

Matter 8Fi & 8Fii/South East England Regional Assembly



Joint Statement of Common Ground on Behalf of:

Aylesbury Vale District Council
Bedfordshire County Council
Buckinghamshire County Council
Mid Bedfordshire District Council
Milton Keynes Council
Milton Keynes Partnership
South East England Regional Assembly

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Matter 8F: Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale

8Fi: Strategy and Implementation

8Fi.1 Are the interrelationships between Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale, and with adjoining sub-regions and regions, particularly in terms of economic prospects and travel patterns, sufficiently recognised in the draft RSS?

1. The strategy for Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale (MKAV) must be seen within the context of the wider Milton Keynes and South Midlands (MKSM) growth area, for which a sub-regional strategy (SRS) was adopted in March 2005 as a formal alteration to the Regional Spatial Strategies for the South East, East Midlands and East of England. Part A of the MKSM SRS provides the strategic context for the growth set out in Section E8 of the South East Plan. It will be important that the Part A statement continues to carry the full weight of RSS alongside the adopted South East Plan. The signatories to this statement would like to see the Panel endorse this approach.
2. The MKSM SRS was informed by a sub-regional study covering the areas of Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale. Worker-job balance and commuting issues were both key factors informing the preferred spatial strategy for the growth area, which reflects a continuation of existing relationships in the sub-region (i.e. workers and jobs broadly in balance for the MKSM area as a whole).
3. The MKSM strategy was predicated on the achievement of a high growth scenario which sought to shift economic activity towards higher value sectors and increase employment in key regeneration priority areas (e.g. Corby, Luton, Bedford) which would otherwise (on a trend based scenario) experience negative economic growth. This had the effect of reducing all major net in and out commuting balances compared with the trend projection.

8Fi.2 How workable is the concept of monitoring new housing delivery against district-wide job gains at the rate of one for one, and how would this be applied (section E8, Para 5.2)?

1. The levels of development in the MKAV policies are based on the need to plan for the levels of employment growth set out in the strategy. These figures cannot be used to manage the rate of housing development on a short term basis, but rather to keep track of the job-housing balance. They are neither targets nor maxima not to be exceeded. If monitoring illustrated that housing or workplace and employment growth were becoming imbalanced, appropriate policy adjustments will be needed. It is important to stress that these policy adjustments may not be related solely to land use or spatial planning interventions but may require economic policy interventions - which would need to be taken forward by other relevant strategies and/or agencies.

2. This approach is currently operational across the MKSM growth area for which a sub-regional monitoring report is produced annually by the Regional Assemblies on behalf of the MKSM Inter Regional Board. This first AMR indicated that employment growth in Milton Keynes from 2001/02 - 2004/05, for example, was significantly below forecast levels. Although employment growth rates were higher than anticipated in Aylesbury Vale, evidence suggests that the employment growth is most rapid in the rural areas and that further action is needed to encourage additional employment in Aylesbury Town.

8Fi.3 Have realistic assumptions been made about transport and infrastructure provision in the proposed strategy?

1. The timely provision of infrastructure required to support development is a cross cutting policy of the South East Plan (CC5) and the Assembly's submitted statements on Matters ID and IOA provide further detail on this issue; providing important context to this sub matter. For the first time at the regional and sub-regional levels the Implementation Plan identifies the roles, responsibilities and actions required by specified bodies to deliver the objectives and policies in the Core Strategy and Sub Regional Strategies. These will be a mixture of investments, policy decisions and behavioral change.
2. The Assembly has worked closely with principal authorities to develop the sub-regional infrastructure investment frameworks (SRIFs), which identify the sub-regionally significant infrastructure investments required to deliver the spatial strategy, and are based upon liaison with the relevant statutory infrastructure providers, including the Environment Agency, energy and water utility companies, the Highways Agency and Network Rail, for the purposes of informing the preparation of the strategies and the sub-regional investment frameworks included in the Revised Implementation Plan. The priorities for each intervention are indicated by a combination of the need for infrastructure prior to, or alongside development, and the temporal period indicated for that intervention, all of which are linked back to the implementation of the sub-regional strategy.
3. Transport and infrastructure requirements identified for the MKAV sub-region in the South East Plan revised Implementation Plan (October 2006) therefore represent a considerable refinement of these currently specified in the MKSM SRS Part B statement for MKAV, in particular:
 - They have been expanded to address requirements across the wider definition of infrastructure proposed in the draft South East Plan Implementation Plan;
 - They update the transport and utilities requirements to reflect subsequent work undertaken by the local delivery vehicles (Aylesbury Vale Advantage and Milton Keynes Partnership), local authorities and other partners.

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4. Examples of work which has significantly progressed include the proposal for East West Rail between Oxford and Milton Keynes and the ongoing studies into the waste water treatment infrastructure that will be required to accommodate growth at Aylesbury Vale. The MKSM SRS Part A Statement identifies the East West Rail scheme between Oxford and Bedford as a strategic transport infrastructure priority for delivery in the period up to 2016. Subsequent work on the business case has indicated that the potential for reopening the route is promising and further work is underway to develop a preferred option. A key delivery issue will be the ability to secure developer contributions towards the scheme.
5. The East West Rail Consortium is in the process of evaluating two approaches to this; the first is a proposal for a variable tariff to be applied to all new dwellings within a specified distance of the rail corridor; the second is to pursue the broader land value capture mechanism applied through the eventual introduction of Planning Gain Supplement (PGS). Both options would require a robust policy framework to be established at the regional, sub-regional and local levels. The next stage of the Consortium's work will help to develop the business case for the project in more detail and the selection of a preferred funding option, whether this is via a variable tariff, a land value capture mechanism, or indeed a combination of both, will itself be informed by the final spatial strategy when established through the SE Plan and any final decision on PGS.
6. There is a great deal of confidence about the robustness of the assumptions in relation to infrastructure provision in Milton Keynes and Aylesbury. Milton Keynes Partnership for example, has undertaken an extensive analysis of infrastructure requirements and associated costs for the expansion areas around Milton Keynes, leading to the introduction of a standard tariff approach to planning obligations; this was based on adopted SPG / SPD on planning obligations produced by MKC. The tariff will make a contribution towards infrastructure but will not meet all necessary costs. Aylesbury Vale Advantage has also undertaken considerable work with partners to identify infrastructure requirements which have informed the revised Implementation Plan.
7. An essential pre-requisite for successful infrastructure planning and expedient delivery will be longer term funding commitments from Central Government, utilities and other providers.

8Fii Milton Keynes

8Fii.1 Does the level of housing provision proposed for Milton Keynes post 2021 take appropriate account of its growth area status, local constraints and opportunities, and current build rates?

1. The housing provision proposed in the South East Plan for Milton Keynes urban area post 2021 represents a roll forward of the proposals contained in the MKSM SRS in accordance with the indicative longer term rates of development provided in the SRS Part A Statement (paragraph 22).

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2. The overall level of growth proposed for Milton Keynes urban area in the period to 2026 is accepted by all the principal and district authorities responsible for delivering the statutory planning framework for the area. This is subject to the timely provision of all necessary infrastructure. Any amendments to the level of growth set out in Policy MKAVI may have implications for the wider inter-relationships in the MKSM sub-region (as set in our statement on Matter 8Fi above) and should only be considered within the context of a review of the overall MKSM SRS (as set out in the Part A Statement).
3. The analysis underpinning the Strategy for Growth provides an evidence base for demonstrating that the level of growth proposed for the Milton Keynes urban area in the South East Plan can be accommodated. There remain questions over the spatial distribution and phasing of development and whether the high levels of growth currently identified in the MKSM SRS for the period 2006-2011 are achievable given their significant increase over current build rates.
4. Current build rates for MKC have increased over the past three monitoring years from 1192 in 2003/4 to 1808 in 2005/6 (an increase of 51%) compared to an annual target of 1580 set out in the MKSM SRS (Policy MKAVI). Overall provision during the period 2001-2006 was 6793; this represents a shortfall of 1107 against the SRS provision of 7900 dwellings over the same period.
5. For the period 2006 to 2011 annual average rates of provision required by the MKSM SRS (incorporated into the draft South East Plan) increase to 3000 per annum. This further increase of 65% above 2005/06 completions will be extremely challenging, as illustrated by the latest housing trajectories provided by MKC in its own submission. For this reason MKC will be proposing a re-phasing of development over the period covered by the Plan. Buckinghamshire CC and Aylesbury Vale DC will also be separately submitting alternative proposals for the phasing of development.

8Fii.2 To what extent should the RSS incorporate the findings of the Strategy for Growth to 2031 by the Milton Keynes Partnership, including the implied housing apportionment by district post 2016 (Policy MKAVI)?

1. In June 2006 Milton Keynes Partnership submitted the Strategy for Growth to the Panel as an advisory document to inform EiP discussions about the MKAV sub-regional strategy. One of the objectives of the Strategy for Growth is to inform the reviews of the Regional Spatial Strategies for the South East and the East of England.
2. The Strategy for Growth was commissioned by Milton Keynes Partnership to develop a (non statutory) long term vision and strategy for the growth of Milton Keynes up to 2031, in accordance with guidance in the MKSM Part B Statement for Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale (paragraph 101). The MKSM SRS provides the strategic policy framework within which the MK2031 Strategy for Growth has been developed.

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3. Following its submission to the Panel the Strategy was subject to a 12 week period of public consultation which closed in September 2006. A summary of the headline results of the consultation is attached at Annex A.
4. The Strategy for Growth was informed by a Steering Group comprising officers from Milton Keynes Partnership, Milton Keynes Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Bedfordshire County Council, Mid Beds District Council and the South East England Regional Assembly.
5. The formal responsibility for the provision of advice to the Assembly under Section 4(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act rests with the principal authorities. In relation to the South East Plan this responsibility lies with Buckinghamshire County Council and Milton Keynes Council. Both authorities have worked with the Assembly to advise it on the level of growth for Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale sub-region from 2021 to 2026. The principal authorities are also in general agreement with the overall vision and strategic objectives of the Strategy for Growth as set out on page 42 and Table 9.1 of the Strategy.
6. Both authorities have put on record their refusal to provide formal advice on the district apportionment of housing in advance of the public consultation on the Strategy for Growth produced by Milton Keynes Partnership. Given the timescales involved, this has meant that the Assembly did not receive formal advice on this matter prior to the submission of the draft South East Plan to the Secretary of State in March 2006. Consequently, both principal authorities and Bedfordshire CC will submit their views on this matter separately to the Examination in Public.
7. It is accepted by all parties to this statement that the growth of Milton Keynes will require a combination of urban intensification and sustainable urban extensions. It is also accepted that a proportion of the growth will need to be accommodated on land beyond the boundaries of Milton Keynes Council. The critical outstanding strategic choice relates to the spatial distribution of housing provision to accommodate the proposed levels of growth at Milton Keynes. Stakeholders will wish to debate both the appropriate balance between urban intensification and urban extensions and well as the directions of growth. On these issues we anticipate a wide range of diverse views to be expressed by principal and local authorities as well as other stakeholders.
8. The resolution of this issue will require the Secretary of State to take a view in the light of the Panel Report. This matter is of strategic significance with potential implications for two Regional Spatial Strategies, three principal authorities, two district planning authorities and Milton Keynes Partnership as planning authority for the planned urban expansion areas. It is not therefore considered appropriate to leave the issue for resolution through the LDD process.

9. All parties to this statement would like to see the Panel debates focus on seeking a resolution to this issue. We recognise that this may require significant debate and are concerned that this may be more than allowed for in the EiP timetable. We would encourage the Panel to reconvene for additional sessions to resolve this matter at the end of the EiP as required.

8Fii.3 Are the mechanisms for joint working across local authority boundaries to deliver the expansion of Milton Keynes adequately addressed in draft RSS? What, if any, tools are needed to manage the impact of Milton Keynes expansion on surrounding towns and villages?

1. All local authority signatories to this statement accept that improved joint working arrangements will be required to address key cross boundary issues arising as a result the final agreed distribution of development between Milton Keynes and its adjacent authorities as set out in the final adopted RSS. The local authorities are working with MKP to establish appropriate mechanisms in anticipation of the adopted RSS, building on the officer steering group and member reference group arrangements employed for the MK2031 strategy. This will also usefully be enhanced through wider collaborative working across the Milton Keynes and South Midlands area through the Inter-Regional Board, particularly in relation to overall strategic direction and infrastructure programming.
2. For example, a joint LDD is one possible way of identifying any tools needed to manage the impact of expansion on surrounding communities in a comprehensive and consistent manner. Individual statements submitted by the signatories to this joint statement address this issue in greater detail. The planning and co-ordination of infrastructure delivery is another issue where joint working will be required. The ongoing joint working on East West Rail and the associated proposals for a coordinated approach to land value capture to help deliver the scheme, provides the foundations for more formal joint planning and delivery arrangements,
3. Joint working arrangements will need to allow for inter-regional collaboration and coordination. Although progress on sub-regional delivery arrangements (and funding mechanisms) has been made by the MKSM Inter-Regional Board, it will be important to ensure that differences in the timescales for progressing RSS reviews do not frustrate delivery on the ground.

8Fii.4 What level of housing provision should be made for those parts of Milton Keynes unitary authority area which lie beyond Milton Keynes city and its planned and proposed urban extensions?

1. The MKSM SRS provides no figures for the level of provision in those parts of MKC which lie beyond Milton Keynes city and any proposed urban extensions. It simply states that development in the rest of Milton Keynes Unitary Authority Area will continue to be related to local needs at the same rate (paragraph 97).

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It is not entirely clear what this means in practice, although the MKSM SRS Panel Report recommended a provision of 120 dwellings per annum for the rural parts of Milton Keynes Borough. The Plan would benefit from a clear exposition of housing provision in these areas. Milton Keynes Council will advise the Panel on this matter in their statement to the EiP.

Ubiquis Reporting

Consultation on The Growth Strategy for Milton Keynes: An Overview

**Executive Summary
for Milton Keynes Council
and Buckinghamshire County Council**

January 2007

Introduction

Milton Keynes Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, Bedfordshire County Council and Mid-Bedfordshire District Council ran a public consultation on *The New Plan for Milton Keynes: A Strategy for Growth to 2031* (the ‘Growth Strategy’). Respondents were asked to comment on the Vision for the growth of Milton Keynes to 2031, the Principles that should shape this growth, the scale and location of growth, the infrastructure needed to support growth, and development in the rest of Milton Keynes Borough to 2026.

Ubiquis, a private, independent company, analysed the responses quantitatively and qualitatively. These results are explored in the 50-page document *Consultation on the Growth Strategy for Milton Keynes: Thematic Analysis*, of which this is a brief overview.

- 1693 responses to the consultation were received.
- The majority (88%) followed a written or web questionnaire; 12% were free-form responses.
- Over half the respondents resided in the Milton Keynes Council Local Authority area; a third lived in the Aylesbury Vale District Council area.
- The vast majority (1589, or 94%) were from private individuals.

94% of responses came from private individuals. The remaining 6% included landowners and developers, local and regional government, voluntary and community groups, public sector organisations and private sector organisations.

Developers, Landowners, and Other Private Sector Organisations: Many of these 38 respondents raised objections to the proposed landscape designations and objected to further Green Belt designations. Concerns were raised about the speed of delivery of housing and other implementation issues. It was felt that the capacity for brownfield development had been overestimated, and development in the expansion areas was favoured over the city centre. In many cases, these responses were at odds with the majority opinion in the consultation overall.

Local and Regional Government and Other Public Bodies: This category included 37 respondents. Major areas of concern included the retention of successful features of Milton Keynes such as the grid roads and green spaces, and a desire that infrastructure should be in place before development commenced.

Community, Voluntary and Other Interest Groups: Among these 29 respondents, local concerns were prominent, often specific to the area in which the group was based. There was a desire for public involvement in the planning process, the provision of community-based facilities and services, and the creation of cohesive communities. Many respondents commented on public transport and sustainability.

Cross-cutting Themes

Across the consultation, a number of themes appeared repeatedly as issues of importance for respondents.

Scale and Location of Growth: The majority of respondents (roughly 60%) supported some level of new house-building both inside the city and in the designated Growth Areas south west and south east of the city. However, many respondents called for less development than proposed in the Growth Strategy, with roughly 40% calling for no new house-building in any location. Higher levels of support were expressed for development in existing urban areas than in new locations. The establishment of a long-term city boundary in order to prevent encroachment onto the surrounding countryside was also a popular suggestion.

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Housing: Many respondents voiced concerns about the implications of high-density development for quality of life, though a substantial minority supported high-density development in appropriate locations. Affordable housing was an issue raised across the consultation, particularly for vulnerable groups including the elderly and those on low incomes. Many respondents stressed the need for regeneration of run-down areas of Milton Keynes before building in new locations.

Transport: Both public and private transport attracted much comment throughout the consultation, in roughly equal proportions. Many respondents demanded improvements to the existing public transport system, including more routes and more frequent services. Innovative transport solutions such as a monorail or tram system were proposed, and there was general support for the East-West rail link. However, a significant minority of respondents opposed investment in public transport, believing that Milton Keynes was a city of the car and that any such improvements would be wasted since people would not use them.

A similar number of responses to those concerning public transport dealt with improvements to roads and parking, including requests for more dual carriageways and better links to the M1. The grid roads attracted particular praise. A significant minority of respondents objected to road improvements on the basis that this would contribute to further congestion and pollution.

Other Infrastructure: The most frequent comment regarding infrastructure other than transport was that it should be put in place and fully-funded before housing development commenced. In the area of health, many respondents felt that simply expanding the existing hospital was insufficient and that a second hospital was necessary. Respondents also called for more local health facilities such as GPs and dentists. Social and cultural issues included concerns for the loss of the character of communities, and for problems that might arise from intensive urban development such as antisocial behaviour and crime.

Environment: The primary area of concern in the area of the environment was the potential loss of green spaces through housing development. Many respondents felt strongly that Milton Keynes had a reputation as a green city, or a city of trees, and that this should not be compromised. Concerns over green spaces included the protection of open space and recreational areas within the city, and the prevention of loss of countryside surrounding the city. A minority of respondents raised other environmental issues, including concerns for the sustainability of development, energy generation, pollution and water provision.

Question 1: Vision

**What do you think about the Vision for Milton Keynes to 2031?
How do you think the Vision could be improved?**

- 87% of respondents to the consultation gave an opinion on the Vision, more than on any other question.
- Respondents were divided on the Vision for Milton Keynes, with 44% giving a positive response, and 42% a negative response.
- Key areas of comment were the overall strategy (including scale and distribution of growth), environmental issues, transport and housing.

Overall Strategy: Concerns related to the overall strategy included whether adequate infrastructure would be put in place and how the Vision would be implemented. Some respondents asserted that the Growth Strategy should be abandoned. Several emphasised the value of the 'original plan' for Milton Keynes.

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Environment: Respondents raised concerns about the potential loss of green space within Milton Keynes, and the encroachment of the city on the surrounding countryside. The separation of housing estates from roads with green spaces was strongly supported. Many respondents opposed development on greenfield sites and called for the preservation of Green Belt designations. Further concerns included pollution, water provision and flood defences.

Transport and Other Infrastructure: Opinion was evenly divided between those who called for improvements to public transport and those who supported Milton Keynes as a city of the car. Those who supported public transport generally wanted a reliable system with direct links at affordable prices, supported the East-West rail link and called for improvements to the redways and coach station. In terms of private transport, the grid road system was widely supported. Many specific suggestions for road improvements, improved parking and access to motorways were made.

Comments on other infrastructure were dominated by concerns about its adequacy and timing of provision, with respondents urging that infrastructure be put in place before new housing. Health, education and policing were areas of specific concern.

Housing: In general, respondents criticised plans for higher density housing, though a significant minority supported higher density development in existing urban areas. Some charged that affordable housing was largely missing from the Growth Strategy. Many respondents called for regeneration, suggesting that existing housing stock and infrastructure be improved before new development began.

Question 2: Principles

What do you think about the Principles that should shape the growth of Milton Keynes to 2031? How do you think the Principles could be improved?

- 84% of respondents to the consultation gave an opinion on the Principles.
- More respondents expressed a positive view of the Principles (48%) than negative (33%).
- Respondents from Aylesbury Vale were the most positive about the Principles.
- The majority of comments were general statements of agreement or criticism, rather than specific suggestions for improvement.

General Comments: Many who expressed overall agreement with the Principles were concerned about whether the Principles could be implemented in terms of cost and political will. Those who disagreed with the Principles most frequently asserted that the overall scale of growth was too high and the Principles were unachievable.

Land Use and Environment: The most popular area for comment was concern about the loss of green spaces and opposition to greenfield development, with specific requests for Green Belt protection. A minority of respondents called for the development of sustainable resources, particularly around energy provision. The relationship between green spaces and grid roads was highlighted.

Transport and Infrastructure: Many respondents felt that the Principle of helping people to leave the car at home was unrealistic without substantial improvements to public transport. This concern led to opposite suggestions: some advocated investment in public transport, while others pressed for this Principle to be omitted. Better provision of hospitals and health facilities, schools, sports and leisure facilities, emergency services including policing, and utilities including sustainable energy provision were called for. The need for a new university was questioned.

Question 3: Infrastructure

**Is there anything missing from this list [of infrastructure improvements]? If so, what?
Is there anything that should be taken off this list? If so, what?**

- Two-thirds of respondents to the consultation commented on infrastructure.
- The most frequently raised issues were transport, culture and education, health and environment.
- Relatively few respondents called for anything to be removed from the list of infrastructure improvements. The majority who responded to this question suggested additions.

Transport: In the area of public transport, the majority of respondents called for an improved, efficient system. The East-West rail link was supported, as were additional train services to major destinations, improvements to cycle paths, and a renovated coach station. On the other hand, responses focusing on road transport supported the grid road system and called for its extension into development areas. Further Park & Ride facilities and city-centre parking were suggested, as were specific road improvements such as dual carriageways and better access to the M1.

Culture, Education and Health: Improvements were requested to educational facilities at all levels. Development of the existing Cranfield University and Open University was favoured over the construction of a new university. Specific suggestions were also made in the areas of sport and leisure, youth services, entertainment, museums and heritage, and faith centres. On the topic of health, respondents called for the construction of a new hospital and increased provision of GPs and dentists. Pressure on health services as a result of the planned population growth was a concern for many.

Environment: Respondents were concerned with preventing the loss of green space and protecting rural landscapes. Sustainable energy provision, water provision, and sewerage infrastructure were commented on by a minority of respondents.

Question 4: Scale and Location of Growth

How many additional homes do you think should be built within the city, South West of the city, and South East of the city to 2026? Are there other locations around the edge of the city that you think would be suitable for development, to help meet the government's housing target for Milton Keynes?

- 82% of respondents to the consultation commented on the scale and location of growth.
- Overall, building within the city was the most popular option, while building to the South West of the city was the least popular.
- In each case, the majority of respondents supported some development, but the single most popular response was 'no additional homes'.

Within the City: Responses were polarised at the highest and lowest housing options: 'more than 10,000' (23%) and 'up to 5,000' (23%). Respondents from Milton Keynes favoured lower levels of housing development, while those from Aylesbury Vale favoured higher levels.

South West of the City: Overall, respondents favoured lower levels of housing development in the South West Growth Area with only 4% choosing 'more than 10,000' homes and 79% choosing either 'up to 5,000' or 'none'. Responses from those living in Aylesbury Vale were most weighted towards the lower options.

South East of the City: There was less of a clear trend in this location. While 43% requested no housing development, the remaining responses were roughly balanced between the two lower development options and the two higher options. Respondents from Mid-Bedfordshire were most likely to opt for 'none', while those from Aylesbury Vale were more weighted towards the higher options.

Other Locations for Development: The most popular alternative expansion areas were (1) east of Milton Keynes and the M1, chosen by 30% of respondents to the question; (2) within the existing city; and (3) south of Milton Keynes and the railway line.

Development in the Rest of Milton Keynes Borough to 2026: Respondents were divided in whether they favoured no development or high levels of development elsewhere in Milton Keynes Borough. One-third of respondents stated that there should be no development in the rest of Milton Keynes while almost one-third chose the highest option of more than 1,800 homes.

Question 5: Timing of Development

What do you think about the order in which new areas of development should come forward up to 2026? If you do not support the proposed order, how do you think it should be changed?

- 41% of respondents gave a neutral opinion on the proposed timing of development, more than on any other question.
- Respondents from Milton Keynes were the most positive and those from Mid-Bedfordshire the most negative about the proposed order of development.

Few respondents suggested changes to the proposed order of development. A number suggested that the potential for development to the east of Milton Keynes and the M1 should be evaluated. Of those who proposed an alternative order, the most popular option was within the existing urban area first.

Question 6: Any Other Comments

Do you have any other comments on the Growth Strategy and supporting documents?

- One-third of respondents to this question expressed overall criticism of the Growth Strategy while 2% expressed overall praise.
- Transport received the most comment overall. Almost a third of respondents commented on green spaces.

Overall Criticism: Respondents feared that the positive features and ‘original vision’ of Milton Keynes would be compromised or destroyed. Economic concerns about the rising cost of living in Milton Keynes were voiced, as were fears around rising crime, increased traffic and pollution and urban sprawl. It was doubted whether adequate infrastructure would be in place before development commenced.

Transport: As elsewhere in the consultation, respondents were divided in their support for or opposition to the private car. Demands such as improvements to the bus service, the inauguration of the East-West rail link, road improvements, or city-centre parking were reiterated. Comments about the grid roads were positive almost without exception.

Green Spaces and Environment: Many respondents expressed fears for the loss of green spaces, calling for the protection of countryside areas and for brownfield development. A number felt that the Growth Strategy did not demonstrate sufficient concern for the environment and called for commitments to energy and water efficiency.

This Executive Summary was produced by Ubiqu Reporting (+44 (0) 20 7269 0370)