

The CMK Alliance Plan 2026

A Business Neighbourhood Development Plan for Central Milton Keynes

Final version for Referendum, October 2014



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Referendum version, October 2014

This document has been prepared by the CMK Alliance, a committee of CMK Town Council.

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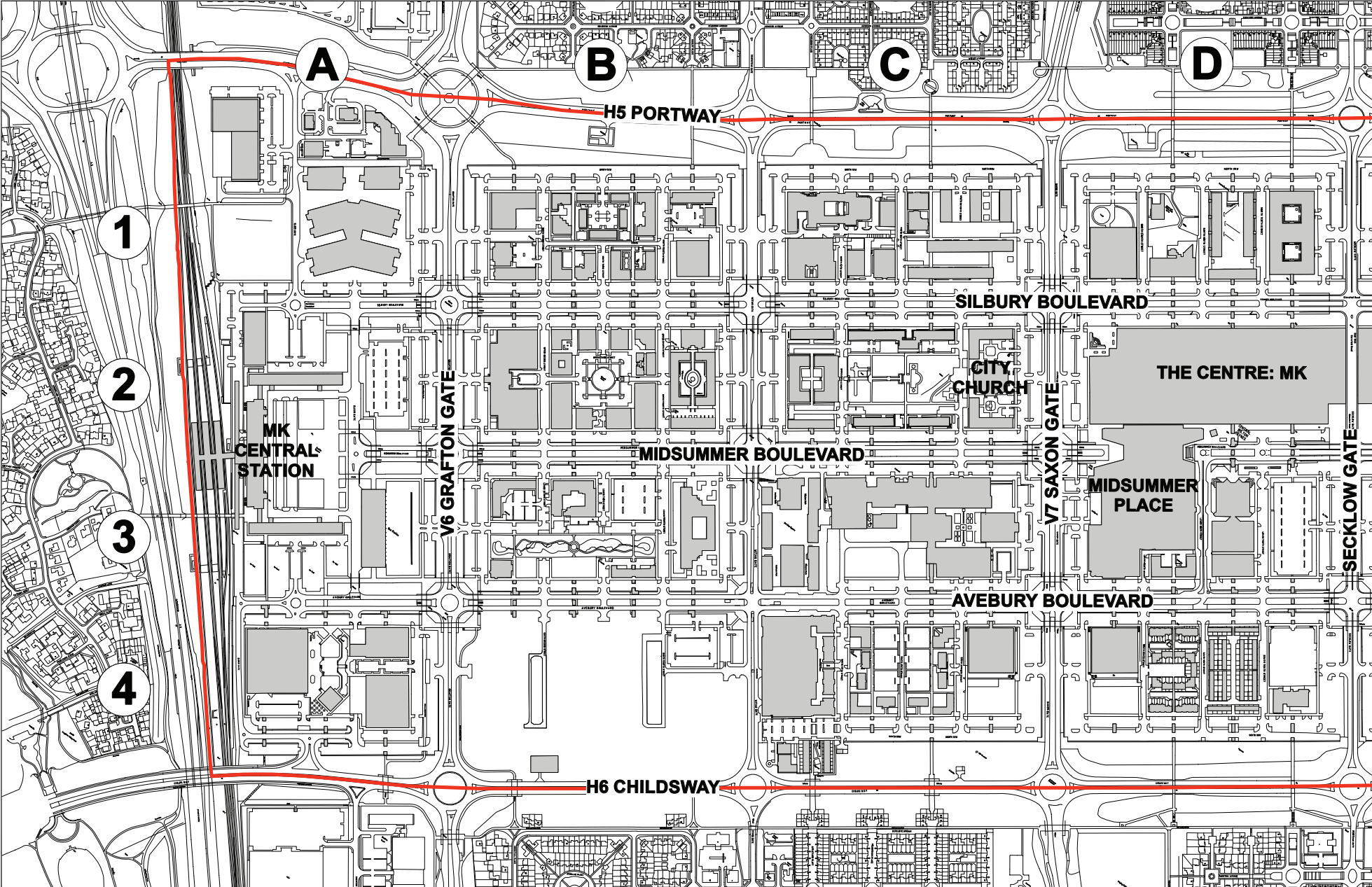
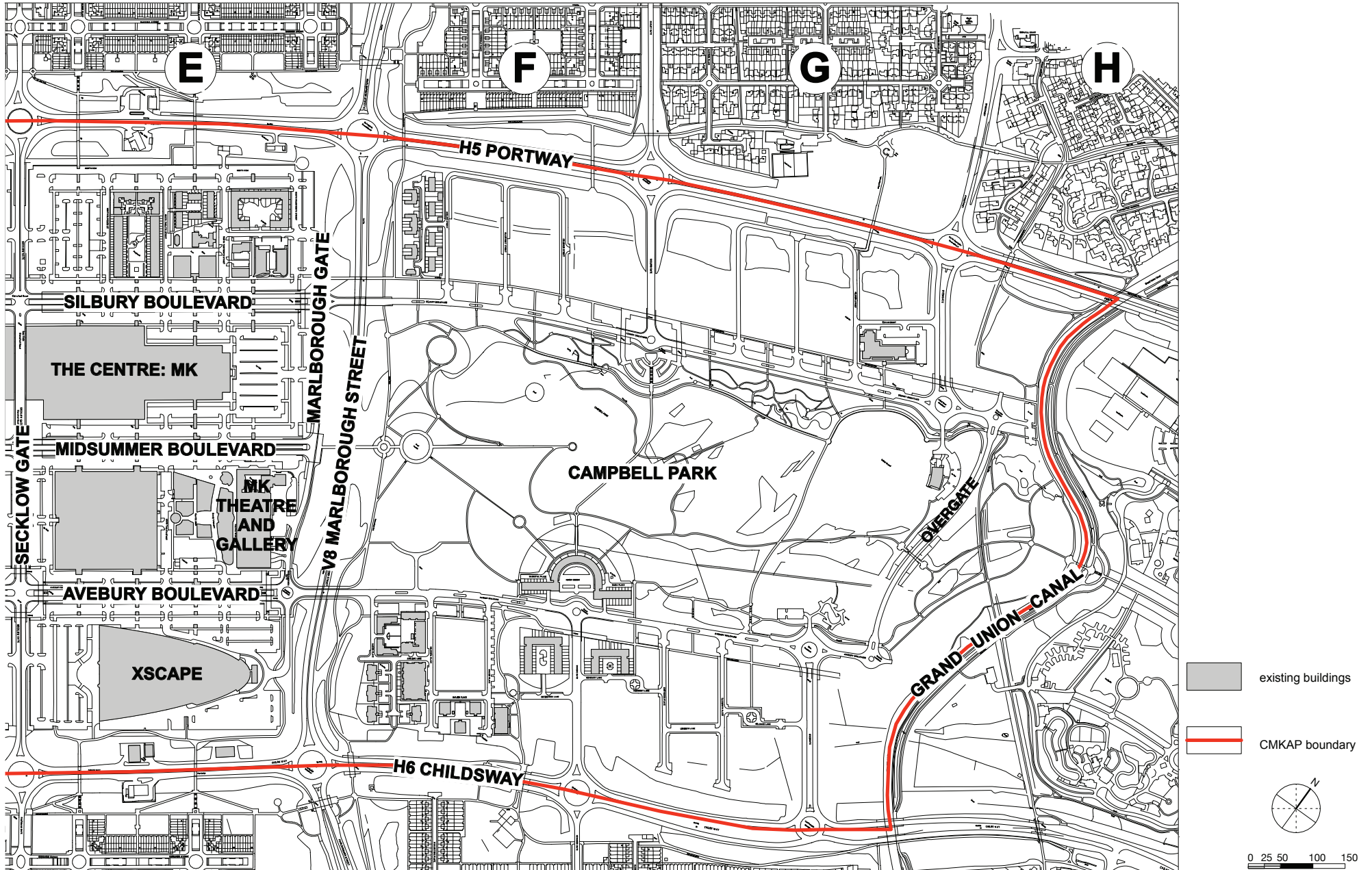


Figure 1: CMK in Context



Executive Summary

The *CMK Alliance Plan 2026 (CMKAP)* is a pioneering business neighbourhood development plan prepared by an alliance of Central Milton Keynes Town Council and local business leaders, working in partnership with Milton Keynes Council. The Alliance's plan for CMK (Central Milton Keynes) builds on the success of the last forty years and plans the continuing growth of the city centre over the next fifteen.

The Plan celebrates CMK's distinct design and heritage – its renowned grid of roads, wide pedestrian underpasses and porte cocheres (covered walkways), its generous and convenient car parking, its remarkable landscaping and stunning Campbell Park, all of which contribute to the commercial attractiveness and quality of life in our city centre. Just as important is the promotion of CMK's emerging role as the centre of a prosperous and growing region, through greater and more diverse development that contributes to the economic, social and environmental well-being of Milton Keynes.

There are almost 50 hectares (120 acres) of land yet to be fully developed in CMK, where the Plan proposes to:

- » Expand and diversify the retail offer of CMK;
- » Build many more offices to create new jobs;
- » Reserve key sites for major opportunities, such as the proposed expansion of the University;
- » Complete almost 5,000 new dwellings; and
- » Enrich our social, sporting and cultural life with new facilities.

To achieve growth within the existing grid layout and development plots, the Plan supports building at higher densities than those assumed when CMK was originally planned. With buildings up to generally eight stories high, the planned growth can be accommodated without changing the spacious tree-lined street scene.

The *CMKAP* provides investors, developers and landowners considerable flexibility in how they develop their plots, but asks them to take greater responsibility in helping to build a successful city centre – improving pedestrian routes, bringing more animation through greater mixed use and active frontages, creating a diverse street life and a safe night life. This will drive growth in both the daytime and night-time economy.

As well as offering more space to large stores in the Primary Shopping Area, the Plan encourages the provision of small and independent specialist shops, and a new covered market hall to complement and enhance the outdoor market. The Alliance's aspiration is to transform Midsummer Boulevard between Secklow Gate and Midsummer Place into the 'heart' of the city: an exciting public space – a destination in its own right – with animated public art and programmed events, a place where Milton Keynes meets, celebrates and demonstrates.

Land is reserved on two prime sites for major opportunities – institutions and headquarters of a scale and reputation to raise the profile of Milton Keynes nationally and internationally. The Plan supports the aspiration to establish a major university for Milton Keynes. A range of cultural, sporting and community facilities are shown across the city centre with provision for the voluntary sector.

It is important that the centre remain a desirable place to live, particularly for younger individuals and couples working in the centre and for older 'empty-nesters.' Ease of access to what the city centre has to offer draws not only visitors but also new residents to CMK, whose presence contributes to the liveliness of the centre. The Plan encourages the development of a wide selection of dwellings with different tenures and at a range of lower and higher urban densities. New housing will be designed to encourage the creation of strong communities, sharing responsibility for their surroundings. To support residents as well as those working in CMK, the Plan identifies sites for the provision of new sports, community and medical facilities.

Finally, the Alliance recognises the critical role that ease of access and convenient parking has played in the success of Milton Keynes from its beginning. Across the UK today, many town centres are declining and high streets are fading as problems with parking and congestion, combined with inadequate public transport, have driven shoppers and businesses to out-of-town shopping centres and business parks. The challenge is that CMK was designed as the centre for a city of 250,000 and Milton Keynes is now approaching this population and is projected to reach 300,000 by the end of the plan period. There is a long-term need to make public transport, cycling and walking the preferred mode of choice for more people coming to and enjoying CMK, and the Plan promotes these modes of transport. At the same time, good provision for cars remains a competitive advantage for CMK, helping its economic development which is of regional importance and in the national interest.

At the heart of a city well placed to drive the national economic recovery, what happens in CMK is of national significance. The *CMK Alliance Plan 2026* prepares CMK to fulfil its role through a balanced approach, promoting growth and development whilst retaining its competitive advantage as a distinctive place with a high quality of life.

The Alliance looks forward to seeing local people, businesses and Milton Keynes Council rising to the challenge of transforming CMK into the centre of a regional city, a place of which we will all continue to be proud.

Section 1: Aspirations & Strategies

1. Introduction

What is a business neighbourhood plan?

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 created new ways for local people to achieve their own ambitions for their community or ‘neighbourhood.’ One way is a new approach to local planning policy, called a ‘Neighbourhood Development Plan,’ which aims to make the planning system more democratic by letting the people who know about and care about an area undertake the planning for it.
- 1.2 Neighbourhood planning is about building neighbourhoods and planning positively for development – not stopping growth. Business Neighbourhood Development Plans are neighbourhood plans for areas that are primarily commercial to ensure that the business community is fully represented and engaged in the plan-making process.
- 1.3 The CMK Town Council, local business leaders and Milton Keynes Council have come together to create an alliance of CMK residents and businesses to prepare this pioneering business neighbourhood development plan – the *CMK Alliance Plan 2026*.

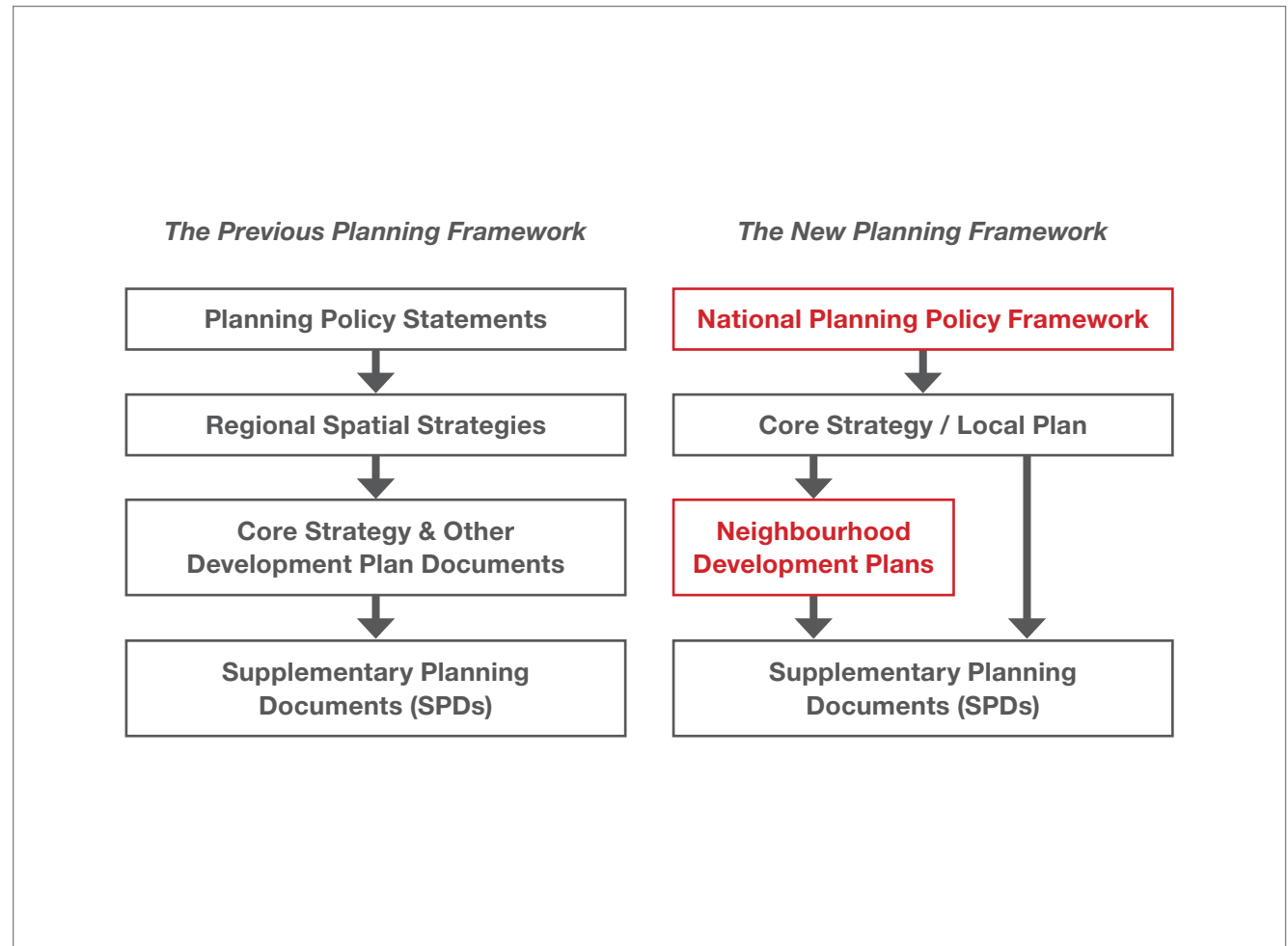


Figure 2: The new planning framework under the Localism Act 2011

Why do we need a new plan for CMK?

- 1.4 The main planning documents for CMK were prepared over ten years ago, and since that time, much has changed. In particular, the 2001 *CMK Development Framework*¹ proposed far-reaching changes to the original plan for CMK, including some that were not sufficiently tested or challenged at the time, and which are no longer considered achievable or even desirable. That is why, in July 2010, Milton Keynes Council's Cabinet resolved that a revised Development Framework for CMK should be prepared, as it viewed the 2001 Framework as 'no longer fit for purpose.'
- 1.5 In addition, over the past ten years there have been significant changes to policy at a national, regional and local level, including the removal of the regional tier of planning policy, the adoption of the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, and the preparation of the Milton Keynes *Core Strategy* which was adopted in July 2013.
- 1.6 The *CMK Alliance Plan 2026 (CMKAP)* takes into account lessons learned from the

implementation of the 2001 *CMK Development Framework* and the principles contained in the revised Framework (adopted by Milton Keynes Council in 2013).

- 1.7 At the end of the neighbourhood plan process, if successful, the *CMKAP* will become part of Milton Keynes' Local Development Framework (LDF) of planning documents. It will be a statutory plan which will be used by MK Council when making decisions on planning applications.
- 1.8 Perhaps more importantly, the *CMKAP* is a clear statement of intent in terms of how local people and businesses want to see our city centre develop in the coming years, providing guidance and certainty to investors, residents and businesses alike.
- 1.9 At a time when many town centres in the UK are declining and high streets fading, CMK cannot afford to rest on its past success. We must acknowledge and learn from our past mistakes. Our future prosperity is not guaranteed - we must actively work together to achieve it.

How does this plan relate to other plans?

- 1.10 In preparing the business neighbourhood development plan, we must have regard to a number of documents, including the recent *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, MK's adopted *Core Strategy* and the Adopted *2005 Local Plan*.
- 1.11 The *CMKAP* must be in general conformity with the MK adopted *Core Strategy* and its policy for CMK (Policy S7). The *CMKAP* must support the quantitative objectives that the draft *Core Strategy* has set for the number of new dwellings and additional amount of office and retail floor space in CMK over the plan period to 2026. All relevant policies in the MK adopted *Core Strategy*, when adopted, will apply to development in CMK, so there is no need for the *CMKAP* to repeat elements of it. For example, despite the absence of a specific policy on sustainable design and construction in the *CMKAP*, all new development in the city centre should reflect efficient use of natural resources and methods to reduce environmental damage, in accordance with policy CS14 of the adopted *Core Strategy*.

¹ adopted by Milton Keynes Council in 2002 and subsequently incorporated in the 2005 Local Plan

- 1.12 The *CMKAP* must also be in general conformity with the strategic objectives for CMK in the *2005 Local Plan* (Policy S5). However, once adopted, the *CMKAP* policies will replace the CMK-specific policies in the *2005 Local Plan* (see Table 1).
- 1.13 As noted above, the Council has recently adopted a revised *CMK Development Framework*. The Alliance has worked closely with MK Council, which is one of its partners: the adopted Framework sets out the vision for CMK and includes general design and development principles in order to guide the form and nature of development in the centre. The *CMKAP* generally builds on those principles with more detailed policies and land use proposals, but in some cases departs from them.

How have we engaged with the community?

- 1.14 During January and February 2012, the CMK Alliance Steering Group considered several options for the scope of the plan, likely project timelines and a variety of approaches for community engagement.
- 1.15 The Plan has gone through several phases of community and stakeholder involvement thus far. The *CMK business neighbourhood planning process* was launched through a newsletter delivered to all residents and businesses in the parish of the CMK Town Council in late April and early May 2012.
- 1.16 The first phase of public engagement involved preparation and publication of a series of seed papers on a special website called a 'wiki' (www.cmkalliance.co.uk). A wiki is a type of collaborative internet software that allows anyone who registers on a website to make revisions and comments to documents posted on the website.

- 1.17 The seed papers provided background information and sought feedback on a range of topics and issues about CMK, including retail, office-based businesses and jobs, tourism, residential accommodation, leisure and recreation, and civic pride and diversity. The wiki was 'open' to the public for comments and editing during April and May 2012. During this time, over 800 people visited the website and 150 registered as users.
- 1.18 In addition, eight public workshops were held covering many of the topics and issues raised through the online wiki papers. These were run during April and May 2012 and were attended by around 130 people.
- 1.19 The second phase involved five 'expert panel' sessions and over 20 stakeholder meetings to test the emerging proposals and options. These were conducted from June to August 2012.
- 1.20 Using feedback from the first and second phases of public engagement, a draft plan was prepared in August and September 2012.

- 1.21 The draft plan was submitted to formal Public Consultation for 8 weeks (from 12th October to 7th December 2012), in accordance with Section 14 of Part 5 of the *Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012*.
- 1.22 The *Consultation Draft* of the Plan was revised in March and April 2013 to incorporate the formal public consultation feedback to produce this *Examination Draft* of the Plan. Throughout the community and stakeholder engagement process, the CMK Alliance Steering Group met monthly and often weekly, to discuss feedback and debate the issues and options.
- 1.23 The *Examination Draft* of the Plan was therefore informed by a great deal of community and stakeholder involvement and consideration of a range of issues.
- 1.24 A Consultation Statement on community involvement was prepared as a supplementary document to the Plan for the examination.

Policy Ref	Local Plan Policy Name	To be replaced by <i>CMK Alliance Plan Policy</i>
CC1	Shopping	SS2 – Primary Shopping Area (PSA defined in <i>Core Strategy</i>)
CC2	Shopping (additional retail floorspace)	SS4 - Proposals Plan ²
CC3	CMK Development Framework (2002)	<i>Core Strategy</i> Policy CS7 (<i>CMKAP</i> Policy S1)
CC4	Campbell Park Quarter	G4 – Campbell Park G3 – Landscaping & Open Space
CC5	Office Development	SS4 – Proposals Plan ¹
CC6	Non-retail uses in the CMK Shopping Building and MSP	Removed
CC7a	Key Transport Principles	G1 – Public Infrastructure T1 – Access & Design T2 – Public Transport
CC7b	City Spine	G1 – Public Infrastructure G7 – Active Frontages SS3 – Inset Action Plan Area
CC7c	Key Principles for Parking	G1 – Public Infrastructure T4 - Parking
CC8	Design and Layout	G1 – Public Infrastructure G6 – Mixed Use G8 – Block Structure

Table 1: Policies in the 2005 Local Plan replaced by the CMKAP

Table 1: Policies in the 2005 Local Plan replaced by the CMKAP

² in general conformity with Core Strategy floorspace allocation for CMK

Policy Ref	Local Plan Policy Name	To be replaced by <i>CMK Alliance Plan</i> Policy
CC9	Design of New Buildings	G7 – Active Frontages G8 – Block Structure G9 – Design of Buildings
CC10	Planning Obligations Policies in CMK	CC10 and CMK Planning Obligations SPD to be revised bearing in mind <i>CMKAP</i> Policy G12 – Planning Obligations
CC11	Central Business District	SS4 – Proposals Plan (<i>CMKAP</i> does not promote zoning)
CC12	Sustainable Residential Quarter	SS1 – Site Reserved for Major Opportunities
CC13	City Core Quarter	Policy G1 – CMK Infrastructure SS2 – Primary Shopping Area SS3 – Inset Action Plan Area
CC14	Station Square Quarter	SS4 – Proposals Plan
CC15	Enterprise and Knowledge Quarter	SS4 – Proposals Plan
CC16	North West Quarter	No longer applicable (National Hockey Stadium replaced)
CC17	CBX 3	No longer applicable (completed development)
CC18	Block D4	SS4 – Proposals Plan
CC19	Park Gateway	SS4 – Proposals Plan

Which area does the *CMKAP* cover?

- 1.25 When an area is parished, the Localism Act says that the parish or town council has responsibility for neighbourhood planning. The CMK Town Council is therefore the lead or 'qualifying body' for the *CMKAP*.
- 1.26 As delineated by the red line in Figure 1, the area covered by the *CMKAP* is the whole of the CMK Town Council area, which is bounded on the north and south by the H5 Portway and H6 Childs Way grid roads respectively, and on the east and west by the Grand Union Canal and the railway.

What does the *CMKAP* deal with?

- 1.27 The *CMK Alliance Plan* is made up of a number of different sections, which together form a comprehensive basis for managing development in the city centre up to 2026. The first section captures the aspirations and strategic objectives of the Plan. These are guided firstly by a vision and set of key principles, as set out in the MK adopted *Core Strategy* and revised *CMK Development Framework*. These should frame development

in the centre over the plan period. The spatial and design strategy outlines the main direction and types of development and how the centre will look and function. This is underpinned by the access, transport and parking strategy.

- 1.28 Detailed policies and proposals are included in the second section. These include policies which will guide all developments across the city centre, as well as site specific policies for areas identified as major opportunities.
- 1.29 The final section shows the indicative land uses in the Proposals Plan and associated schedule, and addresses implementation and monitoring.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.30 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a tool that highlights any significant environmental, social or economic effects of a plan. The *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* states that an SA should not repeat policy assessment that has already been undertaken. It is optional for neighbourhood plans.
- 1.31 EU directive 2001/42/EC sets out the need for a 'Strategic Environmental Assessment' (SEA) for

'certain plans and programmes' which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. A Sustainability Assessment (SA) incorporating SEA was produced for MK Council's adopted *Core Strategy*. ODPM (now DCLG) have produced practical guidance on applying *European Directive 2001/42/EC*. MK Council used this guidance as the basis for screening the revised *Examination Draft* of the *CMKAP* and the draft screening opinion is now with the statutory consultees, English Heritage, Natural England, and Environment Agency.

- 1.32 The contribution that the Plan makes to sustainable development is described in Chapter Three of the *CMKAP Basic Conditions Statement*, which is a supplementary document.

Examination

- 1.33 In accordance with the Regulations, the Plan was subject to an independent examination to check that the Plan meets the right basic standards and is consistent with the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* and local planning policies.
- 1.34 The Examiner recommended that a few

changes be made to the plan to ensure that it fully meets the basic conditions. Those changes have been incorporated into this final version of the Plan.

Referendum

- 1.35 The neighbourhood planning regulations require the local authority to organise a referendum on any plan that passes examination. This ensures that members of the community will have the final say on whether a neighbourhood plan comes into force.
- 1.36 For neighbourhood plans, the starting position is that residents living in the neighbourhood who are registered to vote in local elections will be entitled to vote in the referendum. In this instance, the independent examiner recommended that the referendum area be extended to the whole of Milton Keynes borough due to the important role that CMK plays in the wider area. This recommendation was accepted by Milton Keynes Council in October 2014.
- 1.37 For business neighbourhood development plans, two referendums will be held – one for the residents and one for the business community.



Stunning Campbell Park on the eastern end of the city centre

- 1.38 The *Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) (Amendment) Regulations 2013* came into force on 6th April 2013. In addition to the residential neighbourhood planning referendums, these new regulations provide the framework for referendums to take place in designated business neighbourhood areas. The person entitled to vote in a business planning referendum is the non-domestic ratepayer, and there is one vote per non-domestic ratepayer, regardless of whether that ratepayer is a multinational retailer or a small independent shopkeeper. As with the residential referendum, the business referendum will also cover the whole borough.
- 1.39 If the majority of the residents and non-domestic ratepayers voting in their respective referendums support the plan, then the local planning authority must bring it into force. If it passes one referendum but fails the other, then the local council will have the final say on whether to adopt the plan or not.
- 1.40 Once a neighbourhood plan is in force, it carries real legal weight. Decision-makers will be obliged, by law, to take what it says into account when they consider proposals for development in the neighbourhood.



London Planes line CMK's Boulevards. Porte cocheres provide weather protection for pedestrians

2. Understanding CMK

A city that will last through all horizons of history.³

- 2.1 In the long sweep of the history of human civilisation, cities developed by accident or design in places of strategic importance: locations were mostly strategic places of connection and market places on trade routes, or were chosen to suit the politics of oppression (to control a local population) or defence (to protect a local population).
- 2.2 Our own city of Milton Keynes occupies an unusual place in history. One consequence of the Second World War (1939 -1945) was the creation of an opportunity for radical changes to come about. People felt they deserved better homes and a better life after what they had been through together.
- 2.3 Following the first General Election after the War, a welfare system introduced unemployment pay, help for those in need, and a contributory State pension for all; in addition, the right to develop land was nationalised.
- 2.4 This last point is really important with regard to the story of Milton Keynes. The Town and Country Planning Act 1947 gave every town hall the responsibility to make plans for their area, including making Green Belts around the major cities to stop them sprawling into the countryside.
- 2.5 Buckinghamshire County Council was particularly aware of these pressures. Under the guidance of the County Planning Officer, Fred Pooley, in 1964 Buckinghamshire County Council decided that the best defence against the pressures for development in the south of the County was to create a new town in the north, in the vicinity of the existing towns of Bletchley, Stony Stratford and Wolverton (see Figure 3).
- 2.6 The Government was impressed by the suggestion from Buckinghamshire County Council, and took up the idea. Much to the dismay of the County, however, the Government appointed a New Town Development Corporation to create the new city, and that organisation decided to commission a fresh master plan⁴.

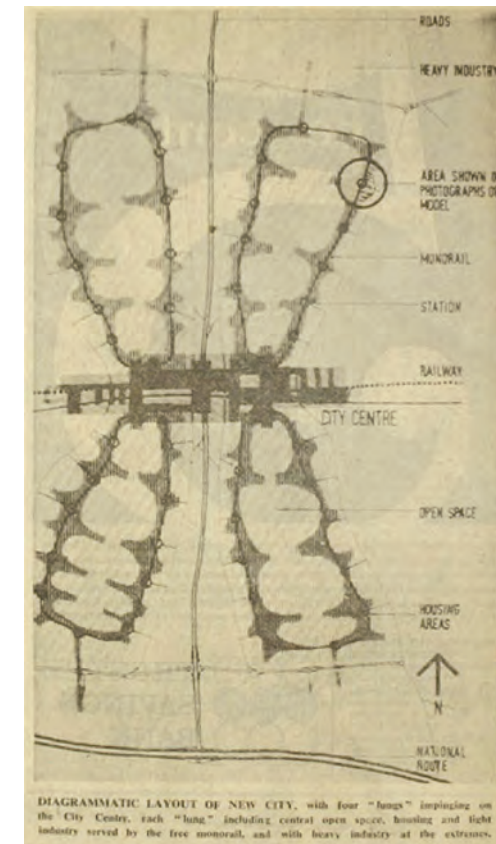


Figure 3: Pooleyville Plan, 1964

³ Lord Campbell of Eskan, 1973

⁴ the consultants were Llewellyn Davies Forestier Walker Weeks and Bor