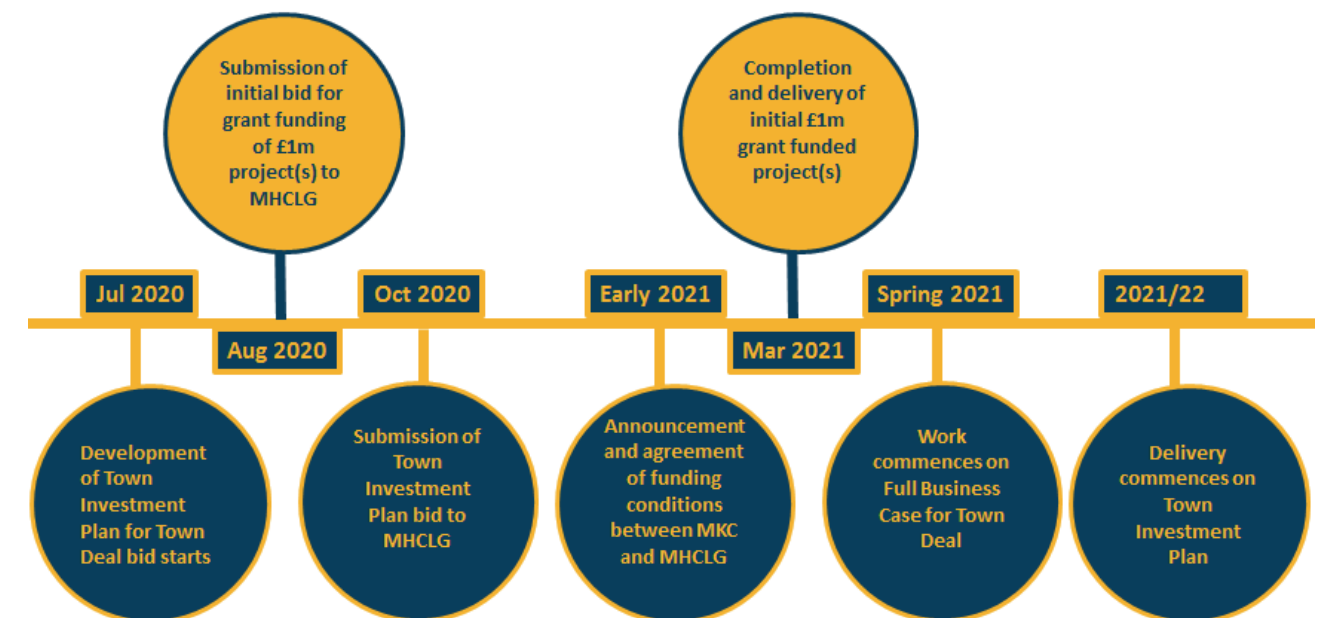
**Action:** Continue our work in partnership with the Town Deal Board

### What we will do:

**Action:** Submit a bid to government in August 20 for early grant project funding of £1m and deliver an initial scheme(s) for Bletchley and Fenny Stratford by the end of March 2021.

**Action:** Working with Bletchley/Fenny Stratford Town Deal Growth Board, submit to Government a Town Investment Plan focussed on Bletchley by end of October 2020.

**Action:** Support MK College with their plans to establish an Institute of Technology in Bletchley, given its strategic importance to skills development within Milton Keynes



## 2.20 Supporting our high streets

The crisis on our high streets is not new. Before the Covid-19 Pandemic, retailers were under pressure from changing trends, pubs and bars were closing and the casual dining sector was under immense pressure. Nationally high street footfall has been consistently down, and although CMK was bucking the trend with visitor numbers relatively static in the past year, the long term pattern is a decline in numbers. The pandemic has accelerated and exacerbated change rather than caused it. The problems are not new and well known. A number of issues such as the Business Rates and tax system which does not offer the physical high street a level playing field, are structural and require macro-level change and intervention.

Milton Keynes does however have a set of unique challenges such as large city centre land holdings and ownership, a number of traditional market town centres and smaller polycentric local centres. The Covid-19 crisis also presents a problem in that many of these sectors need people in numbers to create an atmosphere and sense of place, physical contact and a level of public confidence that is counter-intuitive to a health pandemic. The issues are not new and the solutions will require proper planning and difficult choices if the central hubs of community are to adapt, with the rate of change now accelerating.

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### What we're already doing (and could do more of):

**Action:** Continue to invest in CMK to ensure our city centre is better maintained and attractive to inward investment

**Action:** Support the work of My Milton Keynes

**Action:** Use current available Reopening High Street Safely funding to improve confidence in our high streets

**Action:** Improve CMK Market

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### What we'll do in future:

**Action:** Produce a specific set of actions for the high street in the Economic Recovery Plan

**Action:** Encourage land and property owners to work with us in CMK to maintain a strong city centre offer

**Action:** Work with partners to develop innovative sustainable transport solutions

**Action:** Support change of the tax system and seek a level playing field for physical traders

## Green and sustainable transport

### 2.21 Supporting cycling and walking

The Covid-19 crisis provides us with the opportunity as we recover to do things differently and we have seen an increased desire to travel by sustainable modes of transport, including walking and cycling. We will support the momentum for change, including through improvements to our brilliant Redways so residents continue to use them more and develop other innovative schemes.

We will allocate £500k of funding from reprioritised spending and reserves to the initial phase of recovery and support. More funding will be sought from central government.

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### What we're already doing (and could do more of):

**Action:** Develop schemes to support increase in cycling and walking

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### What we'll do in future:

**Action:** Use Emergency Active Travel Funding to provide safer walking and cycling environments, with a commitment to 250 bike racks to promote cycling

**Action:** Deliver small scale access to bikes project (potential initiative to improve access to bikes and e bikes for people by operating a bike loan scheme) in 20/21. Investigate the potential for additional funding to scale up and deliver by end of 2020





# 2.22 Support modern and sustainable public transport

One area which has been greatly impacted by the Covid-19 crisis is public transport which has seen a large decrease in ridership whilst a greater number of people are embracing active modes of transport such as cycling and walking. MK has a history of being at the forefront of new green transport initiatives, from electric bus charging, to shared, on-demand initiatives like ViaVan and the UK’s first dockless electric bike scheme. Covid-19 provides us with an opportunity as we recover to do things differently and sustainably.

**What we’re already doing (and could do more of):**

- Action:** Supporting the creation of a municipal transport company for Milton Keynes
- Action:** Increasing the supply of transport on-demand services
- Action:** Seek the powers of a Transport Executive

**What we’ll do in future:**

- Action:** Take opportunity of change in legislation to deploy electric scooter personal hire schemes in summer 2020.
- Action:** Bid to government scheme to electrify all the bus fleet delivering public transport across MK (shortlisting late July, decision October 2020)
- Action:** Support the construction of a fully electrified East-West Rail

# 2.23 Mass Rapid Transit System

The population of Milton Keynes is increasing while the capacity of our grid road network remains static. It is not possible to stop the housing and population growth that is driven by our economy, nor is it desirable if we want to support our economy. The success of the city depends on new and innovative means to travel, including a mass transit system. Initial work prepared for MKC suggested a transit system for Milton Keynes could be delivered for £1.1bn.

**What we’re already doing (and could do more of):**

- Action:** Develop a business case for a Mass Rapid Transport system for MK
- Action:** Continue to lobby government for investment in a Mass Rapid Transit system



# 2.24 Emerging issues and flexibilities

The Council will take a flexible and proactive approach to delivering support to its communities throughout the crisis. But we also know that some issues will require government support, so will lobby government for the policy flexibilities we need to deliver.

**Endnotes**

- 1 Data taken from Centre for Cities Recovery index
- 2 <https://www.miltonkeynes.co.uk/business/consumer/milton-keynes-top-20-most-enterprising-locations-uk-during-lockdown-2896272>

