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Introduction

We are delighted to bring to you the Corporate Property Strategy for Milton Keynes City Council. This strategy will guide the Council's future property decisions and is informed by the detailed discussions with our individual service areas.

It is clear that the public sector is facing significant challenges; the need to make efficiencies, ideally without reducing the level of services our residents, businesses, and visitors. This document sets out the basis for our plans for the next five years. Critical to its delivery is the way that we will integrate asset management planning into the reviews of how our services are delivered.

After our colleagues, our property assets are our most valuable resource. Our belief is that we can be more effective in the way that we hold and use our property, to not only make savings on property-related expenditure but to better link our property assets to service delivery so that services to residents are enhanced.

Not only will we seek to use our assets to improve the provision of services, but we will use capital receipts from our asset rationalisation programme to support the Council's ambitious growth and regeneration programme by actively seeking opportunities to develop surplus space.

The key plans which underpin this strategy will be updated annually as a minimum as we review Council assets and Council services. It will be shared with our partners and stakeholders and will enable transparent and consistent decision-making in relation to our property assets.



Cllr Lauren Townsend Cabinet Member, Resources



Michael Bracey Chief Executive

2. Context

In 2022, Milton Keynes was awarded city status. We have attracted generations of people and businesses to move to and stay within Milton Keynes, created thousands of jobs and built a city with high quality infrastructure and green space because we have been at the cutting edge of modern thinking.

Milton Keynes is a special and beautiful city, different to any other in Britain with its parks and lakes within a few minutes' walk of homes, the distinctive grid road system, and city centre. Our older towns, villages and individual grid squares each have their own character and sense of community within the overall layout of the city. Our vibrant economy means young people are more likely to get a job with good prospects than anywhere else and we can move around by car more easily and cycle more safely than in any other city.

We have a diverse property base in type and function. This Corporate Property Strategy covers two key portfolios:

- Corporate Property consisting of the Council's operational occupied estate (including schools).
- Commercial Property our investment portfolio that supports our local communities, as well as strategic and other land holdings. This portfolio also includes the Managed Estate – a portfolio of assets owned by Milton Keynes Development Partnership (MKDP) but managed by MKCC.

This Corporate Property Strategy (CPS) sets out the vision for property and the way in which property will support the operations of the Council, taking account of current and anticipated future economic trends and the Council's climate change objectives.

Milton Keynes faces several challenges and it's clear that although property is not a core function of the Council, it is core to enabling the ongoing successful delivery and development of Council services.

2.1 OUR DRIVERS

Achieving efficiencies: Delivering efficiencies through strategic property management includes achieving revenue savings by reducing operating costs and improving energy efficiency. It also encompasses the efficiencies and productivity improvements enabled in front line service delivery through the better alignment of property assets with service priorities.

Service Improvements: Assets play a key role in the improvement of services, both by enabling services to be provided more effectively, and also by releasing capital to invest in these improvements.

Localities: Milton Keynes has a number of distinct geographical localities, each with differing identities, needs and opportunities. This strategy recognises the importance of these communities and addresses local service delivery, community-based regeneration, and local employment opportunities.

Fitness for purpose and tenure: Our property assets are not all in the type of condition that is appropriate to the needs of service delivery. We aim to ensure that services are delivered from buildings that are fit for purpose thereby improving service outcomes and cost effectiveness.

2.2 OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Since 2019, the size of the Corporate Estate has reduced by 17% delivering annual running costs savings of £1,450,000.
- We have generated £1,200,000 in capital receipts from disposals.
- The Corporate Property Strategy is adopted and embedded into Council processes and governance.
- Property policies are in place so that management of the property portfolio is transparent and consistent.
- Property management risks are identified and managed appropriately and proportionately.
- The Building Maintenance Plan is used to programme our maintenance and repair work and to allocate funding in the capital programme.
- Financial risk to the Council is mitigated through appropriate lease management, as well as improved debt management procedures.
- Property-related decisions are made considering the wider strategic context, not on an asset-by-asset basis.

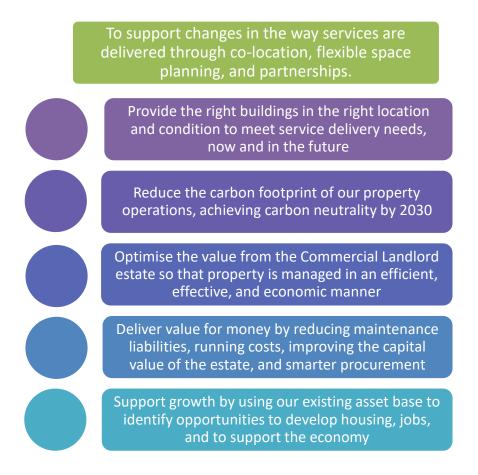
- We have improved our property data collection and our centralised property database is embedded into our processes and is used to:
 - Report on our performance.
 - Ensure we are meeting our statutory obligations, including compliance, and lease deadlines.
 - o Inform the strategic direction of the asset management plan.
 - o Manage our maintenance programmes effectively.

2.3 OUR PURPOSE

Our operational assets must align to our future service requirements in terms of number, location, condition, accessibility, and fitness for purpose.

It is vital that our buildings are contributing to our corporate objectives and assets that do not meet these criteria will be considered for alternative use or disposal. It is also vital that the property portfolio is financially self-supporting and sustainable in the long-term.

The five pillars below are designed to support our purpose and drivers:



2.4 OUR PEOPLE

Our colleagues have a wealth of knowledge and experience in managing all aspects of property. We will promote a culture of continuous professional development and aim to ensure that we work within the guidance set by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors.

We are committed to developing talent and to provide opportunities for promotion and development, retaining skills and knowledge for the future.

3. OUR ASSETS

The Council's property portfolio is diverse. Many of our buildings are of a similar age, and this presents maintenance issues and expense. We will continue with the programme of Asset Rationalisation to reduce revenue and capital costs. We will also organise our property portfolios into Business Units, with each one focusing on profitability, risk management, optimisation of assets, and sustainability and environmental compliance.

3.1 OUR CORPORATE ESTATE

The primary reason for holding these assets relates to service delivery and so, while there may be scope to increase revenue generation as a secondary function, without asset rationalisation, it is likely that spiralling property costs (maintenance, utilities, business rates, management fees) will become unsustainable.

Corporate Estate	Adults Services	Childrens Services	Env & Waste	Leisure & Community	Civic	Totals
GIA (m²)	4,829	11,018	21,245	35,236	10,876	83,204 ²
Running	£545,437	£993,000	£950,000	£704,200	£1,463,300	£4,655,937
Costs						
Asset	£4,198,00	£23,477,000	£63,987,000	£78,056,500	£20,000,00	£190,000,000
Valuation	0					
Backlog	£830,000	£3,453,737	£170,000	£4,100,000	£0	£8,557,737
Maintenance						

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¹ Includes community centres leased to Management Committees, and properties let within the Leisure contracts.

² Buildings only – excludes all ancillary land.

3.2 OUR COMMERCIAL ESTATE

The commercial estate is important for the local economy and generates a stable source of income for MKCC. The majority of this income comes from the retail sector which is made up almost entirely of estate shops and parades (also called tertiary retail).

Commercial Estate	Number of Properties	Income	Valuation
Agricultural	6	£14,500	£1,673,000
Care	5	£12,000	£422,250
Community Uses	14	£12,000	£5,305,000
Cultural	5	£750	£31,780,000
Depots	9	£10,800	£421,100
Health	9	£408,000	£45,000,000
Industrial	2	£14,000	£574,000
Nursery/Pre-school	7	£99,000	£5,560,000
Offices	17	£330,000	£3,610,000
Retail	106	£1,430,000	£985,700
Miscellaneous	30	£48,000	£18,525,000
Totals	210	£2,380,000	£108,551,050

3.3 OUR MANAGED ESTATE

MKCC Property and Development manage assets on behalf of Milton Keynes Development Partnership (MKDP), including assets bought for regeneration purposes such as the Brunel Centre in Bletchley, and operational properties such as CMK Market. We will continue to explore opportunities to manage other portfolios for income generation.

3.4 OUR ASSET STRATEGY

We will challenge the rationale for holding property, supported by quantitative data to demonstrate the running and life-cycle costs of each property, and will continue our programme of Asset Rationalisation (ARP) to create improved efficiencies. We will widen this activity to include the Commercial Estate.

We will avoid acquiring properties for operational purposes, unless there is a compelling strategic reason to do.

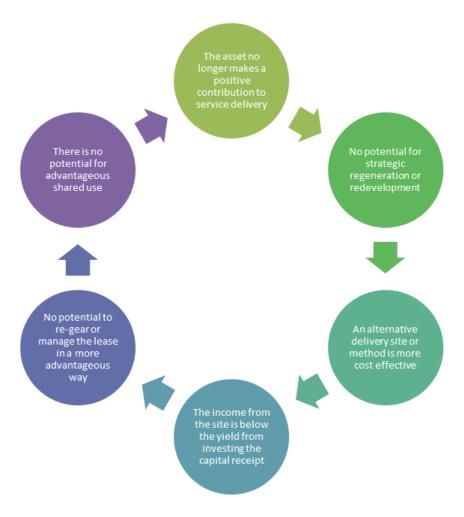
To ensure that our new buildings are sustainably managed in the future, we will identify the correct future management strategy for each building in advance of construction. Typical arrangements will include Community Asset Transfer, or pre-lets on a fully repairing and insuring basis.

We have made good progress to understand our backlog maintenance issues, but there is more to do, particularly for the Commercial Estate. It is important to also understand future obligations and we will analyse life-cycle costs with a view on taking preventative measures as capital investment allows.

To reduce the revenue and capital burden on the Council we will:

- a) Analyse our property data to produce a summary of what each building costs to run, where energy efficiency improvements can be made, the capital value, planned maintenance spend, capital investment required and potential alternative uses.
- b) Meet with service areas to understand their service requirements and carry out accommodation planning.
- c) Identify properties which may become surplus, and develop a business case for disposal, refurbishment, or redeveloping surplus property, taking into account void property costs and social value.

Assets will only be declared surplus where one or more of the following criteria applies:



A key part of our asset management strategy will be disposal of surplus property, both in the General Fund (GF) and within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

We will prioritise disposals to reduce void property costs and enable revenue savings in the GF and to create headroom in the HRA for investment into new or improved housing stock.

3.5 OUR PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are six primary ways in which asset management will deliver value and efficiencies for MKC:

- 1) Additional revenue generated through robust and timely estates management processes, including acquisitions and disposals.
- 2) Reduction in maintenance liabilities through asset transfer, disposal, and pre-lets on a fully repairing and insuring basis, leading to less pressure on revenue and capital spend.
- 3) Reducing maintenance and running costs via the production of maintenance plans for budgeting purposes, ensuring spend is targeted effectively.
- 4) Increased savings through smart and timely procurement.
- 5) Investing in the right assets to ensure that services are delivered, energy efficiency improvements and made, and the value of the asset base increases.
- 6) Providing the workplace arrangements to help our people make intelligent choices about where and when they work, improving productivity, creating a better work-life balance and providing an environment equipped for rapid change.

4. OUR GOVERNANCE

The Corporate Property Strategy has transparent and consistent decision making at its core. In response, Strategic Property and Programme Board (SPPB) will receive all recommendations for strategic or key decisions relating to property held in the General Fund by Milton Keynes City Council to ensure that proposals are consistent with the Corporate Property Strategy. These proposals must have gained approval at the service level boards prior to consideration by SPPB.

Strategic or key decisions will relate to acquisitions, disposal, changes of use, and investment proposals relating to operational use.

The Board will at all times work within the framework set by the Corporate Property Strategy and the three key outputs:

- The Asset Management Plan
- The Building Maintenance Plan (including the Capital Programme)
- Property Management Policies and Procedures

The Board will also act as a programme board to projects board, making recommendations and providing guidance. Once a report has been approved by both the service level board and SPPB, it will then go to Corporate Portfolio Board prior to an Executive Decision.



Annex A: Adults Services (ASC)

Adult Services support people with their Social Care needs, providing services such as occupational therapy and social work assessments, as well as providing housing information and support for people facing homelessness.

The service faces the ongoing challenges of an ageing population, while delivering services from ageing buildings. There is a huge and still rising demand for temporary accommodation and we will look for cost effective ways to deliver more capacity, and the best model to manage this accommodation.

Building	GIA m2	Book Value	Condition	Energy Rating	Backlog Maintenance	Total Running Costs
The Kitchener	201	£276,000	В	В	£50,853	£33,894
Centre						
Tower Drive	1615	£431,383	С	С	£475,301	£106,068
Simpson	908	£2,145,384	С	В	£25,670	£45,924
Whaddon	732	£806,044	С	E	£279,990	£47,115
Way						
Mathieson	N/A	N/A	D	D/C	N/A	£253,000
Road ³						
Old Bus	400	N/A	N/A	D	N/A	£59,436
Station ⁴						
Totals	3856	£3,658,811	-	-	£831,814	£545,437

ACTIONS:

- We will replace Tower Drive, Whaddon Way, and Mathieson Road with a new ASC combined provision closer to the city centre at Linford Wood Place.
- Working with the service area, we will develop options for a long-term property solution for homelessness provision.
- We will also work with the service area to determine options for delivering temporary accommodation for those in housing need.
- We will relocate the services delivered from Stantonbury Alarm to Civic.

³ Leased in from NHS Property Services

⁴ Leased in from MKDP

Annex B: Childrens' Services

Childrens' Services are responsible for supporting and protecting vulnerable children. The service is also responsible for delivering education and lifelong learning, as well as youth services.

B1: Libraries

Buildings	GIA m2	Book Value	Condition	Energy Rating	Backlog Maintenance	Total Running Costs
CMK Library	3015	£487,9740	С	Exempt	£1,425,800 ⁵	£227,328
Newport Pagnell Library	401	£1,053,000	С	D	£141,240	£47,001
Bletchley Library	1162	£1,715,400	С	С	£69,342	£87,772
Wolverton Library	N/A	£809,000	С	С	£0	£12,569
Kingston Library	740	£1,251,949	В	С	£9,525	£62,783
Westcroft Library	213	£1,575,626	Α	Α	£0	£34,406
Netherfield Library	300	N/A	С	С	N/A	N/A
Totals	5831	£11,284,715	-	-	£1,645,907	£471,859

Our libraries are much more than a place to borrow books. They provide meeting places, events, study space, computer access and printing facilities. The library offering is changing and developing to keep pace with the modern world of technology and accessible information.

ACTIONS:

We will develop options for co-locating library services with complementary

 We will work with the service to deliver an options appraisal for Central Library to ensure that the city has a fit-for-purpose hub for lifelong learning prior to

services to encourage more use of the libraries and to reduce running costs.

undertaking major investment.

⁵ Does not include the major capital works needed to the library roof and plant equipment.

B2: Children and Family Centres

This service offers a range of services for families with children from 0 to 5 years old, as well as for expectant parents.

The Early Help Strategy is currently under development and will address whether the service is operating in locations of highest demand/need.

Buildings	GIA m2	Book Value	Condition	Energy Rating	Backlog Maintenance	Total Running Costs
The Rowans	325	£1,854,437	В	С	£27,847	£41,621
Hedgerows	553	£1,164,540	С	D	£263,645	£71,029
Pebbles	182	£527,000	В	С	£14,100	£7,512
Rainbow	87	£284,444	В	D	£9,501	£22,520
Saplings	192	£892,860	В	D	£55,961	£20,082
Robins	140	£260,000	В	E	£577	£14,345
Squirrels	80	£201,000	В	D	£2,337	£10,175
Daisychain	370	£257,540	С	E	£41,500	£27,507
Tickford Meadow	148	£221,000	С	D	£221,000	£13,633
Moorlands	230	£389,891	С	С	£165	£25,967
Sunshine	255	£504,630	В	E	£162,138	£18,821
Hummingbird	215	£306,120	В	В	£20,619	£21,954
Little Owls	150	£798,810	В	В	£ 29,959	£11,837
Seedlings	400	£499,000	В	E	£55,640	£17,917
Totals	3327	£8,161,272	-	-	£697,365	£324,920

ACTIONS:

 We will continue to support and inform the Early Help Strategy outcomes with a view to providing the service with the right buildings in the right locations, and to explore opportunities to co-locate this provision.

B3: Family Contact Centres

The Family Time Service offers contact between children and their families who may have become separated for various reasons. Other services, such as Safeguarding, also work in close collaboration.

Buildings	GIA	Book Value	Condition	Energy	Backlog	Total Running
	m2			Rating	Maintenance	Costs
Greenleys	400	£588,000	С	С	£588,000	£35,618
Coffee Hall	496	£918,000	С	E	£501,834	£71,778
Totals	896	£1,506,000	-	-	£1,089,834	£107,396

The building at Coffee Hall is in poor condition and does not meet service needs. As well as the backlog maintenance, it requires significant upgrades to meet the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES).

ACTIONS:

- We will refurbish the Warwick Road Activity Centre for use as a Family Contact Centre and relocate the service from Coffee Hall.
- We will work with Woughton Community Council (WCC) to deliver a sustainable asset strategy in the locality, making best use of the assets held by MKCC and WCC.

B4: Looked After Children

Where it is not possible for children to remain within their own family, the children in care service arranges and provides foster care, adoption, residential care and leaving care services for children in the care of Milton Keynes Council. These services aim to provide stability and security to those children in care so that they achieve their full potential.

The service faces challenges due to the lack of placement opportunities within MKCC's boundaries and so is currently reviewing the demand and opportunities to keep children and care leavers closer to their families and familiar localities.

There are three other residential properties which have until recently provided support and housing to young people transitioning out of care. We are currently exploring alternative uses for the properties with the service area.

Buildings	GIA m2	Book Value	Condition	Energy Rating	Backlog Maintenance	Total Running Costs
Westminster	440	£1,020,060	В	В	£49,705	£37,872
House						
Furze House	524	£1,245,899	С	E	£169,174	£50,355
Fenny House ⁶		£260,000	С	С	£21,859	£600
Western Road ⁷					£160,090	£0
Blackheath					£127,765	£0
Crescent						
Totals	964	£2,525,959	-	-	£528,593	£88,827

ACTIONS:

- We will support the service to establish new residential facilities for looked after children within Milton Keynes.
- We will aim to relocate the respite care service at Furze House to Linford Wood Place in conjunction with Adult Social Care.
- We will undertake a review of surplus property against current and future service needs with the aim of improving outcomes for looked after children.

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⁶ Fenny House and Blackheath Crescent were leased out to a third-party care provider.

⁷ Western Road is currently void and is not suitable for future residential use.

Annex C: Environment and Waste

The Wolverton Resource Campus is a beacon of aspiration for both Milton Keynes and on a global scale for how the principles of cyclical economy, sustainability and the ownership and custodianship of a city's waste resources and environmental services should be managed. The Commissioning for a Net Zero Future for Environment and Waste Services to 2030 strategy sets out the importance of the campus in more detail.

ACTIONS:

- We will position our assets in Old Wolverton into a formalised waste and environmental services management campus, expanding the campus to accommodate an even greater number of efficiencies and provide identity and integration of services, including:
 - Acquisition of a new site for storage of spares for our assets and fleet to reduce operational cost and ensure strongest availability and maintenance.
 - Assess options for 'vertical farming' in close proximity to MKWRP and other renewables which can plug in to our private wire and grid connections.
 - Expand Private Wire and electrical vehicle charging grid to drive carbonisation
 - Drive a refurbishment of available office space to support Asset Rationalisation
 - Enabling our Sustainable Heat and Renewables Heat recovery decarbonisation programme to delivered through Wolverton as an energy hub
 - Supporting other facilities and depots across the city such as CMK and Emberton Country Park
- We will support the service to drive their ambitions to recycle more, introduce dedicated reuse provision, and decarbonise our services, to include:
 - Building street sweepings bay at the Recycling plant to recycle all of our street sweepings.
 - Create our first Reuse Centre in Milton Keynes where we can gather all reusable materials for our Household Waste Recycling Centres and

- residents can purchase them. This will include rehoming packs and cheap furniture to those who are most vulnerable in our Housing services.
- We will work to direct purchase the electricity produced by MKWRP to minimise our carbon footprint, ensuring that we purchase directly from a renewable source to power our Council buildings, homes and streetlights.
- Provision of a dedicated education centre
- o Providing a greater integration of a one city workforce
- We will contribute positively to business continuity and resilience by providing a backup location for customer services, emergency planning and other critical operations.
- We will ensure electrical self-sufficiency for our internal fleet, external contractors and resource processing facilities through the use of our private wire to power our fleet and assets
- We will support delivery of over 80 dedicated electrical chargers for the authority's fleet and contractors.

Annex D: Leisure and Community

D1: The Leisure Portfolio

The portfolio has undergone significant change in the last few years to ensure that community assets are managed locally, and so that the risk profile of the service is managed appropriately. The Leisure portfolio currently consists of 47 facilities of which:

- 20 facilities are on long leases within the Corporate Estate.
- 7 facilities are leased to our leisure providers with due to expire in 2024 & 2026.
 Work is underway to determine the future strategic direction for our leisure offering.
- 12 facilities are on Annual Periodic Tenancies (APT) managed by volunteer management groups.
- 6 community facilities are due for transfer under the Leisure Asset Transfer programme.
- Greenleys CC currently has no arrangement in place and presents a risk to the council.
- Kents Hill Pavilion and Sports Ground is out of lease and is due to be demolished.

The Leisure Asset Transfer (LAT) programme has been particularly successful in delivering long-term sustainability of community-based leisure assets, set against the challenges faced by the leisure industry, which was further impacted by the pandemic and the subsequent cost of living crisis.

Since 2020 LAT has successful reduced the MKCCs property portfolio by 17 facilities; making a revenue saving of circa £750K and reduced our ongoing landlord responsibilities / liabilities for buildings that have been transferred. In addition, transferred facilities have seen an increase in footfall and delivered increased participation in physical and social activities, supporting healthy communities.

A further 6 facilities are scheduled to transfer to local management. However, transfers are now becoming increasingly challenging due to a changing economic landscape and town and parish councils are less enthusiastic to take facilities that require investment. Therefore, MKCC may need to consider alternative arrangements for example direct management of facilities.

ACTIONS:

D1: Leisure

 We will support the service area to deliver the best outcomes for leisure provision across the city.

D2: Community

- We will work with the management committees who are under an APT arrangement and instead issue leases to give them more security.
- Where it is not possible to reach agreement on new lease arrangements, we will
 consider alternative options for the properties, which will include alternative
 uses or disposals.
- Working with the service area, we will undertake a strategic evaluation of the built leisure offer for MK.

D3: Regulatory Services

- We will deliver an options appraisal for works to the Willow Chapel and changes to the wider crematorium site.
- We will undertake the preparation work to identify and deliver new cemeteries in the eastern and western expansion areas.

Annex E: Commercial Estate

Our commercial estate performs an important function for the local economy, our partner organisations (including community services), and generates a stable revenue for MKCC. However, there are also some challenges with managing a large estate:

We do not have oversight of the maintenance obligations for MKCC. There has been no significant investment in the estate for decades. As a result, premises are let without any form of refurbishment, which makes it difficult to ensure that incoming tenants carry out their maintenance obligations effectively. At the end of tenancies, MKCC's capacity for dilapidations is severely reduced, leading to a weakened negotiating position and higher costs for MKCC.

Every leased property will require a lease renewal and rent reviews on a cyclical basis. While this work can be predicted, there is a high amount of unplanned work in relation to lease assignments and lease surrenders, which adds to the lease administration burden for both Property and Legal.

Commercial Estate	Number of Properties	Income	Valuation	
Agricultural	6	£14,500	£1,673,000	
Care	5	£12,000	£422,250	
Community Uses	14	£12,000	£5,305,000	
Cultural	5	£750	£31,780,000	
Depots	9	£10,800	£421,100	
Health	9	£408,000	£45,000,000	
Industrial	2	£14,000	£574,000	
Nursery/Pre-school	7	£99,000	£5,560,000	
Offices	17	£330,000	£3,610,000	
Retail	106	£1,430,000	£985,700	
Miscellaneous	30	£48,000	£18,525,000	
Totals	210	£2,380,000	£108,551,050	

In addition, the income from the assets is on average £10k pa for non-retail and £13.5k pa from retail. While this is a relatively stable income, it's clear that better value can be levered from the non-retail element of this portfolio.

In terms of risk, our commercial portfolio is unbalanced, with a heavy reliance on retail. The pandemic highlighted the financial risks to MKCC, and the portfolio should be diversified.

Our industrial holdings represent only a small proportion of the overall estate. Milton Keynes is rapidly gaining a reputation as a logistics hub due to the proximity of the M1 and the number of businesses operating from MK. There is, however, a severe shortage of mid-size industrial units which is having a negative impact on businesses and the economy.

Start-up businesses cannot find premises to move on to, so either stay in their starter units (which blocks new businesses looking for start-up opportunities) or move away from MK to find suitably sized, affordable premises, which has a negative impact on the job market.

ACTIONS:

- We will review the commercial portfolio and identify opportunities to sell the freehold of some properties (with sitting tenants).
- We will identify opportunities to create better retail offerings, including development of the existing facilities.
- We will ensure our property data is up to date, and that tenant inspections take place.
- We will develop a maintenance plan for our commercial estate to better understand our liabilities and risks.
- We will work with our partners including MKDP and Parks Trust to deliver good-quality local facilities which improve value of all assets at each location.
- Working within the boundaries of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance, we
 will identify opportunities to develop or dispose of land which is suitable for midsize industrial units where their provision clearly supports our wider goals.

