

Urbanism Lunch Hour: Covid-19
Summer Series Spotlight – Milton
Keynes.

What can Milton Keynes offer
towards understanding a city's
future Post Covid-19?

Focus 1.
Transport & mobility. Safer access
and seamless travel.

Focus 2.
City centre public realm.
Reimagining the city centre.

Focus 3.
Reinventing neighbourhoods.



Campbell Park. CMK. Source: CB.

A Series of Three Lunch Hour
sessions focussing on the short
and long-term possibilities through
the lens of the UK's Largest
Designed City in transition.

November 2020.

Foreword by The Academy of Urbanism

The AoU welcomes and values the opportunity to have collaborated with Milton Keynes Council on this online lunchtime series. Covid-19 is presenting a challenge for all of us and in times like this we have to think clearly and implement action to prepare us to live with and beyond the pandemic.

The Urbanism lunch hours covered three focus sessions: -

Focus 1. Transport & mobility. Safer access & seamless travel.

Focus 2. City centre public realm. Reimagining the city centre.

Focus 3. Reinventing neighbourhoods.

The investigation that accompanied these sessions has highlighted a number of critical areas where action is needed. Talks have focused particularly on the spaces that we all share. From the discussions we see an opportunity to build on a number of ideas and deliver a Green public realm and infrastructure recovery plan and something that we can see in the context of our other great challenge - Climate Change.

Our suggested recovery plan brings two aspects together in the form of a Public Realm and Green Infrastructure Recovery Strategy and actions that complement and feed into the Covid-19 'Strategic Recovery Framework.'

The investigation has shown that Milton Keynes as a designed city and landscape has built in advantages from which it can benefit. Lessons that may be more difficult to translate into plans for more traditional, compact cities but potentially show how future growth and regeneration areas and neighbourhoods should be designed to be safe, walkable and liveable cities post Covid-19.

The Academy of Urbanism

The following sections cover

Session focus 1.

Transport & mobility. Safer access and seamless travel. 29th July 2020.

Session focus 2.

City centre public realm. Reimagining the city centre. 19th August 2020.

Session focus 3

Reinventing neighbourhoods. 23rd September. 2020.

This summary paper provides a detailed account of each of the lunch time sessions including a brief summary of each session and the discussion points arising from the Questions & Answers.

A summary and findings section that addresses some interventions and action areas and suggest the case for six green space themes as part of a public realm and green infrastructure recovery strategy.



MK's cycle network. Source: CB.

Focus 1. Transport & Mobility.

Session 1:
Transport & mobility. Safer access
and seamless travel.

Chair: Judith Sykes. Director of
Useful Projects & Commissioner.
Milton Keynes Futures 2050
Commission.



Session title. Source: NT.

Speakers:
Delivering a publicly accessible
transport system in uncertain
times.

- Neil Taylor, Director, Integrated
Transport Planning Limited.



Session title. Source: JP.

Realising active travel and an
integrated movement network.

- James Povey, Milton Keynes
Council (MKC) Strategic Lead for
Transport, Policy and Planning.

Focus 1. Transport & Mobility.

Session 1: Transport & mobility.
Safer access and seamless travel.

Delivering a publicly accessible transport system in uncertain times.
Neil Taylor, Director, Integrated Transport Planning Limited.

Key points:-

- Raised a question over future finances of public transport systems and MRT. Use during Covid-19 nosedived and it was thought it could lead to 25% reduction of long-term demand;

- Acceleration of retail and office functions moving online to home, deserted town centres and move to people shopping and staying locally seen as trends.

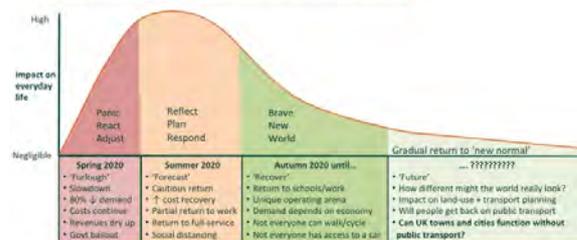
- Greater focus on alternative modes to public transport – car, cycling and walking. What is the implication for MRT?

- MRT is linked to growth happening – does a reduced number of MRT lines, means an equivalent reduction in growth?

- By implication, initial housing and other growth is centred around Transit stations – this would enable both scale of growth and MRT viability.

- Forward funding of some routes more viable than others – a further analysis of the business plan would be necessary.

CV19: impact on public transport



Slide 6. Source: NT.

How else will people get around?

Can your parents/grandparents use these alternatives?

ONS forecasts 24% of UK residents will be over 65 in 2042 (18% in 2018)

Slide 11. Source: NT.

Focus 1. Transport & Mobility.

Realising active travel and an integrated movement network.

James Povey, Milton Keynes Council (MKC) Strategic Lead for Transport, Policy and Planning.

Key points:-

- Focus on active travel.
- Redway network deficiencies – e.g. gaps such as Bletchley, and shared surface between cycling and pedestrians an issue if ‘Super Redways’ are to work for better commuting.
- How programmes going forward need to be proactive rather than reactive to government funding programmes.
- Links to cross-city and regional movement – multi-modal beyond Milton Keynes - Improved links, connection to activity areas and employment hubs.
- MK’s advantage over other cities is that it has a base infrastructure that can be built on separate to road infrastructure, continuity is possible.



Slide 2. Source: JP.



Slide 7. Source: JP.

Discussion Points from Session 1. Questions & Answers.

Key points:-

- **Avoid polarisation.**

Be aware of the polarisation of different transport modes. While there is a greater use of active travel there is a risk that more people will abandon public transport and return to the use of the private car.

Keep a focus on public transport and a forward-looking emergency plan.

- **Think differently.**

The economics of public transport have really shifted as a result of Covid-19 and will have an impact on how we plan for it in the future.

The challenge now is to think differently about public transport and be prepared to adopt a vision led service outcome approach to future travel.

- **Investing for the future.**

Investment in transport and mobility must happen in the context of how retail and work practices will change. Infrastructure interventions responding to how we plan our urban centres in the future.

- **Multi centred growth.**

Support growth centred on city intensification, contained within the MK boundaries and around transport hubs and transit stops. Support and relate this to walkable neighbourhoods and active travel. Use a case based on this to lever funds.

- **The default choice.**

Make cycling and walking attractive and the default choice. Ensure uptake in active travel is maintained and does not lose momentum. Be clear on active travel scope and the modal hierarchy.

- **Affordable & inclusive**

Make public transport affordable. Address inclusivity for all on an improved transport network but avoid direct penalties as a consequence of transport improvements. Focus on high quality active travel where the disadvantaged will have access to a cost-free system.

Maximise use of the redway asset

get cycling

- Not just about infrastructure
- Behaviour change
- Access to bikes

VIK

Discussion Points from Session 1. Questions & Answers.

- **Balanced choices.**

Apply the discipline of low average fare to new transit systems as part of its viability assessment.

Make a balanced policy choice over the level of support for private vehicles in future: a lower priority on new parking provision for example.

Address the design of the place, city structures and the concept of the compact city to support different modes and what intensification means.

- **Safety issues.**

Be aware of active travel safety issues as a result of the increased use and diverse range of vehicles using the Redway network, which should be seen as our most important asset and invested in.

Undertake a detailed design strategy that supports a range of users on the Redway network.

- **Words into action.**

How do we move from principle to actions? How do we ensure sustained, predictable funding to allow things to happen? Recognise the need for a flip in priority and an emergency action plan.

- **Delivery organisation.**

Review the best organisation for delivering the transport service and whether it remains as now, the existing situation, a single authority, or hybrid model.

Central to this is MKC leadership to drive this forward with business and communities fully in support.



Active vehicle modes. MK. Source: ST.



Transit interchange. MK Central. Source: CB.

Focus 2. City centre public realm.

Session 2:
Reimagining the city centre.

Chair: Hilary Satchwell. Director.
Tibbalds Planning and Urban
Design.

Speakers:
The Strategic Growth Corridor:
the City Centre.

- Will Cousins, Design Director,
David Lock Associates.

A Post Covid19 Milton Keynes
City Centre – what has been, is
currently and could be achieved.

- Neil Sainsbury, Head of Place-
making, Milton Keynes Council.



Title slide. Source: WC.

AoU Covid-19 Summer Series Spotlight, Milton Keynes

A Post Covid19 Milton Keynes City Centre –
What has been, is currently and could be
achieved, with specific focus on public realm?

Neil Sainsbury
Head of Placemaking, Milton Keynes Council
19 August 2020



Title slide. Source: NS.

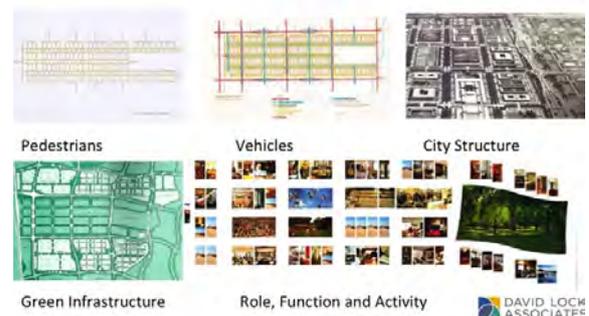
Focus 2. City centre public realm.

Session 2: City centre public realm.
Reimagining the city centre.

The Strategic Growth Corridor: the
City Centre.
Will Cousins, Design Director, David
Lock Associates.

Key points:-

- Resilience to Covid-19 Is Milton Keynes by its very design, better placed than others? Milton Keynes Council published its Economic Recovery Plan in July 2020.
- MK Futures 2050 – DLA asked to provide reflections and insight on city centre structures, resulted in the Strategic Growth Study, August 2019.
- City Centre - Central Milton Keynes (CMK) and its neighbouring Central Housing Area – an important relationship between them.
- CMK Neighbourhood Plan. Importance of Mixed uses and centres role. A need to refocus CMK as a Local Centre for the Central Area as a whole. Identity issues for locals.
- CMK - Governance is a complex hierarchy which needs resolving.



Slide 6. Source: WC



Slide 11. Source: WC.

Focus 2. City centre public realm.

- CMK as a playful city – the City Club effect. Making normal wonderful. ‘The Everyday Wonder’. Cultural element of animation and vibrancy – The Active City.

- Case studies – Eindhoven and Philips factory site; Melbourne Growth Plan (Jan Gehl/Rob Adams); Copenhagen (Tina Saaby) – the role of the City Architect in Placemaking and Design.

- Hyper-Local and the 15-Minute City – spaces and places to enjoy together, networked and connected. A Local role to add to the City and Regional Roles.

- Four Steps for Covid-19 Resilience:

- Make CMK “Hyper-Local” - The 15min City;

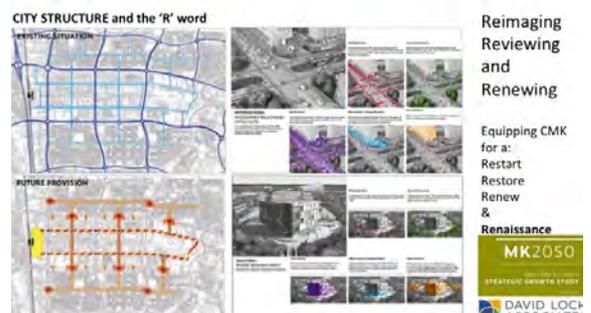
- Establish a Lab for making the ‘Everyday Wonder’;

- Take Frequent and Small Steps to Place (re)Activation;

- (re)Prioritise Active Travel.



Slide 12. Source: WC.



Slide 16. Source: WC.

Focus 2. City centre public realm.

A Post Covid19 Milton Keynes City Centre – what has been, is currently and could be achieved.

Neil Sainsbury, Head of Place making, Milton Keynes Council.

Key points:-

- CMK as a regional city, to undergo a 'Renaissance', centre of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc;
- Housing will be a main factor in CMK Growth and linkages for pedestrians need to be improved.
- High or 'higher' density housing. Relates to:
 - the overall low-density and character of Milton Keynes as a new town;
 - there needs to be a strategy around taller buildings and access to green open space for all residents;
 - a defined landscape of open space;
- Projects in planning that will be transformational for better public realm. Examples:
 - Santander Hub – commercial investments,
 - Midsummer Boulevard East as the main (pedestrianised) high street,
 - MK:U A new university and audience (students) for CMK,

- Station Square as the main western gateway, (Investment from LNWR).
- Revamping of sites such as the Food Court and Market area to mixed uses.

- How to promote and get people to engage? How do we move forward on funding the requirements? What is the overall programme?
- Covid-19 has focused the mind on the expanse of public realm that CMK has to its advantage over other cities.



Slide 3. Source: NS.



Slide 8. Source: NS.

Focus 2. City centre public realm.

How do we best use this knowledge to reimagine the centre?

- Campbell Park as the ‘Green Lung’ – new park-side housing provides a potential for developing the 15-Minute City concept

- Explore opportunities to improve public realm and open space to attract people to live in CMK as new residents.

- Redefine scale of existing public spaces to seem less expansive and more welcoming;

- Midsummer Boulevard East Pedestrian-isation – new spaces plus opening up to cycling and walking;

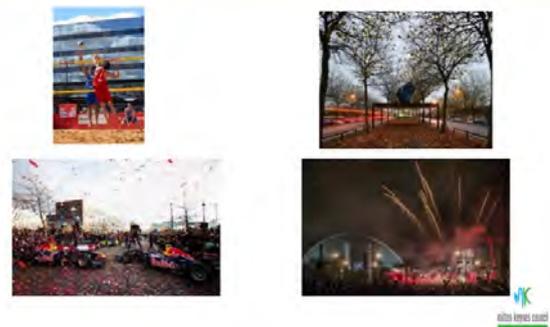
- The East/West Redway requirement that enables this.

- Includes a major and ongoing use of culture and creativity – e.g.

- A Festival of Creative Urban Living – residents engaged with design process,

- Pedalling Culture – active travel and cultural connections.

History of using the public realm creatively in CMK



Slide 11. Source: NS.

Midsummer Square – as yet unfulfilled!!



Slide 16. Source: NS

Discussion Points from Session 2. Questions & Answers.

Discussion Points for Session 2 Questions & Answers.

Key points:-

- Future uses.

Address what people need when spending time in public places. Milton Keynes has space that can be played with. The challenge is how best to use and incorporate it into the public realm in the future.

- People priority.

Identify the difference between optional and necessary activities. Are there more valuable uses than the space taken up for parking private cars?

Is there greater scope for improving walking and cycling facilities for example and for providing more green space in our future city, creating healthier and safer spaces? Focus on a people orientated public realm strategy.

- Use repurposing.

Recognise that our city centre will continue to grow. Significant changes in shopping and work practices were already evident before the pandemic, which has accelerated this process.

Building spaces and sites are available for repurposing. New and revised plans are needed and likely to include a shift to more housing accommodation.

An intensification policy and an inclusion of more residential uses will put focus on health, welfare and safety standards, building heights, internal movement provision and storage for active travel vehicles.

- City centre roles.

The existing role of the city centre as both a regional and district centre will need to be addressed against the needs of different users.



Shopping building. CMK. Source: CB.



Market place, CMK. Source: CB.

Discussion Points from Session 2. Questions & Answers.

The CMK Alliance Neighbourhood Plan remains relevant and useful although the use priorities will need to be reconsidered. MKC's Economic Recovery Plan, the MKDP Renaissance prospectus and other strategic documents will all help to inform the process.

- City, district and local centre roles.

- Highlight the different roles of city, district and local centre, the increased awareness and requirement by people for goods and services close at hand and how commercial markets could respond to this.

Investigate the opportunity for Central Housing Area regeneration and link this to reconceived neighbourhoods and revitalised local centres and better access for the immediate community.

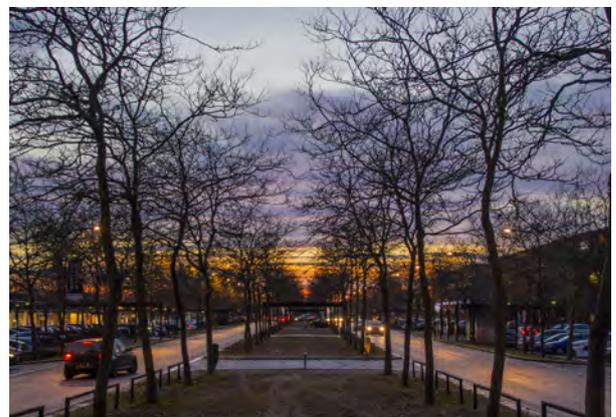
- City centre public realm.

- The role of city centre public realm is important in all of this. There is a need to make it a better and safer place for assembly and a destination. There is a benefit from the replanning of external spaces - a multiple place offering diverse multiple choices should be promoted.

An updated cultural infrastructure plan for CMK is essential and needs to be part of way forward. Part of a programme to draw people back to city centre that must address both regional and local community interests, This requires an action plan involving all the council, developers and communities.



Octo sculpture. CMK. Source: CB.

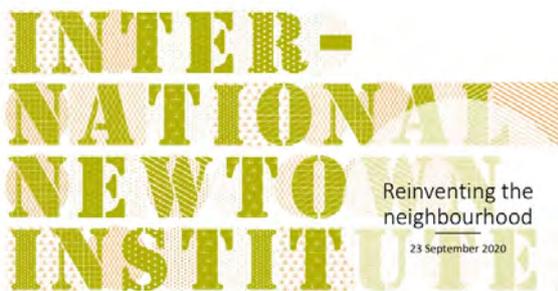


Midsummer Boulevard. CMK. Source: CB.

Focus 3. Reinventing neighbourhoods.

Session 3:
Reinventing neighbourhoods.

Chair:
Jasvir Atwal. AoU Board Director.
Director. Kevin Murray Associ-
ates.



Title slide. Source: MP.

Speakers:
Reinventing neighbourhoods - the
New Town and Covid-19.

- Michelle Provoost, Director, In-
ternational New Town Institute.



Title slide. Source: WR.

How Covid-19 Impacts
Regeneration Principles and
delivering a community-led
approach.

- Will Rysdale, Head of Housing
Development, MKC.

Focus 3. Reinventing neighbourhoods.

Session 3 : Reinventing neighbourhoods

Reinventing neighbourhoods - the New Town and Covid-19.

Michelle Provoost, Director,
International New Town Institute.

Key points:-

- New Towns as Utopian ideals – design Masterplan and Green Space
- Revisit our local centres, support localities.
- Learn from others, Rotterdam, Hoogvliet and the 'Logica Model' of residents, professionals and city officials working together to same guidelines.
- The importance of culture and the role this plays in shaping change.
- Place an emphasis on community engagement through culture.
- Cars out and people in.



Slide 4. Source: MP.



Slide 9. Source: MP.

Focus 3. Reinventing neighbourhoods.

How Covid-19 Impacts Regeneration Principles and delivering a community-led approach.

Will Rysdale, Head of Housing Development, MKC.

Key points:-

- MK Ambition to be World's greenest city and of up to 500,000 people.
- Focus on Good Growth supporting Regeneration.
- Community led regeneration strategy. Build on this. (As Hoogvliet above).
- Covid-19 – Access to online consultation an issue for some who do not have digital services;
- New way of looking at design, increased home working, importance of outside space and role of local centre.



Slide 3. Source: WR.



Slide 5. Source: WR.

Discussion Points from Session 3. Questions & Answers.

Discussion Points for Session 3. Questions & Answers.

Key points:-

- High- density cities.

There has been a significant reaction against high-density cities with high population numbers because of Covid-19 and the threat it appears to pose.

The impact of this needs to feed into housing area design approaches and the intensification of the city centre. Issues around space standards and design of apartments and flats need to be investigated.

New housing types should address health, welfare and safety issues, efficient land use and density issues but avoid high-rise development.

- The walkable neighbourhood

The idea of the walkable neighbourhood can be undermined by the right of people to choose where they go for their services, recreation and education.

This freedom should be recognised but this means that children can become divorced from a local community network.

Equally important is the provision of good local facilities, good schools that will hold people in an area, and investment into schools and other community facilities.

- Cohesive communities.

A key challenge will be to ensure we have neighbourhoods that are fit for purpose and support stronger and cohesive communities. What form will these take?

Clarity is needed on the definition of the neighbourhood and how the community relates to this. Is the neighbourhood solely a physical concept rather than a social one?



Secondary school. MK. Source: ST.



Netherfield. MK. Source: CB.

Discussion Points from Session 3. Questions & Answers.

Should the walkable environment be presented as primarily a physical environment rather than a social unit? The implication of this need to be addressed further.

- **Community programmes.**

Importance is attached to the role of the public realm and open space and wider community uses such as more local food production, community orchards and shared garden collectives in our cities.

This has highlighted an existing issue about maintenance of these spaces. Is this a responsibility that can be taken over by the communities and local residents?

This is likely to involve funding and formalised arrangements with the community organisations and parish councils, and a possible extended role from the Parks Trust. A focus needs to be placed on a programme to support this.

- **Engagement & participation.**

A key part of reinventing neighbourhoods is about engagement. Listening to the community, understanding what they need and informing them about opportunities and choices.

This is recognised as an important part of a regeneration process but has a greater role to play in addressing change driven by the pandemic. This needs to be addressed.

Some recognised practices like involving the schools can be adopted, but this implies an extended engagement programme to involve the wider community as well in order to seek their views and involve them in the process.



Oakgrove local centre. Source: ST.



Sustainable urban drainage. MK. Source: ST.

Summary and findings.



Housing MK. Source: ST.



Campbell Park, CMK. Source: ST.

- Summary and findings.
 - Intervention and action areas.
 - Six Green Space themes and a step towards recovery.
 - For Milton Keynes, the Series sessions have also shown for the specific areas.
-

Summary and findings.

Summary and findings

The aim of this series has been to help inform our understanding of the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic is having on cities by using Milton Keynes, and by using this knowledge to map out a way forward during and beyond the Covid-19 pandemic crisis. This work is in itself a case study to be shared with other cities to help inform their planning.

During the course of the three sessions we have drawn together a significant amount of information and shared viewpoints through both the presentations and the question and answer sessions. This summary section has been prepared following a detailed examination of that information and sets out findings on what possible intervention and action areas we should focus on.

These initial findings do not represent anything that can be seen as being conclusive. If anything it is too early to draw any final conclusions from the sessions but importantly they can be seen as highlights and pointers that can be fed into and inform a wider strategic process.

The MK city model.

One thing we are seeing is the strength of the MK city model, a planned city with an integrated network of open spaces and opportunity to build a safer, healthier and greener city.

To this extent it is important to consider how the three themed subject areas looked at work together as a framework and set of city structures.

A local network of travel solutions.

In the short term we must concentrate on safe travel at the local level and develop a sound and robust local network of travel solutions, something based on city wide public bikes, e-bikes, scooter hire, local buses, micro transit, on demand minibuses and flexible car hire services.

The city centre as a new civic neighbourhood.

We should create the city centre as a new civic neighbourhood and complement this by stronger local centres building on a range of reimagined and repurposed facilities - retail, office, hospitality and entertainment, all within a people's public realm but not forgetting we have the advantage of using today's technologies to build a stronger and connected neighbourhood network at all levels.

These findings will need to be taken a step further and underpinned by further studies that address an updated MK framework and set of city structures. Something that provides a loose fit rolling programme, is responsive to change and can feed into the local plan and future strategic processes.

Key intervention and action areas.

Key intervention and action areas.

This series has highlighted a number of specific aspects from the discussions held which can be considered in more detail.

To bring the discussions above into one place, the following 19 points summarise both the items of immediate action and a review of some current strategies including the following: -

Key interventions & action areas.

- Focus on public transport and a forward-looking emergency plan;
 - Adopt a vision-led approach to future travel;
 - Invest in transport and mobility to be targeted on how retail and work practices will change;
 - Support walkable neighbourhoods and active travel and growth around transport hubs and transit stops throughout the city;
 - Make active travel and safe cycling and walking the attractive and default choice;
 - Make public transport affordable;
 - Make balanced policy choices and review level of support for private vehicles;
 - Prepare a design strategy for the Redway network that addresses a diverse range of users;
 - Undertake a study that addresses an updated movement and centres framework and assist with design and planning coordination;
 - Introduce an emergency action plan that addresses both immediate and long-term city structure interventions;
 - Focus on a people orientated public realm strategy for the city centre and elsewhere;
-

Key intervention and action areas.

Key interventions & action areas.

- Carry out repurposing plan for the city centre and consider implication of increased housing;
- Build recovery strategy on strengths of The CMK Alliance Plan, the economic recovery plan and the Renaissance prospectus to help inform the process;
- Clarify the roles of city, district and local centres;
- Updated cultural infrastructure plan for CMK to address multiple places offering diverse multiple choices;
- Define the housing typologies that respond to people's concerns over high density issues;
- Address the definition of a neighbourhood in more detail;
- Review funding and formalised arrangements for the maintenance of the public realm and open spaces if the local community are to be involved in any responsibility;
- Develop an engagement programme involving both business and community interests.



Garden allotments. MK. Source: ST.

Six Green Space themes.

Six Green Space themes and a step towards recovery.

At the beginning of this document it had been suggested that six green threads could form the basis of recovery strategy. Something on which we can build detailed plans to drive forward improved living and working conditions for everyone working towards a safer post Covid-19 environment.

In this context cities need to bring together the research and case study information and consider the short and longer-term impacts of Covid-19 and qualify them for their local situation - if needed supplement with commissioned local studies.

The six green space themes are:

Theme 1. Safe & inclusive places.

A focus on a fully integrated and inclusive transport network to support an improved active travel offer where spaces are safe. Ensure that the active travel proposal is fully integrated with the public transport offer and any emergency plans currently in place.

Theme 2. Fit for purpose routes.

Make sure the spaces, routes and pathways in which active travel operates work for people that use them, and also for the distribution of goods at a local scale.



Playspace. MK. Source: ST.



CMK festival. Source: CB.

Six Green Space themes.

Theme 3. Future use, futureproof.

Futureproof the network of parks and open spaces strengthening weak spots making sure public spaces are connected and linked up without any gaps. Encourage productive uses involving the communities. Improve the spaces to integrate active travel that allow safer assembly and free, unimpeded movement for people.



Theme 4. A new cultural ethos.

Promote a new city centre work and living ethos with a focus on reimagining its spaces for cultural vibrancy. Extend the hospitality and food offer to the street, repurpose buildings for residential accommodation for the young, students, families and the elderly reusing our enclosed built spaces in new and different ways.



Theme 5. Productive communities.

Introduce a programme for the local communities that supports and encourages the introduction of productive uses, a community orchard or garden, or the growing of vegetables and flowers for example. Using the shared local community spaces.



Theme 6. Local centre revival.

Drive forward a new age local centre and neighbourhood concept with attractive spaces and something centred on a walkable neighbourhood, a local transit hub and enhanced active travel infrastructure.



What the sessions have shown about Milton Keynes.

For Milton Keynes, the Series sessions have also shown for the specific areas:

Travel and Mobility

Unique low-density design and green spaces are built in advantages complementing an increased use and profile of walking and cycling, being more resilient and sustainable modes of transport than the switch to the private car.

Exploit and expand on the unique advantages Milton Keynes has with the Redway network, reserve transport corridors and overall ease of travel to:

Bring forward the multi-modal transport plans which connect the city with a network of e-vehicle based rapid travel with cycling and walking at the top of the transport 'hierarchy';

Review the MRT viability in line with the Covid-19 impact on public transport and consider which city related movement networks provide most benefit to the proposed Employment and Regeneration priorities.

Review the benefits of a Transit-Orientated Development, higher density housing approach to ensure access to quality green space is paramount and sufficient capacity for promoted cycling and walking uses.

City Centre

Changing patterns in work and shopping. Business and shopping areas have been heavily impacted by the shift to working from home, demonstrating CMK's over-reliance on these functions compared to a more balanced centre with residential and local living.

The city centre should use its advantages of space and reserve land to:

Provide flexible office and retail spaces with access to green spaces, public squares and cultural activity to attract the visitor to CMK;

Develop CMK as a multi tiered centre, increasing resilience through more, better quality and affordable residential with access to outside spaces.



All-electric bus. Source: ST.

What the sessions have shown about Milton Keynes.

Link CMK better with its periphery and central housing areas, so they also benefit from the advantages of CMK growth, bringing an extended geographical focus to add to its vibrancy.

Neighbourhoods

Covid-19 has forced people to rediscover their neighbourhood; shopping and exercising locally where possible.

This locality is a strength if coupled to an ease of mobility to access employment and opportunities further afield for people staying local and wanting (and needing) green space, access to parks, gardens and walking routes.

A better mix of housing with possibly some shift away from buying apartments to houses with available outside spaces.

Affordability is key to make Milton Keynes more equitable and attracting students and younger people to the city.

Housing is a fundamental part of neighbourhoods, but mixed development and a community focus around local centres of activity brings resilience.

Review where the focus is around housing. What is the role of different housing sectors?



Shopping building mall. CMK. Source: CB.

A current focus on Housing Companies building affordable homes, overshadows what the role of the private sector should be.

Design quality and local character is important. '15-minute Neighbourhood' case studies in other cities such as Melbourne should be reviewed where they undergo a process to recognise what the city's assets are and assess what is important to keep.



Brooklands. MK. Source: CB.

The Academy of Urbanism

The Academy of Urbanism

The Academy of Urbanism is a politically independent and cross – sector organisation that promotes good placemaking.

The AoU's mission is to understand, promote and celebrate the qualities of our cities in order to improve the quality of place and livelihoods and through this appreciation of what makes great places apply these lessons to the improvement of our towns and cities.

Place making is about establishing a high quality of living, nurturing a healthy and creative way of life, supporting economic, social, political and cultural activities and ultimately delivering sustainable, robust, distinct and attractive physical environments within both our urban and rural areas.

For further details of The Academy of Urbanism please go to:-

<https://www.academyofurbanism.org.uk>



Parkways. MK. Source: CB.



Campbell Park, CMK. Source: CB.

Acknowledgements.

Thanks are extended to everyone that has supported this initiative and particularly to the speakers and chairpersons for their contributions to the Lunch Hour sessions, to the Futures and Placemaking Teams at the Council, to the AoU team and Stuart Turner for coordinating the programme.

Also for the images from the speakers , as initialed and CB - Caroline Brown and ST - Stuart Turner.

Links to YouTube.

Links to the Covid-19 Series Sessions
on YouTube :



All electric transit. CMK. Source: CB.

Session Focus 1.
Transport & mobility. Safer access and
seamless travel.

Session Focus 2.
City centre public realm.
Reimagining the city centre

Session Focus 3.
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