

# Cabinet report



1 June 2021

## UPDATED MK FUTURES 2050 PROGRAMME – 2021-2023

Name of Cabinet Member	<b>Councillor Pete Marland</b> Leader of the Council
Report sponsor	<b>Tracey Aldworth</b> Deputy Chief Executive
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Exempt / confidential / not for publication	<b>No</b>
Council Plan reference	<b>Ref: Action 33 (plus 19, 23, 34, 41, 42 and 53)</b>
Wards affected	<b>All wards</b>

### Executive summary

The original MK Futures 2050 programme was developed following the report “Making a Great City Greater” in 2016 and has made good progress in delivering the Six Big Projects recommended by the MK Futures 2050 Commission. Highlights of the programme 2016-2021 are summarised in Annex A.

Following the adoption of the Milton Keynes Strategy for 2050 in January 2021, a new focus on delivery and implementation is needed for the MK Futures 2050 programme. This will allow most effective use of resources and prioritise work on determining the most appropriate delivery approach for the long-term growth programme, MK:U, Renaissance:CMK and ongoing monitoring and delivery through other policies.

Cabinet are recommended to approve the updated MK Futures 2050 programme and its priority workstreams for the next 24 months, as set out in Annex B to this report.

## 1. Decisions to be made

- 1.1 That Cabinet endorse the role of the MK Futures 2050 programme and its renewed focus on delivery as being fundamentally important in securing a successful long-term future for Milton Keynes.
- 1.2 That Cabinet recognise the progress made in delivery of the Six Big Projects originally identified by the MK Futures 2050 Commission in their report “Making a Great City Greater”.
- 1.3 That Cabinet approves the updated MK Futures 2050 programme and the priority areas of focus for the next 24 months.
- 1.4 That Cabinet agree to consider further revisions to the MK Futures 2050 programme through future update reports as appropriate over the lifetime of the programme.

## 2. Why is the decision needed?

- 2.1 The original MK Futures 2050 programme was established following the publication of “Making a Great City Greater” in 2016 in order to set out the initial steps to deliver the MK Futures 2050 Commission’s recommendations ([Cabinet report](#), Item 11, 11 October 2016). **Annex A** includes a summary of progress made since 2016 on the Six Big Projects of the original programme.
- 2.2 The adoption of the Milton Keynes [Strategy for 2050](#) as an annex to the Council Plan by Full Council in January 2021 ([Council papers](#), Item 4, 20 January 2021) has been a key milestone for the MK Futures programme. As part of the adoption of the Strategy, Council required a revised MK Futures programme to be received by Cabinet by the end of June 2021.
- 2.3 **Annex B** therefore reflects priority workstreams for the MK Futures programme for the coming 24 months. This focusses on four key areas of activity;
- 2.4 **Delivery mechanisms** – to review the Council’s options for delivering the long-term growth programme in order to determine the most appropriate approach and put in place a process to establish any new mechanism or model. This work also includes further developing the Council’s relationship with Homes England and the potential to formalise a strategic partnership with the agency.

- 2.5 **Renaissance:CMK** – work with Milton Keynes Development Partnership (MKDP) to prepare a Renaissance:CMK Strategy which expands on the Strategy for 2050 for the city centre, and sets out a delivery programme for a range of interventions, including exploring the potential benefits of a joint venture or partnership with a major development partner.
- 2.6 **MK:U** – continuing to work with Cranfield University on delivery of the university project, expanding on the pilot launch degree apprenticeships programme commencing summer 2021.
- 2.7 **Strategy for 2050 monitoring and delivery** – working across service areas and with other partners/organisations to test and deliver the ambitions of the Strategy for 2050 through the development of the new Local Plan, the Oxford-Cambridge Arc spatial framework and the work of the Central Area Growth Board. Over the longer term, this will also include a review of the Strategy for 2050, commencing April 2024, as required by the Council decision earlier this year.

### **Reasons for reviewing the Programme**

- 2.8 As well as the adoption of the Strategy for 2050, there are other reasons why this is a timely opportunity to review the MK Futures programme. The recent retirement of the Director of Strategy and Futures and the appointment of another member of the small 'Team Futures' to lead the Economic Development function, means the capacity within the team needs to be focussed on priority workstreams.
- 2.9 The original programme was based on delivering Six Big Projects. Over the last five years, good progress has been made to establish these projects within other parts of the Council, which are now self-sufficient in leading their delivery. Big Project Three: Learning 2050 is now led by a project manager working to the School Improvement team and maintains close links with the MK:U project and our Economic Development work and skills agenda. Projects within the Smart, Shared, Sustainable Mobility area (Big Project Four) are being successfully delivered through the Head of Transport Innovation and colleagues within Transport Policy, and proposals for mass rapid transit are supported by the Strategy for 2050 and future policy development in the Local Plan. Finally, Big Project Six: Creative and Cultured City is being led by the Council's Culture and Heritage team, maintaining links with placemaking and our work on Renaissance:CMK. The remaining Big Projects (One: Growth and Strategy, Two: MK:U and Five: Renaissance:CMK) are continued in the new MK Futures programme, but we do not intend to continue using the same 'Big Project' terminology.

### 3. Implications of the decision

Financial	Y	Human rights, equalities, diversity	Y
Legal	Y	Policies or Council Plan	Y
Communication	Y	Procurement	N
Energy Efficiency	N	Workforce	N

#### a) Financial implications

The MK Futures programme includes work to explore potential delivery mechanisms for the growth programme. It is the intention that any such mechanism would help to secure public and private investment for infrastructure, services and facilities.

To enable that work, the Council submitted a bid to the Ministry of Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) 'Delivery Vehicles Competition' in February 2021, to secure funding for staff resources and external expert consultancy advice over a 24-month period. This would supplement the £50,000 'Annex W' budget that has already been secured for the 'Delivery Vehicles' work for 2021/22. We are hopeful that the MHCLG bid will be successful, but if the additional funding is not secured, the Council will need to consider how it will resource the project, on the understanding that the resulting mechanism would reduce the future financial burden on the Council. Therefore, if we have not had confirmation from MHCLG of the funding position by August 2021, or if we are unsuccessful in our bid, a further revision to this workstream will be required to determine how we will deliver this important project.

#### b) Legal implications

The development of a future delivery mechanism(s) is likely to have legal and governance implications for Milton Keynes Council, which may include changes to statutory responsibilities or the creation of new partnership arrangements. These issues will be fully explored through the relevant workstream and in consultation with Legal and Governance colleagues and would be incorporated into a future report before any final decisions are taken.

#### c) Other implications

**Communications** – through the MK Futures 2050 programme to date, regular stakeholder briefings have taken place, a four-day public exhibition about the programme and the MK:U international design competition was held in July 2019, and a full engagement programme was carried out during the development of the Strategy for 2050 (as explained in the [Supporting Statement](#) to the Strategy). It is the intention that through the updated MK Futures programme, stakeholder engagement and communications will be maintained.

**Equalities** – the Strategy for 2050 was subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment that found the Strategy advances equality of opportunity in numerous ways and mentions, and has regard to, the need for inclusivity, diversity and meeting the challenge of child poverty. The Strategy recognises the diversity of Milton Keynes as a great strength and sets out policies that will contribute to delivering inclusive growth that benefits everyone in Milton Keynes and helps address child poverty, including increasing the delivery of affordable homes, improving access to skills and better jobs, ensuring local facilities and services are accessible to everyone within easy reach of their homes, and delivering a much improved public transport network to aid mobility for all. These are interventions referenced in the final Milton Keynes Child Poverty Commission report. The Impact Assessment noted that as the Strategy is delivered, we will need to give attention to the factors that have led to persistent child poverty and focus on designing in access to all and developing a ‘welcoming spirit’. These themes will be integral to our work to deliver the Strategy and in bringing forward the updated MK Futures programme.

**Policies/Council Plan** – the MK Futures programme has a role in delivering against several actions in the Council Plan, including:

Action 19 – Support the delivery of a fully electrified East-West Rail and continue to promote better connectivity and infrastructure across the Oxford-MK-Cambridge Arc.

Action 23 – Continue to support the development for a Mass Rapid Transport system.

Action 33 – Take back control from developers, progressing a shared vision for the future of the City with MK Futures 2050 and securing proper funding for growth through a Housing Deal.

Action 34 – Progress Plan:MK2 to plan the growth for MK properly, and include appropriate zero carbon housing mix policies that address the needs of Milton Keynes.

Action 41 – Bring forward plans to improve Station Square.

Action 42 – Bring forward plans to improve CMK market.

Action 53 – Seek funding from Government for the development of MK:U.

The MK Futures programme will also integrate closely with other services and departments to ensure the ambitions of the Strategy for 2050 (including in its role as an Annex to the Council Plan) are carried forward into future council policy, including in the development of the new Local Plan.

## 4. Alternatives

- 4.1 To not update the MK Futures programme – we could continue with the focus on the original Six Big Projects. However this would not provide the necessary focus on the delivery of the long-term growth programme.
- 4.2 To not maintain an ongoing MK Futures programme – this would put at risk the opportunity to secure government funding and support for growth and the leveraging of private investment, and means the city would continue to rely on the ‘business as usual’ planning process to deliver our ambitious growth programme, which we stated in the Strategy for 2050 is not likely to achieve development at the scale, pace and quality that the Councils aspires to. Not continuing the work of the MK Futures programme would also undermine progress made to date on priority projects, including MK:U.
- 4.3 It is therefore recommended that the Cabinet agree the revised MK Futures programme as set out in Annex B.

## 5. Timetable for implementation

**Annex B** sets out the MK Futures work programme for the next 24 months.

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### List of annexes

Annex A – MK Futures 2050 Programme – delivery highlights 2016-2021

Annex B – Revised MK Futures 2050 Programme Workstreams 2021-2023

### List of background papers

Milton Keynes Strategy for 2050, adopted January 2021 – [www.MKFutures2050.com](http://www.MKFutures2050.com)