

**DLP BRIEFING NOTE 128**

Prepared by  
**DLP Planning Consultants**

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## **DLP Planning Consultants**

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East Midlands

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## **Section 1 – Aspirations & Strategies**

### **1. Introduction**

The *CMK Alliance Plan 2026 (CMKAP)* is a '**business neighbourhood development plan**' prepared by an alliance of Central Milton Keynes Town Council and local business leaders, working in partnership with Milton Keynes Council.

There are almost 50 hectares (120 acres) of land yet to be fully developed in CMK, where through the Plan it is proposed to:

- **Expand and diversify the retail offer of CMK;**
- **Build many more offices to create new jobs;**
- **Reserve key sites for major opportunities, such as the proposed expansion of the University;**
- **Complete almost 5,000 new dwellings; and**
- **Enrich our social, sporting and cultural life with new facilities.**

The Plan identifies two major opportunities for growth, one being an aspiration for the university to grow and the other to encourage cultural, sporting & community facilities.

### **2. Vision, Principle & Objectives**

#### **CMK Vision**

By 2026, CMK will be the centre of one of the fastest-growing regions in the South-East. It is intended that it will support thousands of new jobs and wide-spread prosperity as:

- **One of the most accessible city centres in the UK**
- **The home of an expanding university**
- **A vibrant and safe place, with an increasingly regional and national role**
- **Prestigious city centre, with its distinctive cityscape and high quality infrastructure respected**
- **The home of people and organisations working to reduce their carbon footprint;**
- **An inclusive place, encouraging participation and interaction**
- **The centre of civic life for Milton Keynes.**

#### **The Most Accessible City**

The Plan identifies the challenges of **retaining and improving the accessibility for all users**. It also highlights the need for **greater accessibility by the public transport system** and at the same time **improving the efficiency and management of parking**.

CMK has identified that there is limited of land available for any more parking facilities, which means that **public transport needs to be encouraged and improved, along with more pedestrian routes and cycling lanes**.

#### **A Learning City**

Milton Keynes is the largest town **without** a university, **and is aiming for approximately 5,000 students to be living & studying in the city by 2025**.

#### **Vibrant & Safe**

CMK want to create a diverse and vibrant street scene. However because the city centre is large in size compared to other towns of its size this is more of a challenge to create the busy atmosphere of other towns and cities. To tackle this issue the Plan aims to **increase and concentrate activity along the front of key pedestrian routes**, whilst bringing a greater diversity of uses into every block.

#### **Distinct and Admired**

The grid like system and open areas of green space make the city attractive to visitors & investors.

#### **A Social and Inclusive Place**

The Alliance is **looking for investment by the development industry**, but is also examining innovative ways of creating places which will allow the free reign of ideas. They want to create a social inclusive and welcoming environment.

#### **Key Principles**

The proposals and policies in the *CMK Alliance Plan* have been informed not only by the vision for the city centre, but also by a set of key principles and values. Underpinning the Plan, these principles provide benchmarks against which its implementation can be assessed.

1. **To maintain and enhance the city centre as a distinctive place**
2. **To be sensitive in the approach to development**
3. **To ensure ease and choice of access for all**
4. **To embrace diversity**

5. To embrace diversity
6. To recognise the importance of green and open spaces in CMK
7. To make CMK a social place
8. To be respected and admired as an important city centre
9. To foster creativity, learning and success

### 3. Strategic Objectives

Policy *CMKAP S1*

The key objectives for CMK are to:

- Achieve higher quality buildings and spaces around them.
- Promote a higher density of development in appropriate locations;
- Achieve growing visitor numbers from outside the city
- Offer a range of travel options;
- Develop as an attractive focus for all the residents of the Borough
- Encourage greater access to and within the area by walking, cycling and public transport;
- Provide more pedestrian-friendly routes and spaces between new and existing buildings and public areas;
- Improve integration between the facilities;
- Accommodate the expansion needs of Higher Education such as the University Centre Milton Keynes
- Offer an attractive urban living environment for current and future residents.

### 4. Opportunities & Challenges

Opportunities:-

1. To support the development of an internationally-recognised university
2. To transform the primary shopping area into the heart of Milton Keynes
3. To leverage localism to help drive delivery of the Plan's aspirations

Challenges:-

1. To retain accessibility whilst transitioning to more sustainable modes of transport
2. To balance short-term development pressures with long-term economic growth potential
3. To provide flexibility for development whilst protecting CMK's heritage

### 5 Economic Strategy & Quality of Place

#### Economy

The six priorities of the Milton Keynes Council's *Economic Development Strategy 2011* are:

- **Diverse and competitive knowledge based economy:**
- **Create an environment that will foster business and employment growth**
- **Economic regeneration: Improve access to training and job opportunities, especially for those with no skills**
- **Skills and learning: Improve the overall skills and qualifications profile of the resident population through education and training provision.**
- **Articulating a compelling 'MK Offer':**
- **Promote Milton Keynes as a premier location for inward investment and as a visitor destination;**
- **Business support: Encourage business**
- **Enabling infrastructure: Create, maintain and improve the appropriate infrastructure for growth**

### 6. Spatial & Design Strategy

The Plan seeks to achieve the following land use & mixed use objectives:-

- To reinforce and extend CMK's 'magnet' areas of greatest attraction for people and movement;
- To encourage the spread of pedestrian footfall along key pedestrian routes between the magnet areas;
- To achieve a good mix of activities during both day and evening hours, and on weekdays and weekends
- To create enhanced social, cultural and civic spaces across the city.
- To increase variety and competition in the Primary Shopping Area
- To disperse uses to reduce peak load traffic hotspots on the CMK grid

#### Three Magnets of Activity

1. **Station End** – Key area for employment growth. CMK also want to develop the 24hr activity in the area.
2. **Primary Shopping Area** - The strategy is to turn the retail core, with its inward looking shopping malls, into a more outward looking driver of the city centre as a whole, with visitors exploring a diverse and mixed network of Boulevards and streets.
3. **Campbell Park** - over four hectares of undeveloped land in an attractive location

### The Public Realm

An objective of the *CMKAP* is to welcome and promote a finer grain of development as CMK grows, with **more pedestrian and cycling access** or 'permeability.' **Consolidation of development into whole Blocks or super Blocks is now to be avoided**, as what would have been public Streets, Boulevards or Gates would become instead impenetrable private land.

### Creating and Improving Public Spaces

Protects & encourage improvement green spaces & the tree lined boulevards.

### Primary Shopping Areas

The plan **encourages large retailer investment** but also aims to **encourage smaller independent retailers** to create diversity with the city centre. Retail that cannot be accommodated within the primary shopping area will be encouraged to spill into Midsummer Boulevard West & around the Station End.

### Residential Use Across the City Centre

CMK are promoting housing development but need to be **sensitive to the environment to create natural surveillance** and take into consideration noise pollution and nuisance. The main concentration of house building will centre around Campbell Park however other residential development will be encouraged.

### Offices: Quantity and Diversity

CMK aims to make Milton Keynes a **major regional centre for investment in office development**. They also aim to expand hotel numbers that also provide conference facilities.

### Encouraging the 24 hour Economy

CMK want to **increase and promote commercial leisure facilities**. These will be located along the Boulevards and Gates particularly Midsummer Boulevard.

### A Mix of Cultural, Sporting and Community Uses

The indicative land use proposals plan and schedule includes sites for the following uses and facilities:

- **Accommodation for Milton Keynes to grow a major university centre with associated buildings**
- **Sports and leisure space: a major urban sports centre; dance studio, etc;**
- **Encourage cultural spaces**
- **Increase community spaces**
- **A community medical centre; and**
- **Visitor facilities associated with Campbell Park.**

## 7. Access, transport & Parking Strategy

Two key goals:

- **To offer a range of travel options which collectively support an increase in visitor numbers to the city**
- **To encourage greater access to and within the area by walking, cycling and public transport.**

The Alliance's strategy for access, transport and parking has these strands:

- **Enhance highways and car parking capacity for future growth and development;**
- **Transform public transport to provide better facilities**
- **Encourage walking and cycling through better public realm**
- **Restrain car parking provision while shifts to alternative transport modes take**

### Enhancing CMK's Highways Capacity for Growth & Development

#### Plan promotes

1. **The retention of the Gates, Boulevards, Streets and the inter-connected 'slow streets'**
2. **Encourages new development to create greater 'permeability' – more routes for walking & cycling**
3. **Encourage distribution of land uses in order to disperse entry and exit points around CMK and spread the traffic load on the surrounding junctions.**

#### Increasing public transport capacity, flexibility and choice

Plan promotes:

1. **Creation of a second transport interchange in the city centre**
2. **The delivery of the an intra-CMK rapid transit network such as a shuttle service**

## Encouraging walking and cycling

Future longer term proposals include:

- **Further improvements for cyclists within Station Square** (e.g. a 'Cycling Hub' with storage, information, repair shop and sales, café);
- **Dedicated changing facilities near the Station** (potentially in the former MK Central Bus Station and / or the new Community Sports facility behind new Network Rail offices) and other key locations on the Super Redway network;
- **Cycle hire within the city centre and subsequently across the Borough.**

## Better aligning and delivering parking provision

Due to the lack of space for any new parking facilities in the centre **any new parking facilities will have to be located on the edges of the city centre.** However the plan does not want to stop the development of parking because this would have a detrimental effect on growth.

Two sites have been identified for major development:

1. **North side of Campbell Park**
2. **South of Avebury Boulevard between Grafton & Witan Gates**

## **Section 2 – Policies**

### **8. General Policies**

**G1 Public Realm Infrastructure - To protect the classic CMK infrastructure.**

**G2 Heritage Buildings & Public Art - To protect the built heritage and public art of CMK.**

**G3 Landscaping & Open Space –**

- To protect the landscaping and open spaces which contribute to the classic CMK infrastructure;
- To protect the historic sites of Secklow Mound and Common Lane;
- To guide provision of new public space.

**G4 Campbell Park**

- To protect Campbell Park as one of the finest contemporary urban parks in Europe;
- To guide development along the Grand Union Canal at the eastern edge of Campbell Park.

**G5 Green Frame**

- To guide development within the Green Frame;
- To ensure the overall character of the Green Frame remains one of a green setting.

**G6 Mixed Use**

- To ensure a diverse mix of activities across CMK, including the Campbell Park grid square;
- To encourage a mixture of uses within developments;
- To minimise adverse impacts of mixed uses.

**G7 Active Frontages**

- To enhance the pedestrian experience;
- To maximise pedestrian safety and perception of safety.

**G8 Block Structure**

- To enhance the pedestrian experience;
- To maintain pedestrian permeability;
- To define criteria for amalgamating Blocklets through the removal of Streets.

**G9 Design of Buildings**

- To achieve a high standard of building design;
- To guide development of taller buildings.

**G10 Residential Developments**

- To guide residential development;
- To ensure a mixture of tenures and unit sizes across CMK.

**G11 Exceptional Developments**

- To provide flexibility in applying *CMKAP* policies for exceptional development opportunities.

**G12 Planning Obligations**

- To ensure there is adequate physical and social infrastructure;
- To ensure that all development in CMK contributes to the strategic objectives for the city centre as set out in *CMKAP S1*.

### **9. Site Specific Policies**

**SS1 Sites Reserved for Major Developments of Strategic Importance**

- To protect the extraordinary development potential of Block B4 and Blocklets F1.2-F1.4

**SS2 Primary Shopping Area**

- To define the Primary Shopping Area and Edge of Centre;
- To widen retail choice and competitiveness;
- To retain and extend the outdoor market

**SS3 Midsummer Boulevard East**

- To identify Midsummer Boulevard East as an Inset Area Action plan for further design work.

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### SS3 Midsummer Boulevard East

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### SS4 Indicative Land Use Proposals Plan

- To deliver the indicative land uses shown in the Proposals Plan.

## 11. Access, Transport & Parking Policies

### T1 Access & Design

- To safeguard existing movement corridors in CMK;
- To ensure that the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users are given priority in new developments in CMK.

### T2 Public Transportation

- To improve the sustainability of CMK;
- To improve interchange between public transport users.

### T3 Cycling

- To give increased priority to cyclists in the design and layout of new development.

### T4 Parking

- Promote a shift to more sustainable modes of transport whilst taking into account the needs of business
- To enable more efficient use of parking
- To provide un-allocated residential parking for visitors in the Campbell Park grid square.

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