



Accessibility Study 2025



**For the Milton Keynes
City Plan 2050**



Thursday 23rd October 2025



Executive Summary

This Accessibility Study has been undertaken to support the People Friendly Healthy Places (PFHP) principles set out in the Milton Keynes City Plan 2050, with a focus on assessing residents' access to essential services and amenities via active travel modes. The study evaluates accessibility across the Borough of Milton Keynes, identifying spatial disparities and opportunities for policy intervention to promote healthier, more inclusive, and climate-resilient communities.

Key Findings

Accessibility varies significantly across the borough, with central and densely populated areas generally better served than peripheral or rural locations.

Active travel infrastructure, particularly the Redway network, is highly valued by residents but remains incomplete in several areas, especially older settlements like Bletchley.

Grocery stores emerged as the highest priority amenity in public feedback, with notable gaps in provision in rural areas and along key corridors such as Linear Parks.

Health centres are underprovided relative to NHS targets, with urgent need identified in areas such as Walnut Tree and East MK.

Primary schools are generally accessible, but lower prioritisation and borough-wide undersubscription support an increased accessibility threshold from 800m to 1000m.

Policy Recommendations

Refine accessibility standards by adjusting distance thresholds and removing lower-priority amenities such as hairdressers/barbers from strategic planning tables (namely Table 3).

Expand PFHP2 to encourage development in areas with existing under-provision, not just areas of change, ensuring universal access to amenities.

Clarify policy language to define terms like “most homes” and improve consistency across planning documents.

Enhance Redway infrastructure through targeted investment and integration into financial mechanisms such as Section 106 agreements¹.

Improve public perception of active travel routes through branding, signage, and upgrades to underpasses.

Strategic Implications

The findings of this study underscore the importance of embedding accessibility into all stages of planning and development. As Milton Keynes continues to grow, ensuring equitable access to

¹ A Section 106 (S106) agreement is a legally binding agreement in England between a developer and a local planning authority, made under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to provide local services and mitigate the impact of development. These agreements offset negative impacts by securing contributions for infrastructure, affordable housing, or environmental enhancements, ensuring that new developments benefit the local community.

services via active travel will be critical to achieving the PFHP vision. This includes not only the provision of amenities but also the infrastructure that connects people to them.

The recommendations outlined in this report provide a framework for future policy development, infrastructure investment, and community engagement. By addressing current gaps and planning proactively for future growth, Milton Keynes can become a more connected, inclusive, and resilient city.

Contents

Page 5	Introduction
Page 7	Methodology
Page 9	Analysis of Spatial Data
Page 25	Analysis of Local Feedback and Additional Data
Page 32	Conclusion & Summary
Page 33	Policy Recommendations

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to support the People Friendly Healthy Places (PFHP) outcomes set out in the Milton Keynes City Plan 2050 by assessing residents' accessibility to essential services and amenities across Milton Keynes. Accessibility is a key determinant of health, wellbeing, and quality of life, and is central to national planning policy and guidance.

Defining Accessibility

Accessibility refers to the ease with which people can reach desired destinations or engage in activities. It is influenced by factors such as distance, route-finding, and the availability of safe, high-quality transport infrastructure. In planning contexts, accessibility is increasingly recognised as a critical component of sustainable and inclusive urban development.

Wider Impacts of Movement

How people move through their environment affects more than just individual mobility. It has broader implications for air quality, traffic congestion, economic vitality, demographic diversity, community cohesion, and climate resilience.

Policy Context

As a Local Planning Authority, one of our core objectives is to contribute meaningfully to the achievement of sustainable development. The National Planning Policy Framework identifies “accessible services and open spaces” as essential components in fostering “strong, vibrant and healthy communities”—a key aspect of the three overarching pillars of sustainable development: social, economic, and environmental. In response, various accessibility models, such as the walkable neighbourhood concept, have been implemented across the country to support this aim. In Milton Keynes, our vision aligns with this national direction through our commitment to creating People Friendly and Healthy Places, as outlined in the MK City Plan 2050. This assessment is therefore rooted in the PFHP principles, which place a strong emphasis on accessibility. In fact, six out of the twelve PFHP principles explicitly reference accessibility, while the remaining principles are indirectly supported by it. These principles are illustrated in Figure 1.

Focus on Active Travel

Milton Keynes is uniquely characterised by its grid road system. However, contemporary research and planning guidance emphasise the importance of active travel—such as walking and cycling—for promoting health, enhancing sense of place, and mitigating climate change. Accordingly, this study focuses exclusively on accessibility via active travel modes.

Study Scope

The assessment will cover the entirety of Milton Keynes, with analysis conducted at multiple geographic scales to capture local variations in accessibility.

Anticipated Outcomes

By understanding current levels of accessibility, the study will identify design and policy interventions to address gaps in service provision and connectivity. Given Milton Keynes' distinctive urban layout,

the findings may reveal patterns that inform future development as the city continues to grow ambitiously over the next 25 years.

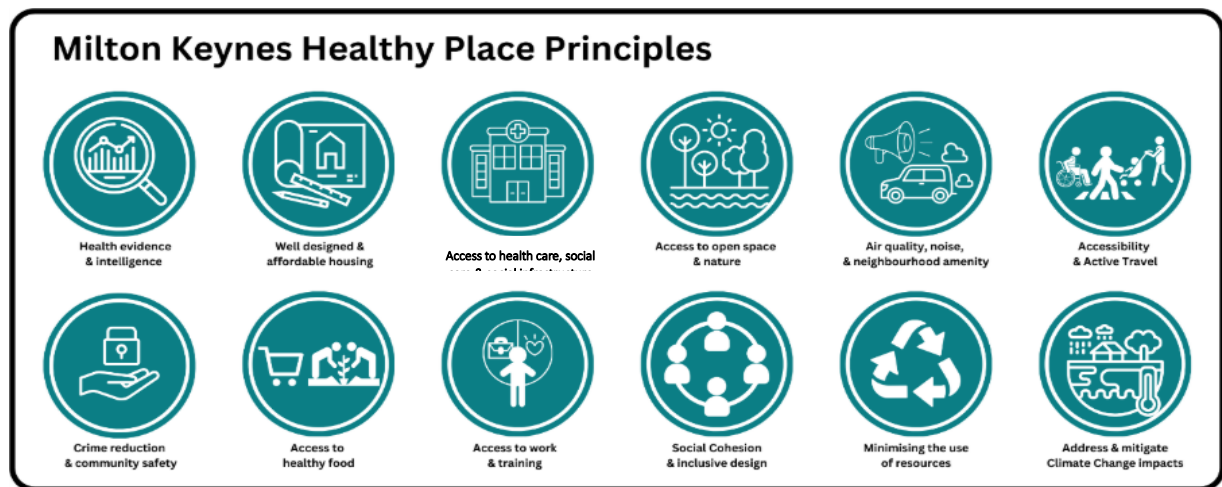


Figure 1: PFHP principles from the MK City Plan 2050.

Methodology

Methodology Introduction

As cited in the Town and Country Planning Association's (TCPA) 20-minute neighbourhood guide², to create truly accessible, people healthy and friendly places, baseline research and analysis is key for understanding:

- How a place functions
- What assets it has and where
- How the local community experiences it
- What the community wants and needs.

Thus, a key requirement of this study was to consult members of the local population to ascertain the above and to ensure that observations based on routes plotted between residential settlements and community amenities were consistent with the lived experiences across Milton Keynes.

As such an informal consultation was launched in November 2023 for 12 weeks, consisting of a two-part online survey for residents to complete, and 6 focussed workshops with a diverse range of community groups. Following this in July 2024, a formal Regulation 18 consultation was also conducted over a 12-week period to gather feedback on draft policies to be featured in the final version of the MK City Plan.

Digital Data Collection

To gather data during the informal consultation period, an online survey was hosted on the digital engagement platform Commonplace and consisted of an 18-question form, where respondents provided insight about their sentiments towards accessibility and safety in Milton Keynes generally, as well as accessibility and safety within their local neighbourhoods. There was also a mapping tool where respondents could leave comments on location concerning a specific green space, road, or amenity.

To gather data during the formal Regulation 18 consultation period, an online survey was hosted on the digital engagement platform PlaceMaker and consisted of the draft plan document and a minimum of three questions per policy to ascertain: whether the respondent agreed with the policy, why the respondent held their stance, and any additional thoughts held by the respondent.

In-person Data Collection

The workshops were run with a range of community stakeholders, including the young people of the MKC Youth Council, local community groups, faith groups and entrepreneurial networks, to ensure a good cross-section of local experience was captured.

A total number of 970 people participated in the informal pre-regulation 18 online survey and an estimated 65 workshop participants.

² [The 20-minute neighbourhood - Town and Country Planning Association](#)

Methods of Analysis

Analysis of the PFHP feedback took place in three parts. The Commonplace platform arranged comments received via the survey into key themes and priorities using tables and charts, whereas the data gathered via the mapping tool was manually grouped into general themes, and then priorities specific to each location represented.

Feedback from workshops were provided orally, which was noted down by the project team, and in the same way was manually grouped into themes and priorities and themes per workshop were identified.

Development Management Shadow testing

The resulting draft policies were also reviewed by colleagues from the Development Management team to test for comprehension, ease of application and wording choice. Additional feedback on content was also supplied from the context of handling previous applications.

Analysis of Spatial Data

Spatial Data and Methodology

Traditional approaches to modelling access to services often rely on straight-line (“as the crow flies”) distances, which can misrepresent actual travel conditions. To provide a more accurate assessment, this study utilised Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to perform route-based analysis using active travel networks. This method calculated the real-world travel distance from each residential address to various destination types, as outlined in Table 1.

In addition to this, Figure 2 below shows an example of route analysis conducted from a single address point (black circle). The red routes extend 800m and a polygon is created around this at its furthest point/distance. This polygon is then assessed to see if it contains each of the accessibility indicators listed in Table 1.

Distance Benchmarks

The distance thresholds applied in this analysis are based on guidance from the TCPA³. These benchmarks reflect the principles of the “20-minute neighbourhood” — a planning concept aimed at creating compact, connected communities where essential services are accessible within a short walk or cycle. This idea is internationally recognised under various names, such as the “15-minute city”.

Accessibility Mapping

The resulting maps illustrate the proportion of homes within the study area that fall inside the catchment zones for each destination type. These visualisations help identify how well the area supports local access to key services and amenities.

Table 1: Catchment Distances for Tested Destinations	
Destination Type	Catchment Distance
Bus/train stop, and active travel stands	400m
Open space ³	710m
Grocery shop	800m
Primary health care facility / pharmacy ⁴	800m
Pre-school / Primary school	800m
Indoor/outdoor recreation centre	800m
Allotments	800m
Cafe	800m
Hairdressers/barbers	800m
Library	800m
Employment floorspace/co-working spaces	1,000m
Community Facility	1,000m
Places of Worship	1,000m

³ [Home - Town and Country Planning Association](#)

Cultural Buildings	1,000m
Public House	1,000m



Figure 2: Example of route analysis conducted from an address point (black circle). The red routes extend 800m, and a polygon is drawn at their furthest point. This polygon is then checked if it contains each of the accessibility indicators listed in the table.

Maps for each Destination Type

Each of the Destination Types outlined in Table 1 (excluding places of worship and cultural buildings) have been assessed and a map for each grid neighbourhood settlement has been created to visually demonstrate the spatial data showing local accessibility rates to key services and amenities. This section will provide individual maps for each identified Destination Type covering the following amenities:

- Bus/train stop, and active travel stands (with a catchment area of 400m as opposed to 800m as outlined in Table 1)
- Open space (with a catchment area of 710m as opposed to 800m as outlined in Table 1)
- Grocery shops
- Primary healthcare facility / pharmacy
- Pre-school / primary school
- Indoor / outdoor recreation centre
- Allotments
- Café
- Hairdressers and barbers
- Library
- Employment floorspace / co-working space (catchment area 1000m as opposed to 800m)
- Community facility (catchment area 1000m as opposed to 800m)
- Public house (catchment area 1000m as opposed to 800m)

The key included with each map indicates the percentage of households within the catchment distance (namely 800 or 1000 metres, or 400 or 710 for bus/train stops / active travel stands and open space) of each destination type.

Bus /train stop, and active travel stands

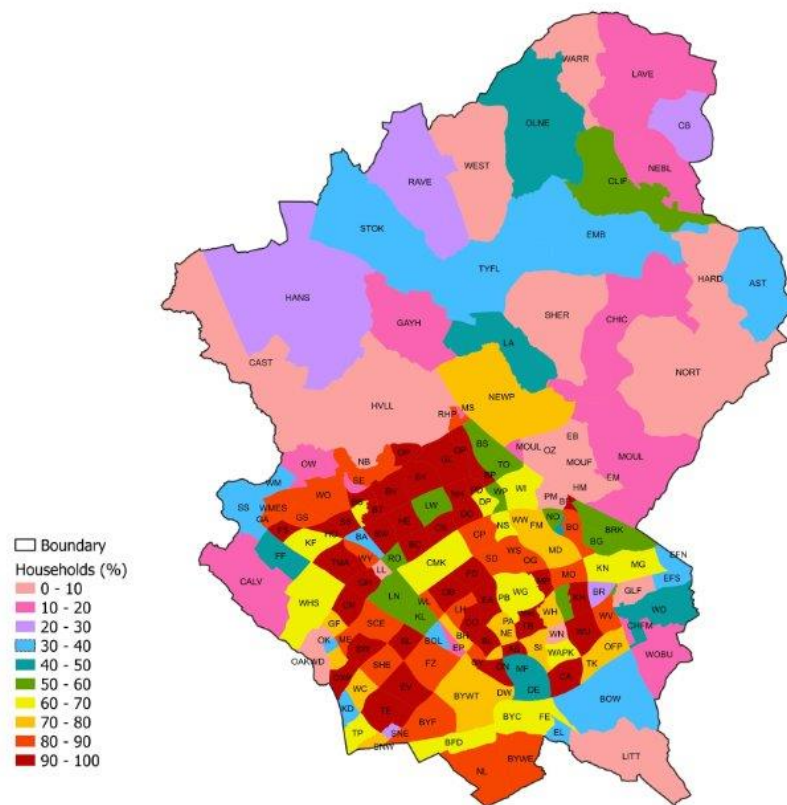


Figure 3 - Bus / train stops and active travel stands

High accessibility areas in Milton Keynes, such as Bradwell, Bradville, and Conniburrow, benefit from strong transport coverage, with 70–100% of households located within 400 meters of a bus stop or active travel stand, with services running every 15-20 minutes Monday to Saturday, and half hourly on Sundays. In contrast, the northern rural parts—including North Crawley, Sherington, Western Underwood, and Castlethorpe—have significantly lower accessibility, with less than 30% coverage, and services running hourly or two-hourly. These low-access areas may pose challenges for residents without private vehicles, highlighting the need to explore demand-responsive transport options or new bus routes to improve connectivity.

Open space

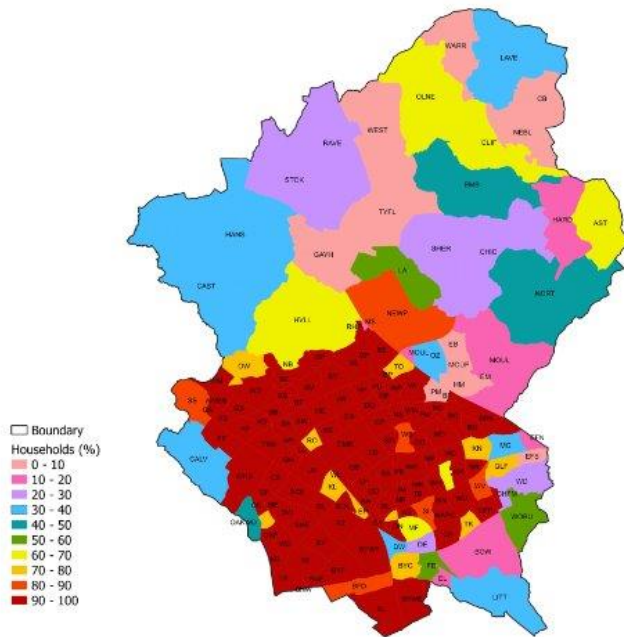


Figure 4 - Open Space

Areas with high accessibility to open space in Milton Keynes—such as CMK⁴ and its surrounding grid squares, as well as Newport Pagnell—have 70–100% of households located within 710 meters of open space. In contrast, more rural locations like Moulsoe, Bow Brickhill, Chicheley, Ravenstone, Stoke Goldington, Gayhurst, and Warrington fall below 30% accessibility. Interestingly, despite their rural nature, these areas have poorer access to open space, which may negatively affect residents' health, wellbeing, and overall quality of life.

⁴ Central Milton Keynes

Grocery shops

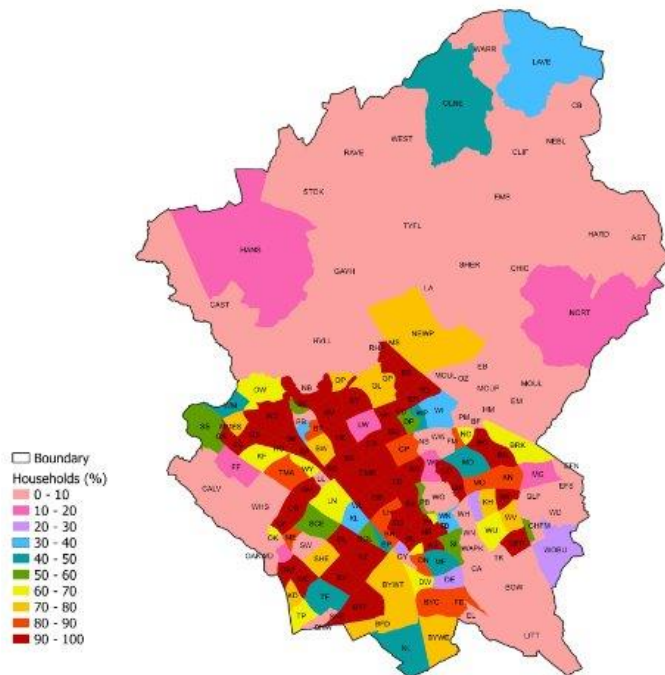


Figure 5 - Grocery shops

Most of the northern part of the borough has very low accessibility to grocery shops, with fewer than 10% of households located within 800m of one. Exceptions include Olney and Lavendon, which show slightly better access at 30–50%. In contrast, CMK and nearby areas such as Conniburrow and Downs Barn have over 90% of households within close proximity to a grocery shop. Overall, rural areas experience significantly lower access compared to the more urban city centre, which may affect convenience and daily living for residents.

Primary healthcare facility / pharmacy

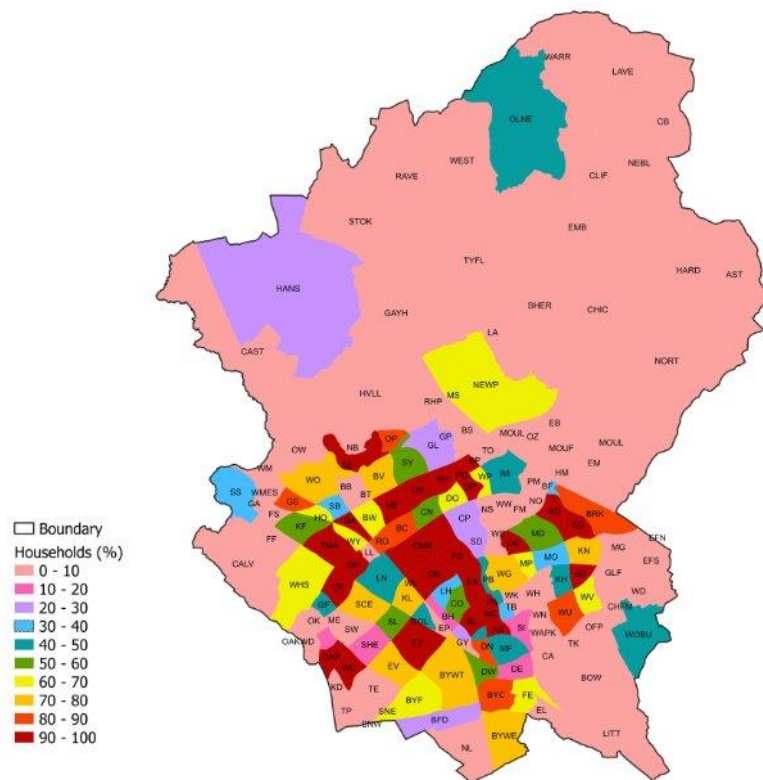


Figure 6: Primary healthcare facility / pharmacy

This map highlights a clear disparity in access to primary healthcare facilities and pharmacies between central and peripheral areas of Milton Keynes. Grid squares surrounding the city centre generally show better accessibility, while rural areas lag behind. Olney stands out with 40–50% of households within 800 meters of a healthcare facility, in contrast to its surrounding areas, which fall below 10%. Other areas such as Hanslope, Woburn Sands, and Newport Pagnell also perform slightly better than their neighbouring grid squares.

Pre-school / primary school

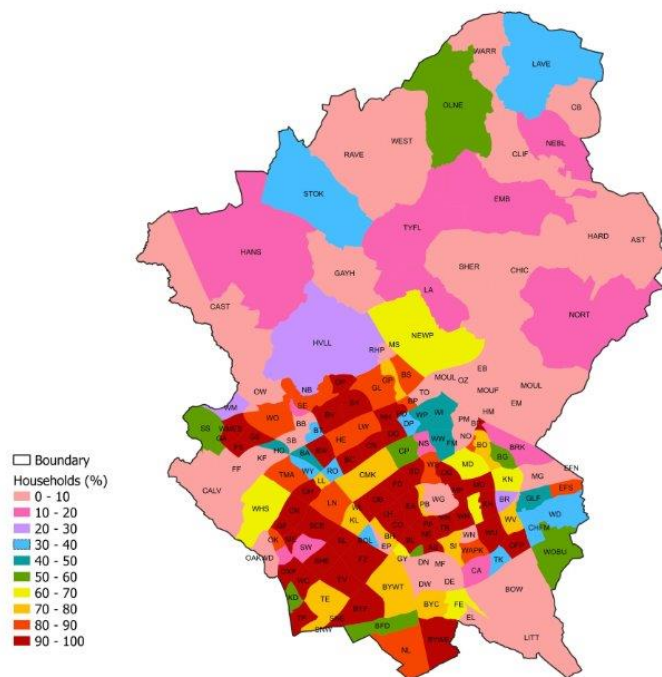


Figure 7: Pre-school / Primary School

This spatial data displayed in this map shows notable variation in access to pre-schools and primary schools across Milton Keynes, with a recurring pattern of lower accessibility in rural northern areas, where most households fall below the 30% threshold of being within 800 meters of a school. In contrast, areas closer to and south of the city centre—such as Springfield, Shenley Church End, and Emerson Valley—demonstrate high accessibility, with over 90% of households located within close proximity to educational facilities.

Indoor / outdoor recreation centre

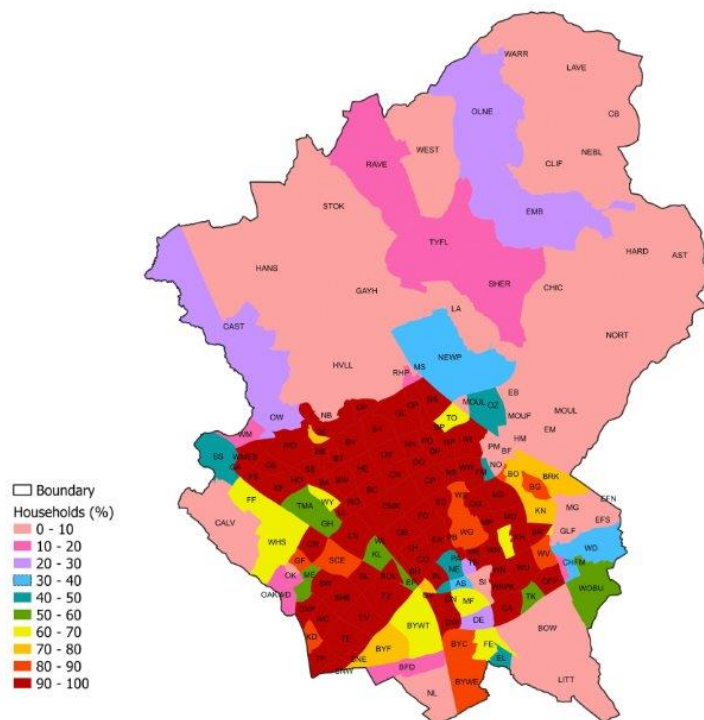


Figure 8: Indoor / outdoor recreation centre

This map reinforces a recurring theme in the study: the northern and more rural areas of Milton Keynes face limited access to key services, including indoor and outdoor recreation spaces. Locations such as Lavendon, Warrington, Ravenstone, Western Underwood, Olney, and Emberton all have less than 30% of households within 800 meters of such facilities. In contrast, areas closer to the city centre—like Giffard Park, Great Linford, Winterhill, and Stacey Bushes—show much higher accessibility. Notably, Newport Pagnell has a lower-than-expected rate, with only 30–40% of households within reach, which is below the city average outside the rural zones.

Allotments

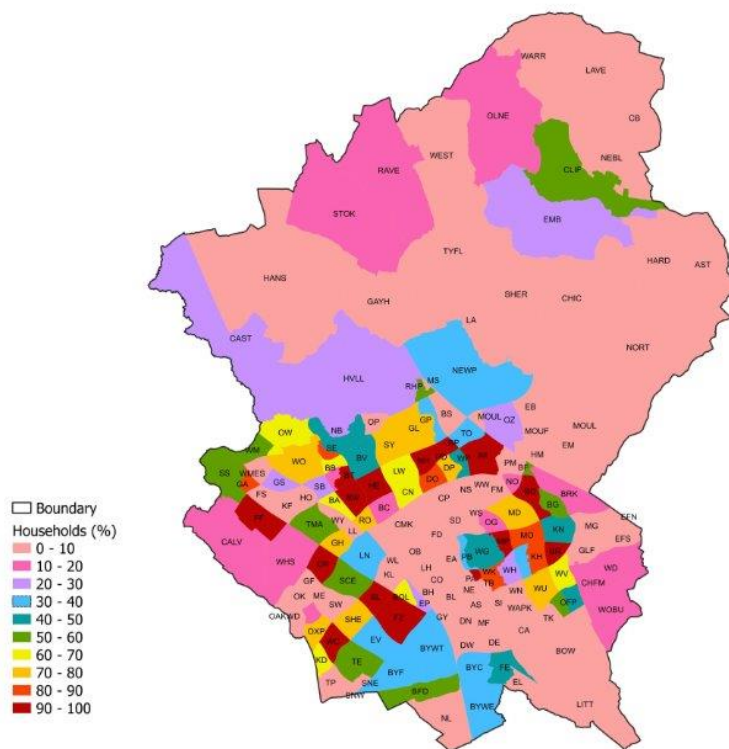


Figure 9: Allotments

The mapping of accessibility to allotments has CMKs lowest score yet for percentage of households located within 800m. Less than 10% of households within CMK are within 800m distance of an allotment. This is much the same for some surrounding areas as well such as Eaglestone, Leadenhall and Fishermead to name a few. Areas with the highest percentage of households located within 800m of an allotment (above 90%) are Furzton and Shenley Lodge, along with Fairfields and Westcroft amongst others. Rural areas in the north still see a surprisingly low level of households located within 800m of an allotment with the exception of Clifton Reynes (rated 50-60%).

Cafés

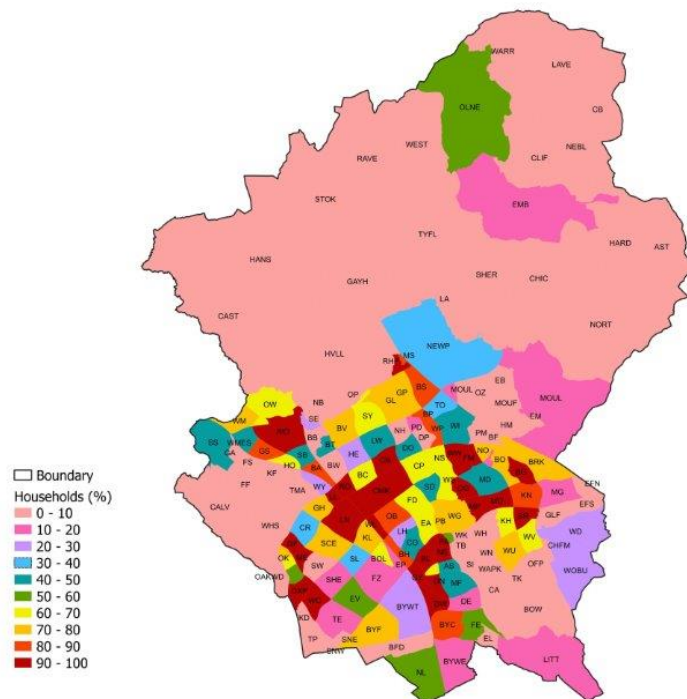


Figure 10: Cafe's

The mapping of accessibility to cafés in Milton Keynes reveals a varied picture, with significant differences even between neighbouring areas. While CMK and Loughton have high accessibility, with over 90% of households located within 800 meters of a café, nearby Bradwell has less than 10% coverage. This contrast highlights how proximity to the city centre does not always guarantee consistent access, and that stark disparities can exist between adjacent grid squares.

Hairdressers & barbers

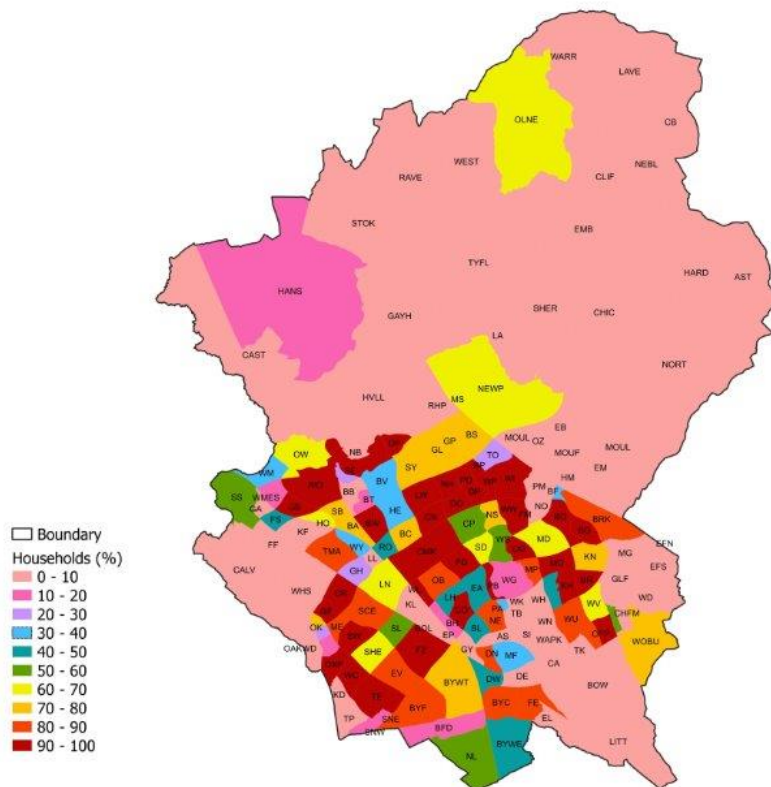


Figure 11: Hairdressers and barbers

This map shows that except for Olney and Newport Pagnell, the rural areas of Milton Keynes, particularly to the north and southeast have less than 10% of their households within 800m of a hairdressers or barbers. Areas closer to the city centre, especially to its immediate north/northeast show the most consistent high percentage of households located within 800m of a hairdressers or barbers. This includes places such as Conniburrow, Linford Wood and Downs Barn as examples.

Library

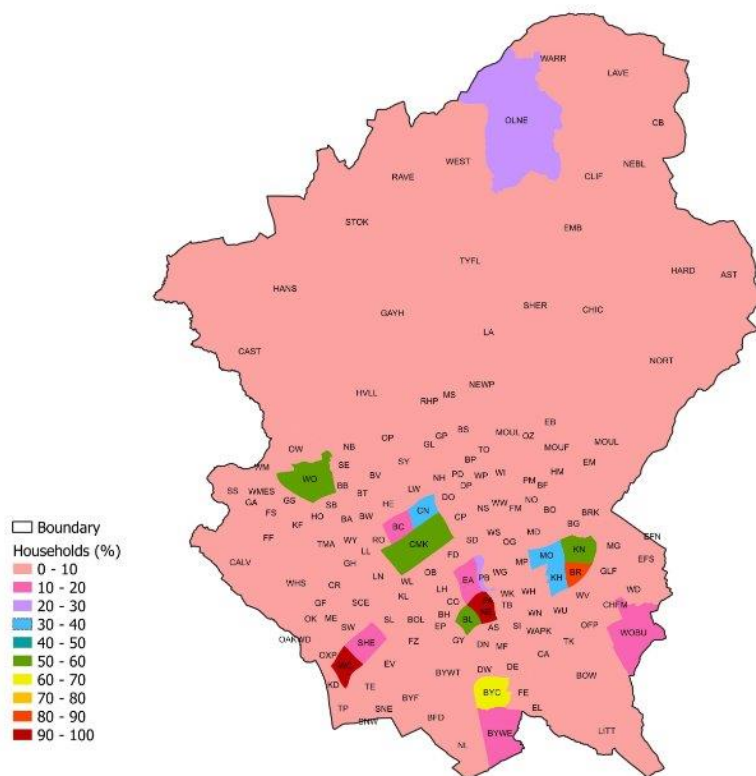


Figure 12: Libraries

The spatial mapping showing the percentage of households within 800m of a library demonstrates that not many locations within Milton Keynes are within close proximity to a library. The locations with the highest percentage of their households located within 800m of a library is Westcroft and Netherfield and Passmore. Other locations such as CMK, Beanhill, Wolverton, and Kingston all show that at least 50% of households are located within 800m of a library, with Central Bletchley also having a rate of 60-70%.

Employment floorspace / co working space

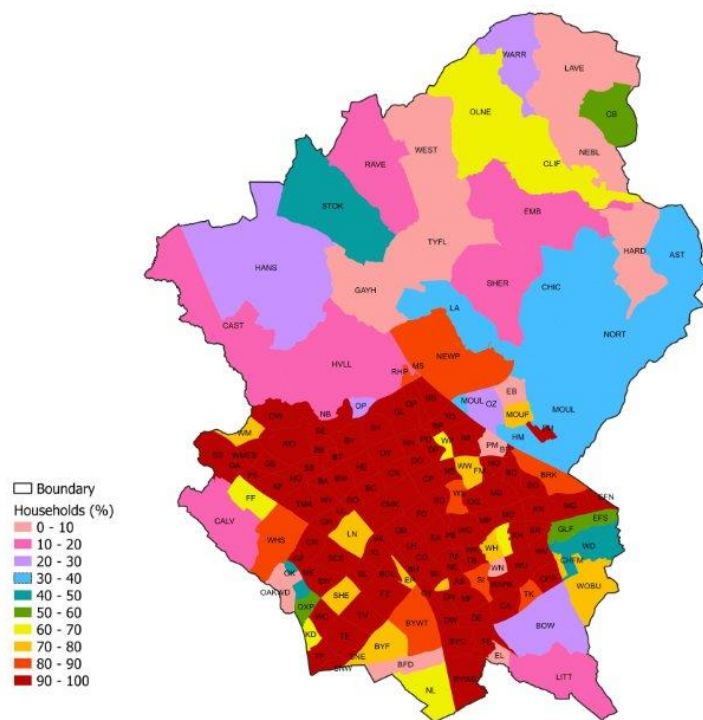


Figure 13: Employment floorspace / co-working space

The spatial data for employment floorspace and co-working space shows generally high accessibility across most of Milton Keynes, though it's important to note that the catchment distance used for this category is 1000 meters rather than the standard 800 meters. This extended distance likely contributes to the higher levels of accessibility observed, particularly in the southern parts of the city, including CMK, where over 70% of households are within 1000 meters of such spaces. Even some rural areas, like Stoke Goldington, show relatively strong accessibility with rates of 50–60% and 40–50% respectively. However, many northern rural areas—including Lavendon, Western Underwood, and Gayhurst—still fall below 10%, indicating a continued disparity in access to employment-related facilities.

Community facility

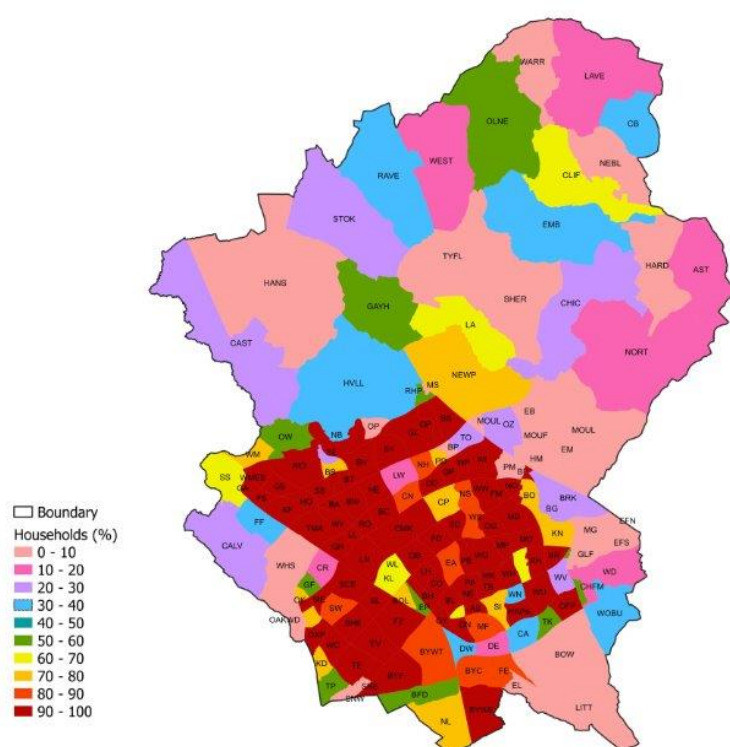


Figure 14: Community facilities

The accessibility mapping for community facilities in Milton Keynes shows considerable variation across the city, even between neighbouring areas. For instance, Denbigh East has only 10–20% of households within 1,000 meters of a community facility, while nearby Fenny Stratford and Central Bletchley have much higher accessibility rates of 80–90%. This highlights the stark contrasts that can exist between adjacent locations. In the northern rural section, Clifton Reynes stands out with a relatively high rate of 60–70%, whereas other areas such as Warrington, Tyringham, Filgrave, and Sherington fall below 10%.

Public house

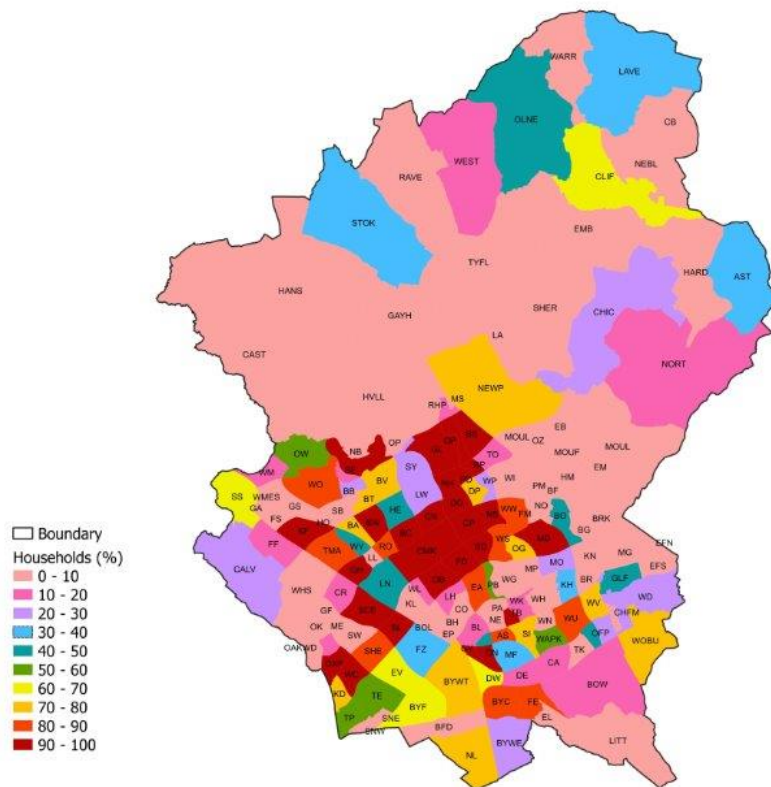


Figure 15: Public houses

This map shows there is a low level of accessibility in the northwest of the borough, with areas such as Castlethorpe and Hanslope with less than 10% of households within 1000m of a public house. Some areas with a mid-range result include Newport Pagnell, Newton Longville, Stony Stratford and Woburn Sands with 60-80% of households being within 1000m of a public house. Again, the highest percentages are seen in CMK and surrounding areas such as Bradwell Common, Conniburrow and Downs Barn (above 90%).

Weighted average of all amenities

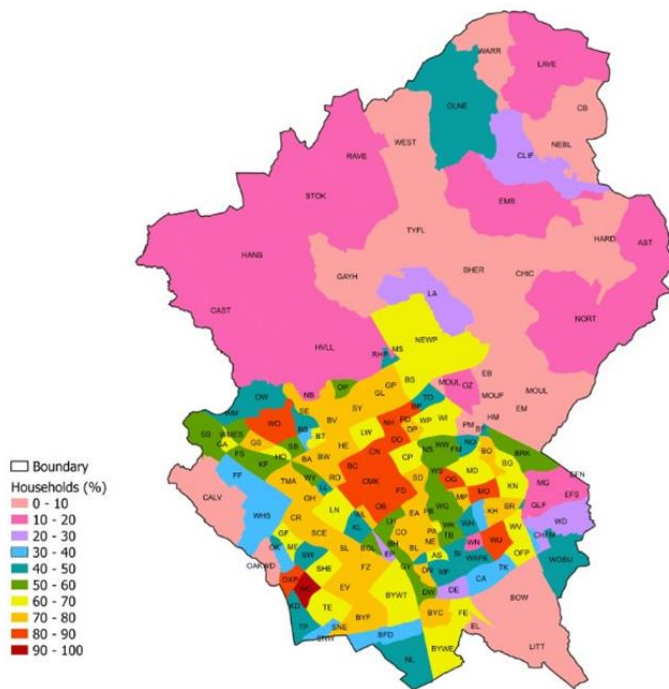


Figure 16: Weighted average of all amenities

Overall Summary of Weighted Average

As we can see from the above map (Figure 16), the settlements in the northern section of the borough in the most rural areas have the lowest average access to all amenities tested. Low averages can also be seen in the southeast and west of the borough in places such as Little Brickhill, Bow Brickhill and Calverton.

The highest scoring location whose weighted average sits in the 90-100% category, meaning 90-100% of households in this area are located within 800-1000m of all of the destination types is Westcroft in the southwest of the borough. This is closely followed by CMK and the surrounding grid squares such as Bradwell Common and Pennyland to name a couple.

Key Themes and Expectations

A key theme emerging from the accessibility analysis is the contrast between rural and urban grid squares, with urban areas—particularly those within close proximity to the city—demonstrating significantly higher levels of accessibility. This is largely attributable to the concentration of infrastructure, services, and transport links in more densely populated urban environments. In contrast, rural grid squares tend to exhibit lower accessibility due to their dispersed nature and limited connectivity. This disparity is both expected and instrumental in shaping the spatial strategy of the MK City Plan 2050, which prioritises development in urban areas. By focusing allocations in locations that are inherently more accessible and sustainable, the plan aims to support inclusive growth while minimising environmental impact.

transport stops, more frequent transport, increased surveillance via CCTV, better located road crossings and traffic management. Comments around road safety in Hanslope were specified. Additionally, suggestions include creating more recreational spaces and controlling parking on pavements to enhance safety. These were reasons cited as to why some respondents might choose not to access amenities and services by foot.

Transport

The survey revealed that 71% of respondents own a car. This may be a key reason why many choose not to access amenities and services via alternative modes of transport. However, even among those without access to a car, there was a noticeable reluctance to use public transport. Respondents cited unreliable and inconsistent bus services as a major concern, with specific comments highlighting that areas such as Eagle Farm are underserved.

Convenience also played a significant role in transport choices. Of those who drive, 20% reported living within accessible distances of places that meet their daily needs. To address this, 12% of respondents stated they use facilities near their workplaces. Additionally, 15% indicated they rely on a car because they are unable to travel far without one.

Even when respondents acknowledged that walking or using public transport was possible for daily tasks, 55% said they needed to drive in order to carry everything back from the shops. Another 16% cited safety concerns as their reason for choosing to drive.

Amenities, Local Centres and

Feedback indicated a desire for enhanced local amenities, including a wider variety of options and improvements in the quality of those currently available. There was a strong interest in the introduction of independent shops and placemaking efforts to create more pleasant and inviting environments—particularly in the local centres of Fishermead and Oldbrook, which were specifically mentioned.

Kingston and Westcroft were identified as local centres that would benefit from an expanded leisure offering, with suggestions to make these areas more permeable and easier to navigate on foot. Additional comments highlighted the limited availability of bike parking facilities, which contributes to a reluctance among residents to cycle to these centres.

Infrastructure

There was limited feedback regarding infrastructure; however, respondents expressed a clear desire for improvements to local infrastructure to be prioritised before any new developments. This approach was seen as essential to avoid overwhelming existing services and to ensure they remain accessible. Suggestions included enhancing public transport services and increasing capacity in local infrastructure such as schools and GP practices, before considering additional housing developments.

Some respondents also proposed that developments bordering Milton Keynes should contribute financially to support the local infrastructure they are likely to impact.

Priorities according to local feedback

When asked to identify which amenities should be prioritised in the creation of an accessible neighbourhood, respondents ranked access to a grocery store, primary healthcare facility, and open space as the highest priorities. In contrast, amenities such as allotments, hairdressers, and pre-school/primary schools were ranked lowest.

Community Amenity	Local Priority	Proportion of respondents in favour
Grocery store	599	52%
Primary health care facility and pharmacy	490	42%
Open space	465	40%
Café	379	33%
Bus stop	349	30%
Indoor/outdoor recreation centre	250	22%
Employment*	238	21%
Library	216	19%
Secondary school	210	18%
Public house	201	17%
Community facility (hall)	188	16%
Pre-school/primary school	149	13%
Hairdressers/barber -	126	11%
Allotments	66	6%

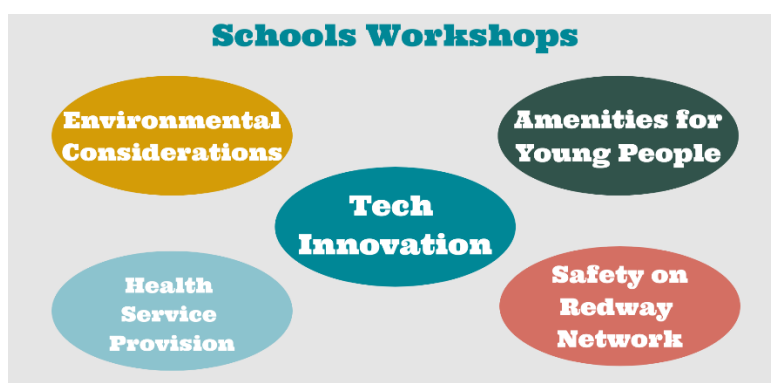
Workshop Feedback

Schools workshop

Two classroom workshops were held at Denbigh School and this involved brainstorming centred on the following topics:

- Areas of opportunity within Milton Keynes
- Areas of opportunity within their neighbourhoods
- Areas of improvement within their neighbourhoods and MK at large

Key themes emerging from classroom discussions were based on:



MKYC⁵ workshop

This workshop involved discussion centred on the following topics:

- The ideal neighbourhood
- Areas of opportunity within Milton Keynes
- Areas of opportunity within their neighbourhoods
- Areas of improvement within their neighbourhoods and MK at large
- General feedback

Key themes emerging as priorities from these discussions were based on:



Community group workshops

Feedback was obtained from 5 groups representing a cross-section of the Milton Keynes population, comprising:

- MK MS Society
- MK Melting Pot
- MK Intercultural Forum
- MK Council of Faith
- MK Churches Together

Of the discussions held, the following key themes emerged as priorities:



- The need for much more accessible housing.

⁵ Milton Keynes Youth Council

- The need for reliable, affordable, accessible transport (buses and taxis) running through to the evening.
- The need for timely, consistent and easy access to medical services.
- Improvements to pavements and accessible parking options across the city.
- Safety around transport nodes

As can be seen from these visuals, recurring themes of improved green spaces, environmental considerations, safety - particularly around transport nodes and on the pedestrian networks, as well as easy access to health provision emerged as priorities for participants of these workshops. However, additional themes around social spaces for all, amenities for young people, reliability of public transport and opportunities for further tech innovation.

Regulation 18 Analysis

Feedback provided in the form of representations during the regulation 19 consultation saw further support for the same priorities identified through informal online and in-person engagement.

GS4 – Creating People Friendly and Healthy Places

The feedback provided on this growth strategy policy reflects a strong desire for balanced growth—one that prioritises environmental sustainability, liveability, and community wellbeing. Respondents showed overwhelming support for proximity to amenities, yet concerns about over-density, loss of green space, and inadequate infrastructure highlight the need for a more nuanced approach.

Key themes included:

- **Green Infrastructure:** The emphasis on the incorporation of more green infrastructure, such as tree canopy and park access suggests residents value nature integration and visual greenery as essential to mental and physical health.
- **Human-Centric Design:** The feedback calls for planning that feels spacious, safe, and empowering, rather than restrictive or overly prescriptive.
- **Integrated Planning:** Infrastructure and transport planning must be holistic, factoring in existing assets, population growth, and diverse mobility needs.
- **Health and Safety:** There's a clear push for planning to explicitly support mental health, physical wellbeing, and public safety—areas often underrepresented in growth strategies.

PFHP2 – Provision and Protection of Community Amenities

The feedback reflects a wide range of concerns and suggestions, grouped into several key themes:

- Suggestions were made for general youth clubs, a community hub in Bletchley, and improved youth provision to support the high streets. Respondents emphasised the importance of supporting existing facilities, especially in rural and smaller developments.
- Comments called for better transport infrastructure and public transport access to community facilities, particularly health services. Concerns were raised about the lack of enforcement for infrastructure delivery in developments like Wavendon.

- Respondents proposed attracting more independent and affordable shops to town centres, such as Bletchley, to improve its appeal.
- While some respondents supported the policy, they expressed disappointment over the absence of specific and measurable targets.
- There was strong support for protecting existing community facilities and ensuring new developments included spaces for community use.

PFHP3 – New Local Centres

The feedback revealed a diverse range of perspectives, with general support for ensuring ample provision of local centres. Key themes included:

- **Need for Flexibility:** Multiple stakeholders stressed the importance of allowing flexibility in location, scale, and types of facilities located at local centres, especially in strategic and expansion areas.
- **Equity and Accessibility:** Some respondents highlighted gaps in existing provision and the need for equitable access to services, especially in underserved areas.
- **Expanded Role of Local Centres:** Suggestions were made to include libraries, and study areas reflect changing household dynamics and the need for multifunctional community hubs.
- **Health and Wellbeing:** Provision of healthcare services and stronger links to health infrastructure were stressed within the feedback and is seen as essential, especially in growing communities.
- **Policy Clarity:** Respondents raised questions about specific locations (e.g., Conniburrow) and references to other policies (ECP2, ECP3) suggesting the need for clearer policy language and cross-referencing.

GS10 – Movement and Access

Respondents provided a range of suggestions aimed at improving the policy's approach to movement and access. Key themes included:

- **Infrastructure Improvements:** respondents expressed a desire for the repair and upgrade of existing infrastructure to be prioritised, with a focus on improving safety along travel routes and crossings, particularly the Redway network.
- **Sustainable and Active Travel:** Feedback emphasised the need for better integration of sustainable travel options, biodiversity corridors, and a stronger focus on active travel.
- **Policy Alignment and Clarity:** Respondents highlighted the importance of aligning the policy with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), especially regarding mitigation and access requirements.
- **Parking and Transport Planning:** Greater flexibility in car parking—particularly in Central Milton Keynes (CMK) and transport hubs—was requested, along with clearer requirements for transport plans and mandatory cycle parking.
- **Public Transport and Rural Connectivity:** Respondents expressed the desire for clearer prioritisation of public transport and improved links to rural settlements.
- **Vehicular Access and Equity:** While promoting sustainable travel, respondents stressed the importance of maintaining vehicular flows, especially in areas underserved by public transport, and ensuring the needs of elderly residents are considered.

Key finding of Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)

The accessibility of services and amenities in Milton Keynes is closely tied to the city's transport infrastructure, particularly the Redway network and the provision of health and education facilities. This section draws on insights from the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)⁶ to contextualise current challenges and opportunities.

Active Travel Infrastructure

Milton Keynes benefits from an extensive Redway network, comprising approximately 350 kilometres of segregated walking and cycling routes. This infrastructure plays a vital role in enabling active travel to the city centre and other key destinations for a significant proportion of residents.

However, the distribution of Redways is uneven, with rural areas and older settlements such as Bletchley particularly poorly served. This limits the potential for active travel in these areas and contributes to car dependency. The spread-out urban form of Milton Keynes also presents challenges, as longer distances between residential areas and key services can discourage walking and cycling, even where infrastructure exists.

To address these gaps, the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) outlines several targeted improvements, including:

- Upgrading the Redway along V11, enhancing connectivity in the eastern corridor.
- Extending the H7 Redway to Broughton Gate, improving access for new and existing communities.
- Creating a new link between Blue Lagoon and Newton Leys, which would connect a growing residential area to leisure and employment opportunities.

It is also noted that there is currently no provision for gas infrastructure in some areas, although this may be subject to further clarification or updates.

Education Infrastructure

The IDP highlights a potential need to increase the catchment area for primary schools in the accessibility assessment. This is due to a combination of surplus capacity across the borough and falling birth rates, which reduce the immediate pressure on school places. As a result, the recommended accessibility threshold for primary schools has been increased from 800m to 1000m, reflecting both current supply and stakeholder feedback on prioritisation.

Health Infrastructure

Access to healthcare facilities remains a critical concern. The IDP identifies a lack of health centre provision in Wavendon, a situation that may have worsened since the plan's publication due to ongoing development in nearby areas such as Glebe Farm and Eagle Farm. As these communities continue to grow, the absence of local healthcare services places additional strain on surrounding facilities and undermines the goal of equitable access.

⁶ Infrastructure Delivery Plan supporting the Regulation 18 Consultation Version of the MK City Plan 2050 available here: [Milton Keynes IDP - PDF.pdf](#)

Conclusion & Summary

The accessibility study highlights a clear spatial pattern across Milton Keynes, with urban grid squares consistently demonstrating higher levels of accessibility compared to their rural counterparts. This reflects the concentration of transport infrastructure, services, and employment opportunities within the city, reinforcing the inherent advantages of urban areas in supporting sustainable growth. Conversely, rural grid squares tend to be less accessible, often due to limited public transport provision and lower densities of key services.

This urban-rural divide in accessibility is a critical consideration in shaping the spatial strategy of the MK City Plan 2050. The plan's focus on allocating growth predominantly within urban areas is underpinned by the need to promote sustainable development, reduce reliance on private vehicles, and ensure equitable access to opportunities. By directing development to locations with existing or potential high accessibility, the plan supports inclusive communities and efficient infrastructure investment, aligning with broader policy objectives around climate resilience, social equity, and economic vitality. Policy recommendations following this are outlined in the section below.

Limitations of the spatial data

While percentage-based accessibility mapping provides valuable insights, it is important to consider population density when interpreting these figures. Areas with lower percentages may still represent a significant number of residents if they are densely populated, whereas high percentages in sparsely populated rural areas may affect fewer people overall. This means that accessibility challenges—and the strategies required to address them—will vary depending on the population distribution. In particular, more tailored and flexible approaches may be needed in rural areas, where traditional infrastructure solutions may not be as effective or feasible.

PFHP conclusion

The PFHP survey and findings revealed that while most respondents felt positively about their neighbourhoods, there were clear concerns around accessibility, safety, and transport. Many relied on private cars due to limited and unreliable public transport, and safety issues—particularly in pedestrian areas—discouraged active travel. Respondents also called for better-quality amenities, improved infrastructure, and more inclusive spaces. Grocery stores, healthcare facilities, and open spaces were identified as top priorities. Feedback from the workshops reinforced these themes, highlighting the need for accessible housing, reliable transport, and safe, well-connected neighbourhoods.

Regulation 18 conclusion

Representations received concerning policies GS4, PFHP2, PFHP3, and GS10 via the Regulation 18 consultation revealed feedback reinforcing a desire to protect existing assets, and substantially improve infrastructure to ensure equitable access to services.

While the feedback generally supported the direction of the draft policies, however highlighted the need for clearer policy language, measurable targets, and stronger alignment with national frameworks. Concerns about overdevelopment, infrastructure delivery, and gaps in provision—particularly in rural and underserved areas—suggest the need for a more responsive and flexible planning approach to creating accessible places.

Policy Recommendations

This chapter outlines the key policy recommendations emerging from the accessibility assessment, informed by PFHP workshop feedback, spatial analysis, and alignment with the MK City Plan 2050. The recommendations aim to improve equitable access to services and amenities across Milton Keynes, particularly via active travel modes.

Refinements to Accessibility Standards

Service Prioritisation

Following stakeholder feedback, particularly from the PFHP workshops, hairdressers/barbers have been removed from the list of priority amenities in Table 3. These services were consistently ranked lowest in terms of strategic importance.

Distance Threshold Adjustments

The recommended accessibility threshold for primary schools and pre-schools has been increased from 800m to 1000m. This reflects borough-wide undersubscription and feedback indicating that these facilities are less critical than others in terms of immediate accessibility needs.

Employment Spaces as Community Amenities

While co-working spaces serve a valuable community function, general employment floorspace is not inherently public or communal. Current provision is concentrated around employment hubs, consistent with MK's urban design. As such, employment spaces are excluded from the accessibility table but will be referenced in supporting text under Policy PFHP2, which addresses the provision and protection of community amenities. The policy should clarify that although employment floorspace is not considered a community amenity, access to employment opportunities via active travel remains a key consideration.

Policy-Specific Recommendations

GS4 – Health Infrastructure

Part A: Remove the clause specifying accessibility needs, as this is addressed elsewhere in policy and supported by Development Management colleagues.

Part C: Revise wording to eliminate repetition.

Health Centre Provision: There is a clear need for additional health centres city-wide, as current provision does not meet NHS targets for patients per square kilometre.

Walnut Tree Area: Identified as significantly overstretched, with urgent need for a new facility in South East and East Milton Keynes.

PFHP2 – Equitable Access to Amenities

Policy Expansion: Amend Part 1 to encourage development in areas with existing under-provision, not just areas of change. Accessibility should be universal, particularly within the established urban area.

Spatial Disparities: The dispersed nature of development in MK results in inconsistent patterns of facility accessibility. Central and denser areas generally perform better, but peripheral zones require targeted interventions.

PFHP3 – Local Centre Development

Walton/Walton Hall: Identified as lacking services; redevelopment of the site should include a local centre.

Glebe Farm: Strong residential support for a local grocery store.

Hanslope: Expansion of Hanslope Park is increasing pressure on the local area. A new hub could serve surrounding rural communities, though traffic concerns must be addressed.

Policy Wording: Clarify the phrase “most homes” by defining a specific percentage of homes that should be accessible via active travel.

Grocery Store Provision: A map of current grocery store locations is provided above in Figure 5 which illustrate spatial gaps in certain locations across Milton Keynes.

GS10 – Active Travel Infrastructure

Redways: Frequently cited by residents, pedestrians and cyclists as high-priority infrastructure. These iconic routes offer direct access to amenities and should be extended into areas of change.

Funding Mechanisms: Specific contributions for Redway development should be outlined in S106 agreements or similar financial instruments.

Policy Wording: Include explicit reference to connections between active travel routes and community amenities.

Location-Specific Recommendations

Bletchley: Poorly served by Redway routes. Due to the built form of older settlements, integration of new routes is challenging. Consider dedicated cycle lanes with red asphalt to maintain visual continuity.

Areas of Change: SEMK and the Eastern Expansion Area currently lack provision across several indicators. These gaps should be addressed in forthcoming development plans.

Rural Access: Grocery stores were the highest priority in PFHP workshop feedback. Many rural areas lack access, particularly along the Linear Park near Walton Hall and Woughton-on-the-Green.

Woburn Sands: Continued housing expansion is not matched by service provision or active travel infrastructure, raising concerns about long-term accessibility.

General Recommendations

Glossary Addition: Include a clear definition of “accessibility” to ensure consistency across the report.

Redway Identity: Improve the public perception of Redway routes through enhanced signage, branding, and upgrades to underpasses. Despite low crime rates, underpasses are frequently cited as barriers to use.