

**Milton Keynes Council**

**CYCLING STRATEGY**

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# 1 Introduction

The growth in the ownership and use of the private motor car is creating pressure on our transport system both in respect of air pollution and congestion of our urban and rural infrastructure.

As part of a comprehensive transport strategy there is a need to shift the emphasis away from dependency on the private car. This needs to be balanced by an increase in the numbers of trips being made by other means, public transport, cycling, walking and car share.

In 1996 the National Cycling Strategy (NCS) was produced. The purpose of the NCS is to create a focus for organisations and individuals that are in a position to influence a change in physical conditions, the attitudes of individuals and the outlook of organisations. It sets out common objectives, identifies targets in relation to those objectives, and identifies a range of actions that can help to meet the targets.

The headline target of the NCS is "To increase cycle use." The targets set to determine if this objective has been met are:

***Double the number of trips by cycles (based on 1996 figures) by end 2002.  
Quadruple the number of trips by cycles (based on 1996 figures) by end 2012.***

## 2 Policy context

As stated in our Sustainable Integrated Transport Strategy (SITS) document our vision is:

***"We aim to open up Milton Keynes by making it a place where everyone can afford to move around conveniently, where economic, social and cultural life can flourish, whilst damage to our environment is minimised."***

Our vision and the following objectives will guide us:

- ***All people should be able to move around conveniently and safely, regardless of their circumstances, with those able to pay doing so.***
- ***That, in developing our planning policies with our partners, we will actively seek to reduce the number, length and need to make journeys.***
- ***To encourage walking, cycling, and quality public transport, whilst reducing journeys by car and promoting a healthier lifestyle.***
- ***To ensure that Milton Keynes' economic prosperity is enhanced by our new transport policies by helping people to travel when and where they want, but in more environmentally friendly ways.***

Our objectives are consistent with the Government's integrated transport policy and with its over-arching objectives

The purpose a cycle strategy of Milton Keynes is to set down a strategic plan for increasing the number of trips made by cycling within the Milton Keynes Council area.

The Milton Keynes Cycling Strategy fits with the Sustainable Integrated Transport Strategy for Milton Keynes already adopted by the Council. SITS states:

‘We will encourage people to cycle by:

Developing a safe Strategic Cycling Network.

Ensuring that cycles can be used safely and easily throughout the Council area.

Promoting cycling as a safe, healthy and sustainable way of travelling.’

The Cycling Strategy sits alongside the Public Transport Strategy in encouraging modal interchanges with facilities being provided to allow easy transition between cycling and bus use and even the carrying of cycles on some buses.

The Cycling Strategy will form an integral part of our Local Transport Plan, the Local Plan and the Road Safety Strategy.

## 2.1 Journey to Work Targets

MODE	1991	1997+	2001	2006	2011
	%	%	%	%	%
Car	77	77	71	62	55
Public Transport	12	12	15	20	25
Cycling	3	3	6	10	12
Walking	7	7	7	7	7
Motorcycling	1	1	1	1	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100

(+ Modal split for 1997 is assumed at the 1991 level.)

## 3 The Cycle Network

There is an extensive network of approximately 250 kilometres of shared use pedestrian and cycle paths in the City (the Redways). Milton Keynes Development Corporation developed the Redways with the aim of creating a coherent network of routes, separate from the Grid road system, which could provide attractive, safe, direct and convenient access for both pedestrians and cyclists at a local, district and city level. Based on a 1991 travel census 3% of all trips to work are made by cycle. This currently equates to 2,200 cycle trips to Central Milton Keynes each week to work. Other additional cycle trips are obviously made to destinations other than Central Milton Keynes and for other purposes.

The Redways run through each developed City area often through quiet estate roads. More strategic City routes, which are mainly parallel to the Grid Roads, provide a route for longer distance journeys.

There is, however, only limited provision of Redways within Bletchley. Apart from a link to Newport Pagnell, the Redways do not extend beyond the City boundary. The outlying towns and villages are poorly served by cycle facilities.

Cyclists also make use of the road network both outside and inside the City area. Where possible, priority measures will accommodate this demand safely, and enhance existing and potential routes to attract a greater numbers of cyclists.

The National Cycle Network, launched in April 1995 by Sustrans, serves Milton Keynes. Plans are well advanced for the Milton Keynes-Bedford-Sandy route. The Milton Keynes-Oxford and the Milton Keynes-Northampton routes are core Millennium routes. It is a superb opportunity to persuade the public to start cycling again and add to Milton Keynes' cycling facilities.

## **4 Problems and Opportunities**

Milton Keynes is different. The City is served by a high capacity Grid Road Network. The Grid Roads are often dual carriageways and provide drivers with a variety of route options to reach their destinations.

Large areas of Central Milton Keynes (CMK) are devoted to surface parking of which 85% is currently free of charge. Car ownership and use is high and forecast to increase. Modal share for car is high compared to the regional average, especially for the journey to work and to CMK.

This is not sustainable nor is it equitable. Traffic growth forecasts suggest that congestion will significantly worsen. Many junctions will not be able to cope with the increases in traffic. If not checked now, Milton Keynes will experience levels of congestion and pollution that we see in many older urban areas. The age and quantity of our roads are in need of constant repair and maintenance, stretching already limited resources.

Within CMK and the district centres, facilities for cyclists are generally poor. The highway offers no priority to cyclists who have to compete with private vehicles and public transport for road-space. Cyclists need to have greater priority over motor vehicles.

Two areas of concern are the conflict at junctions between motor vehicles and cyclists. We have developed a three year programme of assessment and remedial measures to improve safety these junctions.

Safety is one of the prime considerations when providing new or improved facilities for cyclists. In 1998, there were 92 casualties involving cyclists on Milton Keynes roads (excluding the M1, the A5 and the A428).

We run cycle training courses for school children and intend to extend their coverage to adults.

We can improve safety for cyclists on the highway by introducing self-enforcing 20 mph zones in suitable residential areas and by a 'Safe Routes to School' programme covering all Milton Keynes schools.

People will only choose to cycle to work if there are satisfactory facilities. Employers must be persuaded to provide changing and showering facilities at places of work, in order to encourage their employees to cycle to work. Further incentives such as cycle mileage allowances, interest free cycle loans and the provision of pool cycles should also be actively encouraged.

The supply of cycle parking spaces in town centres will need to be increased. Greater cycle use will require additional, secure parking facilities.

## 5 The Strategy

We will encourage more people to cycle thereby contributing to the following SITS objectives:

- ***(That) all people should be able to move around conveniently and safely, regardless of their circumstances, with those able to pay doing so.***
- ***To encourage walking, cycling, and quality public transport (to include taxis and private hire vehicles), whilst reducing journeys by car and promoting a healthier lifestyle.***
- ***To ensure that Milton Keynes' economic prosperity is enhanced by our new transport policies by helping people to travel when and where they want, but in more environmentally friendly ways.***

We will encourage more people to cycle by:

- Developing a safe 'Strategic Cycling Network.
- Ensuring that cycles can be used safely and easily throughout Milton Keynes.
- Promoting cycling as a safe and sustainable way of travelling.

Cycling is very sustainable form of transport with minimal impact on the environment in terms of pollution, congestion and the need for infrastructure. If people cycled more they would also become healthier.

To cater for the differing needs and standards of cyclists, cycling will be actively promoted and encouraged on both the Redways and the highway. This will have the added benefit of increasing awareness of cycling by other road users.

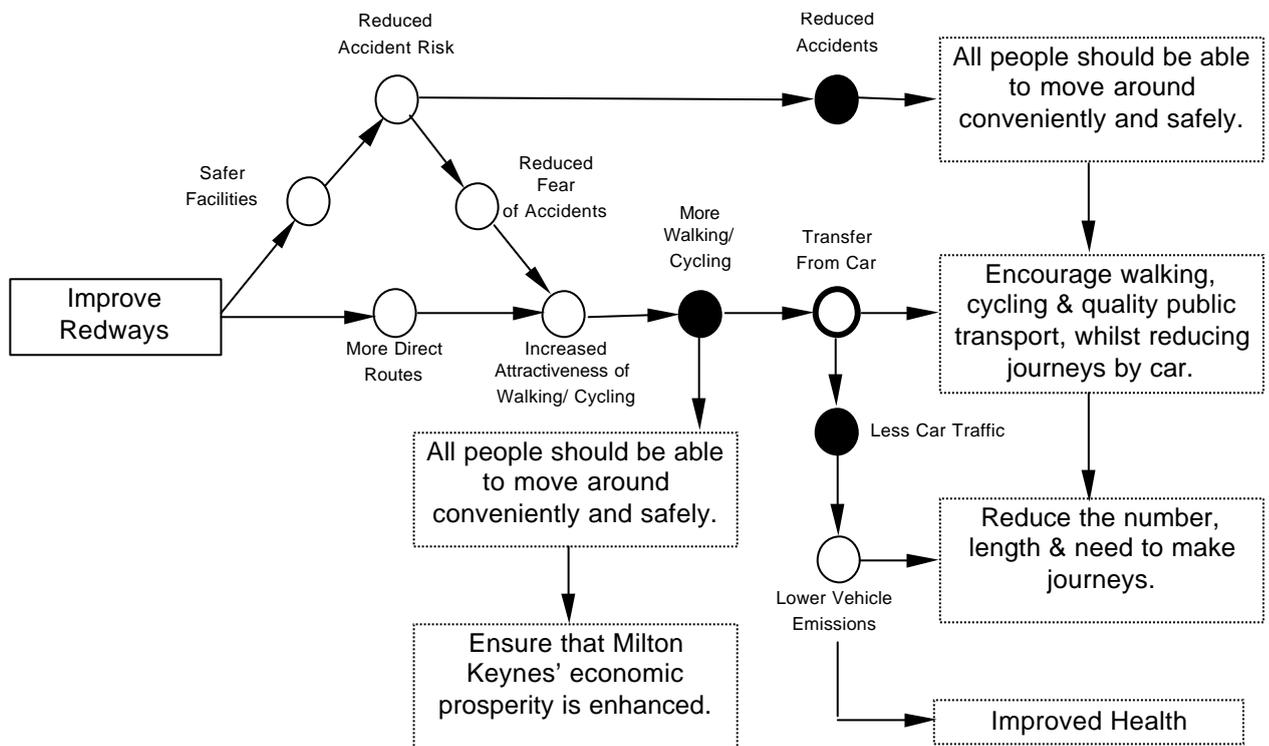
It will be necessary to carry out improvements to both networks to improve safety for cyclists. On the roads, it could mean cycle priority measures and amendments to road markings to create more space for cyclists. On Redways, it could mean improvements to visibility and segregation on appropriate routes.

This may result in a reduction in highway capacity for other road users. Consideration will also be given to pedestrian safety where shared cycle and pedestrian facilities are proposed.

We need to establish a network of strategic cycle routes serving a range of destinations. This network should cover routes between, into and across settlements in both the rural and urban parts of Milton Keynes.

All existing and new routes on the network need to be assessed, to ensure that they are adequate and safe to use. The network must be maintained to ensure visibility standards are met, surfaces are free from hazards and routes are adequately lit.

The processes and contribution cycling and walking can make to our strategy is shown in the Cycling Causal Chain below.



Key

- Type of Measure Proposed
- Objective
- Assumed Effect
- Effect to be measured
- Effect to be measured or modelled

## 6 Objectives

The objectives of the Milton Keynes Cycling Strategy are to:

- Develop the Strategic Cycle Network within the Milton Keynes Council area.

- Increase the number of trips made by cycle.

- Ensure and improve personal safety.

- Improve cycle security.

- Promote cycling.

- Ensure that cycling needs are integrated into the Local Plan, Local Transport Plan, and the Road Safety Plan.

## **7 Targets/Timescales**

In order to achieve the Objectives the following Targets and Timescales have been set:

- To increase the length of safe cycle routes available within the Milton Keynes Council area.
- Double the numbers of trips by cycle (based on 1996 figures) by end 2002 and quadruple the numbers of trips by cycle (based on 1996 figures) by end 2012.
- To reduce the number of casualties per km cycled by 30% by 2005 and by 75% by 2010 based on 1999 figures.
- To increase the number of people attending cycle training courses, both children and adults, ten fold by 2005 based on 1999 figures and by 2010 training shall be available to every 10 year old child who wants it.
- To reduce the rate of cycle theft by 5% by 2005 and by 10% by 2010 based on 1999 figures.
- To increase cycle parking facilities by providing, as a minimum, 4 cycle stands at each local centre, including the villages.
- To produce a new Redway Guide for Milton Keynes.
- To make available the Milton Keynes Cycling Strategy for inclusion in all relevant Milton Keynes Council documents by January 2001.

Our targets are from SITS and extend beyond the timescale of the cycling strategy. However, the interim targets for SITS match the cycling strategy timescale. The success of the cycling strategy will be measured against these targets.

## **8 Mechanisms to deliver the objectives**

### **8.1 Strategic Network**

- Identification of cycling 'key attractors' i.e. those areas/locations to or from which people will wish to cycle.
- Identify what routes already exist.
- Carry out Cycle Audit to determine condition of the existing Redway network and junction details.
- Propose remedial measures and Safety schemes to combat deficiencies.
- Identify desired routes to locations not already catered for and propose scheme to meet requirements.
- Prioritise then programme the measures.

A cycleway link from the designated area of Milton Keynes to Wavendon and Woburn Sands is programmed to be constructed during 2000/01. A further link to Bow Brickhill will also be investigated.

The proposal is to provide improved cycle infrastructure from Newport Pagnell and Emberton via Sherington to Olney.

A pedestrian desire-line linking Newport Pagnell to the City has been identified. This requires the construction of approximately 800m of new footway alongside Willen Road to complete the network. If the route were constructed as a shared pedestrian/cycle footway, it would also provide a direct cycle link from Newport Pagnell to the City.

Settlements on or near to the proposed Sustrans routes will be served by these facilities. Such settlements include Haversham, Hanslope and Castlethorpe. Other villages such as Little Brickhill, North Crawley, Moulsoe and Chicheley are to be investigated with a view to inclusion in this programme.

### **8.2 Program of Footway Inspections**

Safety inspections are carried out on all roads at the frequency below:

Shopping areas and local centres - monthly  
Other footways - in with road inspections  
Redways - nine monthly

The following items are identified for attention:

Dangerous potholes and iron work  
Dangerous kerbing, channels or edging  
Misleading/ dangerous or faded road markings and displaced road studs in the carriageway  
Damaged obscured or insecure lighting columns  
Vegetation causing danger  
Misleading / dangerous or faded road signs

Included in safety inspections will be work that is not of a dangerous nature that will be identified and recorded and then prioritised to be carried out as and when the budget

allows. Some structural maintenance or planned maintenance for future years will also be identified so that resurfacing/reconstruction/surface-dressing works can be carried out at a future date.

### **8.3 Personal Safety**

We will:

- Carry out a Cycle audit to determine hazards on the existing Redway network and junctions.
- Monitor accidents from police data and by the creation of working group including Milton Keynes Council, Thames Valley Police, Milton Keynes Hospital, Milton Keynes Cycle Users Group and other interested bodies..
- Liase with police concerning personal safety and attacks on Redways.
- Propose remedial measures and safety schemes to combat deficiencies.
- Prioritise then programme the measures.
- Continue cycle training of children and establish training programme for adults.

### **8.4 Crime and Fear of Crime**

A Crime and Community Safety Strategy was recently approved by the MK Crime and Community Safety Partnership of which we are a leading member. One of the aims of the strategy is to tackle anti-social behaviour and vandalism and one objective is to reduce such incidents on the Redways.

### **8.5 Cycle and Pedestrian Training**

Volunteer tutors run our pedestrian and cycling training courses for school children.

We intend to increase the number of children receiving training. We are currently re-assessing the provision of pedestrian and cycling training. We are considering distributing resource packs through the local health authority and using paid tutors.

We are also proposing trial adult cycling training schemes that will allow us to assess their impact on increased cycle use in Milton Keynes.

### **8.6 Cycle parking facilities**

We will:

- Identify existing provision at 'key attractors'
- Identify appropriate level and type of facilities required.
- Prioritise then programme the measures.

We have introduced a programme to provide new cycle parking facilities as well as replacing and upgrading existing ones.

### **8.7 Promote cycling**

We will:

- Produce a new Redway Guide.
- Increase publicity for cycling.
- Improve signing and information boards.

- Encourage Travelwise.
- Promote a Green Commuter Policy
- Support the Council's Bicycle User Group (BUG) that was established in 1999
- Integration of Milton Keynes Cycling Strategy
- Prepare the Milton Keynes Cycling Strategy for inclusion in all relevant Milton Keynes Council documents.

## **8.8 Green Transport Plans**

Milton Keynes Council adopted a 'Green Commuter Plan for Milton Keynes' (GCP) in December 1997. As the largest employer in Milton Keynes, it is important that we set an example to other organisations and show a commitment to SITS. We have set a target of reducing car use by staff by 30% by 2001.

A travel survey of staff in CMK in 1997 indicated that 46% lived up to 5 miles away, 64% up to 10 miles away and the following modal split:

4% walk  
 4% cycle  
 5% by bus  
 1% by rail  
 3% carshare  
 77% car driver only

## **9 Monitoring and Review**

Mechanisms will be established to monitor the level of cycle use by increasing the number permanent cycle counters located within the Milton Keynes area.

Reviews of the numbers of attendees at cycle training courses will be carried out to monitor training levels.

Assessing changes in numbers of cycling and walking trips is more difficult to measure on the ground, especially for borough wide changes. Repeating household surveys will indicate progress towards targets in the longer term. Shorter-term changes will be monitored via more localised surveys of particular destinations such as schools and individual destinations within CMK. Individual companies and organisations including schools and public bodies will be encouraged to develop 'Green Commuter Plans'. Monitoring these plans will indicate the changes in the numbers of cycling and walking trips.

Working groups to be established to monitor cyclist casualties and levels of cycle theft.

## **10 Staffing**

A post of full time cycling officer is to be established to ensure the aspirations of the Cycling Strategy striven for.

## **11 Funding**

The authority will provide and maintain funding to achieve the targets proposed. The authority will also seek funding from other sources where appropriate.

Although adopted highway, the Redways do not qualify for Government grants through the Local Transport Plan process or through the Standard Spending Assessment system for road maintenance. They impose great pressure on the Council's limited revenue budget.

## 12 Cycling action plan

	By 2002	By 2005	By 2010
Cycle Audit	It is proposed to carry out a rolling programme of route audits of the Redways.	It is proposed to carry out a rolling programme of route audits of the Redways.	It is proposed to carry out a rolling programme of route audits of the Redways.
Cycle Review	Carry out Cycle Review of all existing Redways within the Milton Keynes Council area.	Continue to review cycling facilities to identify opportunities for improvement.	Continue to review cycling facilities to identify opportunities for improvement.
Cycle Networks	Wavendon and Woburn Sands	Sherington, Emberton and Olney  Willen Road, Newport Pagnell, to the City of Milton Keynes	Extension to Other Rural Areas including Bow Brickhill
Cycle Parking	Carry out review of all cycle parking in Milton Keynes Council area.	Install cycle parking facilities in all Milton Keynes city area.  Create Cycle Safe in CMK	Install cycle parking facilities in all Milton Keynes remaining areas.

	By 2002	By 2005	By 2010
Usage			
Accidents	Improved Redways/Grid Road junctions, surfacing plus signs.  Cycle Safety Improvements  Improved Redways/ road crossings, surfacing plus signs.  Redway/ road	Measures to improve cycle safety and encourage additional cycle use both on the Grid Roads and the Redways are proposed.	

	junction, landscaping.  Redway/ Redway junction, surfacing & landscaping.		
Training	Increase the number of people attending cycle training courses.	Increase the number of people attending cycle training courses, both children and adults, ten fold.	On road training shall be available to every 10 year old child who wants it.
Thefts	See Cycle Parking		
Publicity	New Redway Guide		