

Building Control and
Sustainability Team



Milton Keynes Low Carbon Living Strategy

October 2010



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1. INTRODUCTION

This document presents a Low Carbon Living Strategy for the period 2010 to 2020. It focuses on how the Milton Keynes (MK) community can reduce greenhouse gas emissions locally and thereby help tackle global climate change by

- Integrating sustainability and carbon reduction into the planning and delivery of the Council's aims
- Reducing the authority's carbon footprint
- Demonstrating community leadership in tackling climate change and sustainability issues including reducing the overall carbon footprint of the borough

2. BACKGROUND

WHY CLIMATE CHANGE IS IMPORTANT

2.1. Over recent decades there has been a growing realization that society's current development is unsustainable. The consequences of already unavoidable climate change; the increasing stress on our natural resources and environmental systems and the increasing loss of biodiversity are all readily apparent.

2.2. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), "warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice and rising global average sea level." (Climate Change Synthesis Report, 2007). The report states that "there is very high confidence that the net effect of human activities since 1750 has been one of warming". The IPCC predicts that rising temperatures will be accompanied by many other changes to the Earth system, affecting food and water supplies, human health, biodiversity and the economy. The Stern Review for the Chancellor on the 'Economics of Climate Change', published in November 2006, demonstrated the economic case for acting now to avert climate change. Whilst unabated climate change could cost the world at least 5% of GDP each year and as much as 20% of GDP if more dramatic predictions come to pass, the cost of reducing emissions could be limited to around 1% of global GDP.

2.3. The effects of climate change are already visible and include higher temperatures in summer and winter aggravated by the Urban Heat Island

effect, wetter winters, drier summers and extra pressure on water resources. Climate change will increase the probability of surface water flooding and summer heat wave conditions. As well as adapting to the climate change already in the system (“climate change adaptation”), we all need to take urgent action to prevent further warming (“climate change mitigation”).

OUR COMMITMENTS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

- 2.4. MK Council (MKC) is a signatory to the Nottingham Declaration on climate change and the EU Covenant of Mayors that includes a commitment to cut carbon emissions by at least 20% by 2020.
- 2.5. MKC has joined the national 10:10 campaign, which seeks to get individuals and organisations to cut their carbon emissions by 10% by the end of 2010. This is about cutting the Council’s own emissions and also sets an example to others and helps communicate the message to the wider community. The 10% target means a carbon cut of about 2,500 tonnes and also cutting the councils energy bills by about £250k.
- 2.6. The MK Sustainable Community Strategy includes a priority action to reduce our carbon emissions.

TRENDS IN CARBON EMISSIONS

- 2.7. Figure 1 shows the MK carbon emissions per person. They are higher than the South East England average due to the high emissions from the industry and commerce sector in MK. The domestic figure is relatively low due to the modern housing stock built to rising energy efficiency standards. The trend in per person emissions from 2005 to 2008 is a fall of 5.1%.
- 2.8. Total emissions in MK in the future may rise due to the planned growth in population, jobs and its related traffic. However, the figures below and the MK target are measured per person, which is still achievable even in a growth area.

Figure 1: Milton Keynes’s carbon emissions (tonnes carbon dioxide)

	Industry & commerce		Domestic		Transport		Total	
	2005	2008	2005	2008	2005	2008	2005	2008
MK (000’s)	778	803	512	510	426	414	1,716	1,727
MK per person	3.5	3.4	2.3	2.2	1.9	1.8	7.8	7.4

POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES ON CLIMATE CHANGE

National policy

- 2.9. The Government's Climate Change Act sets out legally binding targets for the UK to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by at least 80% by 2050 and 26% by 2020, against 1990 levels.

Local Policy

- 2.10. The planning regime is governed by the MK Local Plan. Planning Policy D4 deals with sustainable construction and requires high energy efficiency, 10% renewable energy and carbon neutrality/offsetting for all major developments. The proposed replacement policy in the MK Core Strategy sets out new objectives that will require new developments to achieve even higher energy efficiency and an increase to 20% in the proportion of the carbon emission reductions through onsite renewable energy production.

LOW CARBON PROSPECTUS

- 2.11. Milton Keynes Council has jointly commissioned an ambitious MK Low Carbon Prospectus to position the city as an international centre of excellence for low carbon living, which will be delivered through the MK Low Carbon Living Strategy and Action Plan. It describes the ground breaking past and present environmental initiatives in MK. It is the vision statement for MK looking towards 2050 and is due to be published in September 2010.
- 2.12. Many present activities it describes are pioneering some of the most advanced practices in an effort to minimise our environmental footprint while at the same time taking advantage of the economic opportunities afforded by Low Carbon technologies. Despite this we have a significant carbon footprint, one of the highest in the south east, due to the level of economic activity in the city.
- 2.13. Milton Keynes is now addressing Low Carbon and sustainable living on a coherent and strategic basis with help from partners, taking the lead in key economic areas, including transport, energy supply, transmission and demand side management. In addition, a low carbon infrastructure is being encouraged by planning initiatives with proven benefits for reducing the carbon emissions locally e.g. planning policy D4 that requires higher energy efficiency, renewable energy and carbon offsetting.
- 2.14. High profile outcomes of this strategic approach include the first large scale combined heat and power plant supplying the new communities in CMK; the successful bid for funding under the Plugged-in Places project to provide an electric vehicle charging point infrastructure; the Central Networks

East PLC (E.O.N) bid to Ofgem for low carbon network funding including a 'Smart Grid' in an area of new development; an innovative local BioGas plant which will supply gas produced from local household community waste into the local gas grid with a subsequent revenue stream.

- 2.15. These items form the newly established MK Low Carbon Living Programme that has governance arrangements, steering groups and delivery teams that are working through their own projects, programmes and initiatives.

3. THE STRATEGY

3.1. The Council's corporate strategy, reflecting the commitments mentioned above, includes the following outcome:

3.1.1. "Be sustainable and conducive to low carbon living."

3.2. The Council also has an ambition to place Milton Keynes at the forefront of low carbon living, nationally and internationally.

3.3. The overall target of this strategy is to reduce carbon emissions per person in the MK area by 40% by 2020, from a 2005 baseline.

3.4. The Council will be the community leader on this issue but it will need the support and involvement of all sections of the wider community. Existing strategic partnerships will be developed further.

3.5. The details of how this strategy will be achieved is set out in the accompanying Low Carbon Action Plan but in summary it will involve:

- a) Amending policies, procedures or functions of key organizations
- b) Existing budgets being reallocated and new funds sought
- c) Specialist support, e.g. the Energy Saving Trust and Carbon Trust
- d) Development of a communications and marketing plan
- e) Key action areas: private & public sector housing, business support, regeneration schemes, community advice and local transportation.
- f) Use of the MK Low Carbon Living Programme as the delivery vehicle.

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