

A Changing Place – Planning for Growth and Diversity in MK

Our Speakers and Panellists

MK Gallery, 900 Midsummer Blvd, MK9 3QA
1st March 2023



Chris Murray

Chair, Fusion21 and Urban Psyche

Chris' work on urban policy began in Milton Keynes. He ran Core Cities UK for 15 years and founded Urban Psyche bringing the tools of psychology to bear on urban living. Chris has roles with Strathclyde, Liverpool and Boston Massachusetts universities and is Chair of Fusion21, a construction procurement company and social enterprise. He has worked for The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, in local government, and as a psychiatric social worker. He is co-author of 'Psychology & The City: The Hidden Dimension', with Charles Landry and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in recognition of his work with cities.

Michael Bracey

Chief Executive, Milton Keynes City Council

Michael was formerly responsible for children's and adult services. He joined the council in 2009. Michael is the council's statutory Head of Paid Service, leading a diverse team of around 2,500 colleagues. Michael supports the council's directors across a range of services including finance and resources, adult services, children's services, public health and customer and community services as well as working with the Deputy Chief Executive on delivering the Council Plan and developing the council's key strategic relationships.

Annemari De Silva

Lead Analyst – Public Policy Analysis, Office for National Statistics

Annemari de Silva is the lead regional analyst for the Southeast of England at ONS Local, an analytical advisory service for local government from the Office for National Statistics. She leads a team providing support for the wider South of England. Prior to joining the ONS, she worked in research consultancies, non-profits, and government advisory and has experience on social policy issues including household finances and labour markets.

Councillor Jane Carr

Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequalities and Child Poverty, Milton Keynes City Council

Councillor Jane Carr is a south ward councillor for Newport Pagnell and is a member of the Liberal Democrat group on Milton Keynes City Council. She is the Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequalities and Child Poverty, with an expertise in: Reducing Child Poverty and Inequalities, promoting Public Health, Skills, Higher Education and Youth Services.

Jane Whild

MK Fawcett Group

Jane Whild campaigns for a thriving, safe Milton Keynes (MK) for all, which functions within the planet's boundaries. She is active in the Voices of Women Milton Keynes Network, the MK Doughnut Economics Group, the MK Fawcett Society Group, the Women's Equality Party and Citizens: MK. She believes that data, dialogue, and coalition-building are needed to drive a just

transition to a fairer, sustainable City. Fostering community participation in civic discussions and decision-making should lead to more inclusive policies and placemaking, a more vibrant economy, a workforce that draws on the talents of the whole population and a society that's at ease with itself.

Jay Virgo

Communications and Adult Coordinator, Q:alliance

Jay is the Communications and Adult Coordinator for LGBTQ+ charity, Q:alliance. He oversees the web development, social media and comms, as well as coordinating the Adult programs, developing and creating safe spaces, facilities, projects and collaborations. He also currently runs the organisations corporate training.

Anouar Kassim MBE

Founder-Director, Milton Keynes Islamic Arts and Culture (MKIAC)

Anouar Kassim MBE established MKIAC in 2002 and is the Chair of the TVP Police Committee and Governor of two schools. He drives the day-to-day operations and strategic artistic vision development together, fundraising and recruiting key stakeholders.

As a champion for inclusion and diversity in the Buckinghamshire region, he is a spokesperson for the Art Council England's Creative Case for Diversity. Anouar believes in using the arts to overcome societal divisions and provide a sense of community and well-being. He has been awarded The Queen's Award and an MBE to honour his contributions to this cause.

Kerry Thompson

Founder-Director, Milton Keynes Islamic Arts and Culture (MKIAC)

Kerry is an avid campaigner on better accessibility for disabled people and their families, raising awareness on all platforms. She has been a leading campaigner for Changing Places to increase the number of facilities around the country. Kerry now works for MDUK as a CPT Support Officer, giving guidance and support to local authorities and trusts.

She has engaged with local MP's and councillors on issues surrounding accessible housing and is a tenant representative for Habinteg. Kerry has consulted with charities and companies promoting diversity and equality. She acts as an ambassador for Purple Tuesday and AccessAble.

Cllr Pete Marland

Leader, Milton Keynes City Council

Pete has spoken at many events in the UK and across the world, including at the including at the Royal Society for Science and Technology, on issues such as sustainability, urban planning, smart cities and the impact of technology on growth. He was shortlisted as World Leader of the Year at the World Congress Awards in 2022.

He is currently Chair of the Local Government Association Resources Board and a member of the LGA Labour Group Executive. He is a board member of Local Partnerships, Chair of the MK Health and Care Partnership, and a Trustee of Helen & Douglas House Children's Hospice. Between 2016 and 2020 he was Vice President of Energy Cities, a European climate advocacy group.

Andrew Carter

Chief Executive, Centre for Cities

Andrew is the Chief Executive of the Centre and before that he was the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Policy and Research. Andrew has over 25 years of experience working on urban economic policy working for public and private development agencies, consultants and research institutes.

He has also spent time in the US as part of the Churchill Foundation's Fellowship Programme reviewing urban economic development policy and practice in American cities including New York, Washington DC, Boston and Chicago. He is a regular media contributor and chairs and speaks at conferences across the UK and Europe on a wide range of urban and economic issues.

Fionnuala Lennon

Homes England

Fionnuala Lennon is a chartered town planner who has worked predominantly in the public sector in the UK, Ireland and abroad. Much of her experience and interest is around planning large scale development and new settlements so they have a positive impact on the places they are located within. Fionnuala currently leads on delivery of the Garden Communities Programme for DLUHC & Homes England and is involved with major regeneration schemes in the East of England.

Julia Thrift

Director of Healthier Place-Making, Town & Country Planning Association

Julia Thrift is Director of Healthier Place-Making at the TCPA (Town & Country Planning Association) where she works to facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration to create well-designed places, spaces and buildings that make it easier for people to live healthier lives. Her particular interest is the influence that places have on people's health and wellbeing. She is a trustee at Trees for Cities, a charity that works with communities to improve lives by planting trees. Earlier in her career she was a Director at the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE). Formerly a journalist, she has a degree in philosophy from UCL.

Abigaile Bromfield

Director, Arup

Abigaile is a Director for Arup Midlands Campus and leads the UK Midlands Cities Planning and Design teams. She has broad experience across sustainable development, city planning, and social housing. Her recent experience includes leadership roles for engagement and legacy at Birmingham City Council hosting the Commonwealth Games, and management of transport hub schemes. She has worked on projects within Milton Keynes from the station square to the Mass Rapid Transit system.

In 2015/16 she was seconded to the Cabinet Office Implementation Unit for the UK Prime Minister, advising on housing and transport development related policies. She is a Non-Executive Board member for Midland Heart registered housing provider.

Oliver Mytton

Public Health Consultant, Milton Keynes City Council

Oli is a Public Health Consultant at Milton Keynes City Council, leading the public health team's work on planning, transport and health. He has a longstanding interest in how the design of the built environment influences how people travel and what this means for people's health. He is also an Associate Professor of Public Health at University College London, and holds a UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship.

Ben Cave

Director of Ben Cave Insights and Honorary Professor at University of Liverpool

Ben has over 20 years' experience working in assessment with public and private sector and works across Europe and in the US, Africa and Asia. He was President of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) from May 2020 to May 2021.

He is committed to improving standards and quality in the field of impact assessment. He has led development of a review package for HIA reports and convened seminars on quality in impact assessment. Ben is co-author of an article that comes out of these seminars and which looks at what different stakeholders understand by quality in the field of impact assessment.

Anna Le Gouais

Senior Research Associate, University of Bristol

Anna Le Gouais is currently a researcher on the multidisciplinary TRUUD project ('Tackling Root causes Upstream of Unhealthy Urban Development'). She is an embedded researcher in Bristol City Council where she works in the Regeneration Team. Her research focuses on the built environment (including new mixed used developments, walking and cycling infrastructure and open spaces), public health and decision-making.

She has a PhD from the University of Cambridge with the MRC Epidemiology Unit and the Centre for Diet and Activity Research (CEDAR). Her research combines her interests and background in built environments, public health and policy.

Shaun Andrews

Executive Director, Nexus Planning

Shaun has a wealth of experience spanning approximately 25 years of advising both private and public sector clients. His expertise covers the formulation of masterplans and supporting the delivery of major complex developments.

A key specialism of Shaun's is town and city centre regeneration and supporting the delivery of major mixed-use projects. He is also passionate around the issues of health and resilience and the impact of the built environment. He has set up an informal alliance of specialists in this field to work on related projects. Shaun was a lead author in the Key Cities vision and framework called 'The Healthy City' which was published in 2022.

Will Rysdale

Head of Housing Delivery, Milton Keynes City Council

Will is the Head of Housing Delivery at Milton Keynes City Council and is responsible for regeneration, housing delivery and community engagement. He has over 20 years of experience working in the public sector and has been involved in a wide scope of projects. Will is a board member for Leap and is also involved in social enterprise, and improving the lives of residents in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

Karl Fitzgerald

Projects Director/Commercial Advisor, Infrastructure and Projects Authority

Karl is a Projects Director/Commercial Advisor in the Housing and Regeneration Delivery Team, at the Infrastructure and Projects Authority. He has 30 years' experience in consultancy and the public sector. Chartered Civil Engineer and High-Risk Projects Reviewer, and Design Council Expert.

Experienced in infrastructure planning and delivery of large-scale development projects, across both the public and private sectors. Karl has advised government departments on major infrastructure programmes, including the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF), East West Rail, Freeports and HS2 Regeneration.

David Gilchrist

Development Director, Berkeley Homes

David Gilchrist is a Development Director at Berkeley with responsibility for the Milton Keynes East development. David has been with Berkeley since 2004 and has been responsible in shaping and delivering major housing and mixed-use developments across London and the South East. David is a Chartered Town Planner.

Sunita Aujla

Assistant Director New Business and Planning, Paradigm Housing

Sunita has worked in housing and development for over 25 years delivering new homes for Registered Providers. She has developed mixed tenure schemes ranging in size and complexity providing both traditional affordable tenures as well as homes for market sale, market rent and submarket rent portfolios. She is able to draw upon a broad experience and commercial understanding of delivering regeneration schemes, to land purchased and promoted through planning as well as large scale joint ventures delivering at scale.

Sophie Lloyd

Head of Economic Development, Milton Keynes City Council

Sophie is Head of Economic Development at Milton Keynes City Council, heading up Economic Development (Invest MK) and key areas of corporate policy including regional projects. This

includes projects such as the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, Fast Growth Cities Network and Central Area Growth Board.

Before her current role, Sophie was a Policy Manager within the MK Futures Team, responsible for policy development and providing policy advice to senior leaders and Council Departments. In this role, Sophie worked on the Strategy for 2050, with a particular focus on the new university project MK:U and the future economic vision for the city.

Oliver Goodhall

Co-Founding Partner, We Made That

Oliver Goodhall co-founded architecture and urbanism practice We Made That. He brings focus to planning for, and delivering, meaningful economic, social and environmental change in the places that need it. He is dedicated to delivering public good, with an attention to detail in addressing strategic and complex briefs. He has led innovative urban scale masterplans, ambitious development frameworks and flagship cultural infrastructure projects. Oliver places great value on independent, trusted and thorough intelligence in guiding and making meaningful change.

Holly Dawson

Partner & Head of Bidwells Milton Keynes

Holly heads up Bidwells Milton Keynes office. Bidwells is a multi-disciplinary property consultancy whose commercial sector work is principally concentrated in the 'golden triangle' encompassed by Oxford, Cambridge, and London. She is a true advocate of the city having specialised in the commercial office sector for over 20 years and is a board member of MK Business Improvement (BID).

She is well informed and has a proven track record which brings invaluable insight and knowledge to the projects on which she works delivering robust and insightful data enabling her clients to take informed decisions to unlock the potential of their commercial assets.

James Golding-Graham

Decarbonisation and Innovation Manager, England's Economic Heartland

James is a Decarbonisation and Innovation Manager at England's Economic Heartland. His main areas of work include policy development, decarbonisation, connectivity, innovation, digital transport, climate and energy. In the last three years, his focus has been on challenges in Mobility and the Smart City Agenda. He has delved into the application of technology to the challenges of delivering a transport system fit for the future. James is active in the Smart Cities space and sits on the board of Smart Oxford.

Paul Thomas

Director of Planning and Placemaking, Milton Keynes City Council

Paul Thomas is the Director of Planning and Placemaking at Milton Keynes City Council. He has over 20 years' Local Government experience; the last 10 of which have been in senior roles in

planning, strategic transport, economic development and cultural services. Paul has also been a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute for 20 years.

Paul is a Director of Destination Milton Keynes and uses this position to promote the benefits of living, working, and investing in the new City of Milton Keynes.