

Milton Keynes New City Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Non-Technical Summary

Development Plans, Planning and Placemaking



Introduction

Sustainable development is commonly known as “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

This non-technical summary provides a simplified explanation of the Milton Keynes New City Plan (MKNCP) Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. The Scoping Report explains the steps Milton Keynes City Council will take to ensure the MKNCP delivers sustainable development. This Summary outlines the need for a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), the key parts of the report, the proposed approach to the SA, and the next steps.

Completing an SA is a legal requirement¹ as part of preparing the MKNCP and its purpose is to promote sustainable development during the plan-making process. The key feature of the process is to assess the emerging plan, when compared with reasonable alternatives, will help achieve relevant social, environmental, and economic objectives. It is also an opportunity for the City Council to identify and prevent any potential adverse impacts that the plan may have.

The SA process comprises several stages from evidence gathering, to assessment and monitoring the effects of the plan once completed². The Scoping Report sets out the framework of SA objectives and related assumptions which will be used to assess the plan and alternative strategy/policy options. It also lists the existing plans, policies, programmes, evidence, and sustainability issues to create the SA Objectives.

Content

The Scoping Report is split into seven key sections:

1. Introducing what the SA is and how it relates to the plan-making process.
2. A summary of the plans, policies, and programmes that have been considered when creating the SA Objectives.
3. An overview of the social, environmental, and economic evidence.
4. Identifying the broad environmental, economic, and social issues.
5. Setting out the method proposed to use in the rest of the SA process to assess how sustainable the plan is.
6. Explaining our approach to consulting on the SA Scoping Report and asking for feedback.
7. The appendices, which contain technical data relating to the above sections.

Proposed Approach

Several sustainability issues will need addressing by the MKNCP, to ensure the delivery of sustainable development. These issues and problems relate to the following broad themes in the plan-making process: population change, crime, health, housing and regeneration, economy and skills, transport, historic environment and heritage, water, pollution, climate change, natural environment, biodiversity, minerals, and waste.

¹ Section 19 (5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

To assess if the MKNCP shall deliver sustainable development, a list of SA Objectives has been created. These will be used to test the economic, social, and environmental impacts of development strategies and plan policies. It is proposed that the SA Objectives are supported by sets of assumptions and indicators which will be used to score how well the strategy and policy options meet each SA Objective. Depending on how well the strategy/policy option scores, a specific colour code will be assigned to enable a ranking to be given to the various strategies and policy options in order of sustainability. Chapter 5 in the SA Scoping Report contain further details on this approach. Table 1 below contains the list of SA Objectives for reference. Appendixes 3 and 4 in the Scoping Report contain lists of the considerations (which we will use to inform the assumptions) and suggested indicators.

Table 1: SA Objectives List.		
MKNCP Theme	Objective Reference	Objective
High Quality Homes and Neighbourhoods; Healthy Places; Climate and Environmental Action	1	Support establishment of walkable neighbourhoods in existing and new areas by 2050.
Healthy Places; High Quality Homes and Neighbourhoods	2	Reduced physical and mental health inequalities through well designed places and by improving access to health facilities, good quality green and blue infrastructure, community, and leisure facilities for all people in MK by 2050.
Climate and Environmental Action;	3	Provide and Improve accessibility for communities in line with our modal shift targets and minimise car dependent communities.
High Quality Homes and Neighbourhoods; Healthy Places	4	Over the plan period provide a deliverable supply and mix of market and affordable good quality housing, that meets our calculated needs and aspirations.
Climate and Environmental Action; Healthy Places	5	Over the plan period, new development supports reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in MK including transport decarbonisation, supports communities that can 'bounce-back' from environmental challenges, helps protect human and environmental health, and supports reductions in fuel poverty.
Economic and Cultural Prosperity	6	Designated and non-designated archaeological, built heritage, biodiversity and cultural assets are protected and enhanced over the plan period.
Climate and Environmental Action	7	Support creation of a zero-waste economy in MK by 2050.

Climate and Environmental Action	8	Increased water efficiency, including through water reuse and recycling measures, and contributes to improved water quality by 2050.
Economic and Cultural Prosperity	9	By 2050 Milton Keynes has a prosperous, diverse, inclusive, and resilient economy enabled by a high skilled workforce.
Economic and Cultural Prosperity	10	By 2050, CMK has increased its status as a regional centre for culture, leisure, retail, and business activity; has established a diverse city centre residential community; and strengthened itself as a hub for a Mass Rapid Transport system and other local and regional transport networks.
Healthy Places; High Quality Homes and Neighbourhoods; Economic and Cultural Prosperity;	11	In 2050, Milton Keynes is internationally known for its continuing/consistent approach to exceptional design quality and innovation of its townscapes and landscapes, which helps improve people's health and wellbeing.

Next Steps

We are consulting the public and a range of stakeholders on the MKNCP SA Scoping Report for a period of six weeks from the 30 January 2023 to the 13 March 2023. You can find more details about the consultation and the questionnaire you can use to provide feedback on our website³. Following the end of consultation, we will review all comments received and will make changes to the proposed SA Framework where relevant and in line with national policy and legislation. We will then use the Framework to assess future draft versions of the MKNCP and will publish a report detailing how this has taken place when these plans are made available.

³ <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/new-city-plan>

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